

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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MANY of us are aware, some tragically aware, of the lines of cleavage running through our natures and of the conflicts which result. Once these were understood in terms of the conflict between God and the Devil, between the powers of goodness and light and the powers of evil and darkness. Today, when intellectual leadership has passed from the theologians to the scientists and psychologists, they are understood in terms of the conscious and the unconscious. Deep, irrational urges well up from the unconscious, over which rational, conscious man endeavours to exercise restraint according to the taboos imposed by society. Under conditions of great stress that restraint is apt to be swept aside. The delinquent is in revolt against the demands of society. Many a mentally sick person has failed to adjust himself to the outside world and has retired into an inner world of fantasy.

Undoubtedly this kind of approach to our conflicts has given many individuals a useful insight into themselves and many sociologists a useful understanding of such problems as juvenile delinquency. Its value, however, is circumscribed and, in the absence of a third factor, such an approach can be harmful. Using the same terminology, this third factor would have to be called the superconscious. The genius of a Kalidasa, a Shakespeare, a Tolstoy, or a Gandhi; those supreme heights of human achievement, the

lives of a Christ or a Buddha, stand out to mark the existence of the superconscious. In a Tolstoy, the light from a higher region flickers; in a Buddha, it burns clear and steady.

A glance at the lives of some of these figures may help our understanding of our subject, because often in a genius the lines of cleavage run deeper, the conflict rages fiercer. In Tolstoy, the inner light played upon a strong and unique personality and an exceptionally virile body. A lesser man might have indulged without pause his bodily appetites, or followed with no inward searching his inclination and lived in relative peace. Tolstoy could not do that. In him there was a constant endeavour to transmute mind and body in obedience to the promptings of the inner voice, and this inner conflict was reflected in some of his outer relationships. H.P.B. called his philosophic essay, "On Life," "a treatise on the Alchemy of the Soul." What success attended his own essays in such alchemy we cannot judge from the outside, but certainly in his art he did achieve a kind of transmutation. Where another would leave us in despair, overwhelmed with a sense of our impotence in the grip of blind and cruel forces, Tolstoy creates something which makes us feel the Man behind, which robs time's passing of its melancholy.

Gandhi was another who, in the heat of conflict between body, psyche and spirit, mastered in a degree the art of alchemy. This conflict took a form peculiar to an educated member of a subject people and out of his own victory was born the concept of *Satyagraha* for the nation, whereby it could harmonize the outwardly conflicting elements, desire for freedom and non-violence, by a willingness to combat injustice at the hands of another by suffering in one's own person.

In what terms does *The Secret Doctrine* discuss the conflicts in man? In those of the three lines of evolution. On page 272 of the second volume occur these words:

No sooner had the mental eye of man been opened to understanding, than the Third Race felt itself one with the ever-present as the ever to be unknown and invisible ALL, the One Universal Deity. Endowed with divine powers, and feeling in himself his *inner* God, each felt he was a Man-God in his nature, though an animal in his physical Self. The struggle between the two began from the very day they tasted of the fruit of the Tree of Wisdom; a struggle for life between the spiritual and the

psychic, the psychic and the physical.

Pursuing analogy, note first something of the way in which these three lines of evolution manifest in a single human life. The cycle of physical life begins apparently with the fertilization of the ovum. In fact, the astral form is present before conception and it is round this that the foetus develops. The body reaches the peak of its power usually in the twenties and thereafter declines. Are we present in the foetus? Are we present in the baby crying for its mother's milk? Are we present in the adolescent in whom strange new emotions are beginning to stir? At no time are we fully present because the psychic is a distinct line of evolution even though it interweaves with the physical, so that turning points in mental development occur roughly at seven-year intervals in the life of the body. There is a greater degree of self-expression in the babe than in the foetus, in the adolescent than in the babe, but the peak of the inner unfolding does not usually coincide with that of physical development.

Where lies the line of spiritual development? In the third chapter of the *Gita* we learn that the wheel of life is kept revolving by sacrifice and that sacrifice is performed by action. In the fourth chapter we learn that the worshipper is purified from his sins by sacrifice, but that the spiritual man is the one who partakes of the perfection of spiritual knowledge arising from such sacrifice. In other words, if in our physical and mental life we do not perform those small sacrifices which keep the wheel of life revolving, if we follow our pleasure, then we live in vain because no spiritual awakening can work its magic upon us. Spiritual insight and power arise from the fires of sacrifice like an aroma or incense from the fire; and, whether the fire of our physical life or of our mental life be strong or weak, whether it blaze up or flicker before going out, the incense can be pleasing to our spiritual self. An experience can be little more than physical, as watching the death of a body might be to a doctor. To another it might be charged with emotion. To a third, as to the Buddha, it might be a spiritual one, moving him to the depths of his nature. Every experience should, in its own way, be a spiritual one. The prime of our bodily prowess, the height of our intellectual power, the frustration of a hospital bed, the slow decline of old age, each should yield its spiritual harvest. Even our dying moment, if filled with a noble thought for others, can be pregnant

with spiritual gain.

Now let us pass on to the definition of the three lines of evolution given on page 181 of the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. The monadic or spiritual is concerned with the growth and development of the Monad into still higher phases of activity in conjunction with the intellectual and physical lines. Note especially the words "in conjunction with" and then consider this passage taken from H.P.B.'s article on "Genius" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No.13*):

It is the very nature of the Spiritual Entity itself, of our *Ego*, which keeps on weaving new life-woofs into the web of reincarnation on the loom of time, from the beginnings to the ends of the great Life-Cycle....For, though omniscient in its essence and nature, it still requires experience through its *personalities* of the things of earth, earthy on the objective plane, in order to apply the fruition of that abstract omniscience to them.

It would seem that the growth and development implied in the definition of spiritual development can only take place when the spiritual, psychic and physical proceed in harmony, a consideration to be applied by every "false pietist of bewildered soul."

The intellectual scheme of evolution, *The Secret Doctrine* states, is represented by the Manasa-Dhyanis who are the "givers of intelligence and consciousness" to man. Note here the use of the word "givers," implying sacrifice on their part. To this we shall return later.

The physical scheme is represented by the *Chhayas* of the Lunar Pitris. Round this, Nature has formed the present physical body as it forms the foetus round the astral body in the womb. This body serves as the vehicle for the growth and transformations through Manas and—owing to the accumulation of experiences—of the finite into the infinite, of the transient into the eternal and absolute.

Note how the three definitions taken together make clear the interdependence of the three lines of evolution. Next, let us consider the practical application, starting with the physical.

The body of senses needs to be purified by getting rid of the sense of possession. We want possessions for our own self-glorification and we want to hold on to them because in giving them up we suffer loss. But in holding on to them we become their slaves and surrender our freedom. Possessions have to be transformed into objects held in trust, to be used continuously for the good of others and for the

glorification of those objects in themselves. Wealth as an object of possession is ignoble. Wealth held in trust is glorified. The creative powers of the body as objects of possession debase a man. Held in trust they are glorified. Our labour as a possession which our employer takes from us is brutish. Held in trust it is glorified. When objects are glorified, the physical line of evolution begins to reach true fruition and at the same time begins to provide the milieu in which the intellectual and spiritual lines of evolution can reach fulfilment.

How can we transform objects of possession into objects of trust? By detaching the mind from its servitude to desire and pledging it to the service of the soul. In servitude the mind is required to plan the satisfaction of desire. In service to the soul it both retires within for sustenance and counsel and turns outward to sacrifice itself for the glorification of objects. At this point we face the difference between lust and love. Lust binds objects or persons to our pleasure. Love sacrifices that others may grow into freedom. In such giving, we too grow free. With what did Gandhi busy his mind? With objects of desire? At first, to a large extent he did; but increasingly as the years passed, with thoughts of freedom for his people and the dignifying of their labour. So the soul in him developed into higher phases of activity and a light shone through him which touched the hearts of others. With what did Tolstoy occupy his mind? Sometimes with objects of desire, but sometimes with that dual activity of looking within and communicating without with others in his books, and in that dual process lay the secret of his power.

As objects of possession become objects held in trust and as the mind is touched by the spirit of real self-sacrifice, something else begins to stir in the mind, the influence of the spiritual line of evolution. Man, hitherto incomplete because in him spirit, mind and body co-existed, moves towards final completion, the perfect harmonizing of the three.

Such a consummation is not to be achieved without a struggle. The human personality is like a beautiful wild horse. Let it follow its whim and while it will have its wild moments it will not deliberately fight us. But let it feel the touch of a will stronger than its own and it will rear in rebellion against us. If it were not sensitive to that touch and had not the spirit to rebel, it would not have its wonderful capacity to serve man and respond to his command. To

train it properly we must love that spirit and not try to break it. We must love the strength and beauty of the horse, love it for what it is and not covet it as a possession. Also we will need patience and wisdom born of experience with horses.

Yesterday and today we have done such cruel things to one another that the spirit of many has been broken or almost broken. We grow almost to hate ourselves and would put down the wild spirit of man. We must be patient. We must seek wisdom born of knowledge and experience. We must also find a way through love. We must learn more to cherish the beautiful: the many small kindnesses, the hope that will not be finally extinguished, the fortitude in continuing disaster, and the songs of poetry, in prose, in music, in sculptured stone and in colour, for in this love is part of the going out of the mind in sacrifice.

No religion can stand, save on the foundation of philosophy and science. No religion can prove by *practical*, scientific demonstration that there is such a thing as one *personal* God; while the esoteric philosophy...*proves* and gives means to every man to ascertain the undeniable presence of a living God in man himself—whether one believes in or calls his divine indweller Avalokiteswara, Buddha, Brahma, Krishna, Jehovah, Bhagawan, Ahura-Mazda, Christ, or by whatever name—there is no such God outside of himself. The former—the one ideal outsider—*can never be demonstrated*; the latter, under whatever appellation, may always be found present if a man does not extinguish within himself the capacity to perceive this Divine presence, and hear the "voice" of that only manifested deity, the murmurings of the Eternal *Vach*, called by the Northern and Chinese Buddhist Avalokiteswara and Kwan-Shai-yin, and by the Christians—Logos.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THOUGHT BUILDS CHARACTER

THE Ancients regarded Nature as a Magic Mirror—a mighty Looking Glass in which self-conscious, thinking human beings see or can see their own reflections. No one save humans have the power to gaze into this Magic Mirror of Nature, for the act requires the power to think, to reason, to compare and to contrast. It is true that there are men and women who do not use the faculty they possess. "Seeing they see not." All such are blind though they have eyes, thoughtless though they have minds; and of such it may be said that they are born too soon in human shape. The stamp of the ferocious beast, or of the beautiful bird, or of the cunning reptile, is upon them. Both clear vision and deliberate thought are essentials of character-building.

Let us gaze into the Magic Mirror of Nature and see what clue Nature provides in reference to character and its re-formation—its moulding and shaping into something more noble, more just, more compassionate.

"The proper study of mankind is man." In saying this, the poet Alexander Pope but repeated the injunction of the Delphic Oracle in old Greece: "Man, know thyself." The purpose of human endeavour and evolution is that man should know himself. When we desire to improve our character, when we aspire to become better and nobler, we are but being influenced and energized by this primal urge. The urge to unfold and to evolve makes us long for a nobler and stronger character. Without this feeling, this aspiration, man is not man. Our human nature, which distinguishes us from other beings, goads us to look at ourselves, compels us to see ourselves as we are. Therefore self-examination is the first step. We look into the Mirror of Nature to find out what we are.

Our initial effort in this direction is superficial and only the visible differences are perceived. The differences of sex, of race, of country and creed, to which we attach so much importance, are but secondary and subordinate effects. For, we see that there are good Christians and good heathens; there are nobles among the poor, and mean among the rich; there are saints among the "untouchables," and "untouchables" to be shunned among the so-called civilized and cultured. So when we look again we find another kind of distinction

between man and man, a more fundamental one—that of human character.

This important fact about human character should be noted: virtues and vices are common to all men and women, of all races and religions, belonging to every strata of society. Who has not heard or known of nobility of character among the illiterate? Who has not heard or known of the cruelty of the learned, the pride of the opulent, the "holier than thou" attitude of the socialite? So we find that virtues and vices, moral and immoral conduct, show themselves in every race, in every religion, in either sex. It is correct, therefore, to deduce that character is more fundamental than race, religion, sex or environment.

So there are two kinds of differences: outer differences of sex, of race, of religion, of circumstance; and inner differences of character, of habit, of outlook. It does not require any hard thinking to learn that what is more important in ourselves as in others is our character, and not the family to which we belong, our habits, and not the society in which we move, our points of view and our outlook on life, and not the country we love or the religion we profess.

If we desire to re-form our character, we must take a good look at ourselves, in terms not of external marks but of inner traits, and find out how, by what process, our present character was formed. Unless we bring the subject of character-formation into the realm of Law, we cannot possibly work intelligently to eradicate our vices, to eliminate our weaknesses, to bring to birth in our natures more virtues and greater strength.

What builds character? How have we come to possess our present character? Character like everything else is an effect from a cause. Our very desire to improve our character implies that we accept the existence of a law operating on and in character. This law certainly exists, and expressed in simple language it is—*thought builds character*. The mind is the instrument we use consciously, or, alas, all too often unconsciously, to build our moral nature. We must at the outset learn that thought is the cause and character is the effect; that as we think, so we become. Human characters differ because humans think differently. Loose thinking makes for irresponsible character; vicious thinking makes for immoral character; steady thinking makes for balanced character,

and so on. Hence the necessity to learn to control the mind and use the power of thought deliberately.

We can experiment with one of our own weaknesses to prove to ourself that thought builds character. Suppose our weakness is untrue speech. The habit of telling white lies is a dangerous one, for gradually and invariably it leads to grey and then black lies. Petty falsehoods not only beget their own kind, but also in time beget wicked lies. How can the power of thought be used to eradicate untruthfulness?

In our example, the first step is already taken, for we have recognized that we are inaccurate—*i.e.*, we must be aware of our weakness. How many there are who are untruthful and know it not! Such build for themselves circumstances of disgrace and suffering which will ultimately compel them to become aware of their vice of untruth. And this is equally true of any other weakness. So the first step is to know our blemishes.

The second step is resolve—not hasty resolve, but resolve born of calm consideration; resolve made in the silence of our own heart, in the secrecy of our own mind. It is a well-known fact that if we talk to all and sundry of our resolve, we weaken and often kill the potency of that resolve. Let us make our resolve an act of real prayer. Let us retire within the temple of our own heart and there see in the calm light of reason our weakness—one weakness at a time—and say to ourself that it needs eradication. That then is the second step.

However, untruthfulness will not vanish simply because we say to it, "Get thee behind me." The next step is to take care not to worry about our weakness; for such worry means we are dwelling on that blemish, thus lending it the strength of our thought. So many complain that the more they think of their weaknesses, the worse they become! Having recognized the existence of our weakness, and having resolved to get rid of it, let us seek out the opposite virtue—in our example, the virtue of accuracy, of exactness, of truthfulness—and meditate on that. As a man thinks, so he is. So the third step is meditation on the opposite virtue. If the mind becomes full of thoughts that are true and accurate, there will be no room in it for falsehood and untruthfulness.

Meditation is a much misunderstood word. Strange practices, to say the least, are sometimes recommended and passed off as meditation by those posing as spiritual guides. Beware of such guides and

such practices, says Theosophy. True meditation is twofold: First, it is a conscious and cautious examination of our lower self in the light of the Higher Self and of the infallible laws of Divine Nature. Second, it is the consideration and contemplation of impersonal, universal ideas as they relate to our own personal lives, circumscribed by our own horizons of sight, of mind, of soul.

This twofold process of meditation can be applied to our example of untruthfulness. First, we should set apart at least 15 minutes every night to examine if we indulged in our weakness of inaccuracy, inexactitude, untruthfulness; if unconsciously to ourselves it came to the fore. Did we say something that was not true? Were we accurate in all reporting and repeating? Also, did our silence imply something that was untrue? Let us go over, as carefully as we can, all our statements, important and trivial, and we shall find that we did slip into untruthfulness, now in one place, now in another. Next, we need to set apart at least 15 minutes every morning to contemplate on the virtue of truthfulness, the power of accuracy, the merit of being exact. Such contemplation will help us not to be untruthful during the day, and our nightly self-examination will gradually and surely reveal the fair fruits of the morning exercise.

This twofold meditation constitutes real prayer—the morning and evening *Sandhya* of the Hindu; the matin and the vesper of the Christian.

The nightly self-examination is verily like unto a purificatory rite, a bath in which we wash out the dirt of our character, wipe ourselves dry of the moisture of passion, and don the clean garments of virtuous resolves. The morning contemplation is like preparing our lessons for the hours at school—the school of life, the school of the home, of the office, of the club, of work and play. The effect of this double meditation will show itself in our character: we will grow less and less untruthful; then, we will notice that truth predominates over untruth in our nature; and finally, we will emerge triumphant with truth as a permanent virtue in our character.

This, then, is the method by which we can prove to ourselves that thought builds character.

Applying this to our whole character: all our virtues, all our vices, are effects of our thinking in the past. Neither God nor heredity gave

us our virtues and our vices. Heredity is but the channel through which our own thinking, deliberate or automatic, manifests itself and is called character.

Each one of us is born with a character. "Trailing clouds of glory do we come, from God who is our home." Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality" is good literature, but read as a psychological composition it throws a new light on the puzzling problem of character. The Ancient Philosophers, the Asiatic Psychologists, taught the twin doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma: as souls we live in bodies which die, and the soul makes new bodies. Character is the body of the soul. Thought is the instrument which the soul uses to build character. As we sow, so we reap; as we think, so we become.

We must not neglect the whole for the part. While in our meditation, which is our prayer, we should be extra attentive to eradicating one weakness at a time, and work upon it like a clever surgeon with his sharp lancet, we should not neglect our character as a whole. Our daily labours give us constant opportunities to better our character, in an all-round fashion. What is essential is that we do not forget that character is built according to our thinking, and so we ourselves should be definite and deliberate in building it. In the small, plain duties of life, in contact with relations and friends, in doing the necessary duties in civic or national affairs, we must remember that we are building character, replacing virtues with vices and vices with virtues. Every falsehood, every irritation, weakens character; every little act of unselfishness, every word of right teaching, ennobles character. The hidden motive of all we do and say lies in our character. Our deeds, our words, are all avenues which ennoble or sully character. So in the present life we are building our character for the future. Our present character is the result of our past thinking; our present thinking will make our future character. Thus it is true that man is the maker of his destiny. "A wise man rules his stars, the fool obeys them."

Why should we aspire to build a good and noble character? What is our aim and purpose in desiring a strong nature, in wishing for a collected mind, in aspiring for a beautiful character? Many there are who want to grow and evolve and possess moral qualities with a competitive object—to shine in society, to be the observed of all observers. Egotism and pride are our subtle foes and have to be guarded against. So it is necessary to

examine our motive, which is so subtle that it is hidden not only from others, but quite often from our own mental sight.

Narcissus, the handsome youth of Greek fable, fell in love with his own image as he saw it reflected in a fountain, and pined away and died. In one sense, Narcissus represents one who is so self-centred that he can see no beauty anywhere outside of himself. Narcissus had eyes only for his own beauty. How many there are who are so full of their own selves, so rigidly self-centred, that they are in love with their own voice which they long continually to hear, in love with their own views which they air continually, and so forth. Let us not wish to grow better and nobler for the glory and the renown that this might bring to us. We shall be drowned in our own pride and egotism, and what beauty we may have evolved will come to nought.

In the Magic Mirror of Nature we see our own reflection, but we know it to be the reflection of an isolated individual, an *ahankaric*, separated being, and we wish for the vision of the Universal and not of the individual, the vision of the Whole and not of the part. The Cyclopean Eye is the "Single Eye of Spirit," the Third Eye of Shiva. That Eye brings the Vision Universal which is the Vision Splendid. The Vision of Wisdom kills egotism, for it unveils the Universal Self, Atman, Spirit, Deity, God. So, let Altruism be our real motive in our labour of self-improvement. Then we will grow in the safe strength which humility and compassion alone bring. Day by day let us build in our hearts the feeling of love for all, sacrifice for all. With justice to our own self, let us be just to all.

THERE is no sin greater than yielding to ambition; no calamity greater than discontent; no vice greater than covetousness. He who has known the contentment of being contented will always be content.

—LAO TZU

CONSCIENCE—THE BRIDGE

FOR those desiring to take their evolution in their own hands, the starting point is the development of conscience. We may unfold great powers of the mind, but if we do not cultivate our conscience our growth will be stunted. Here is a parting of the ways between the methods of the modern educationist and those of the ancient Theosophists. Mind is very important, but it should not be the starting point, for mental development may and often does overpower conscience. Any number of times that which is seen by the conscience as wrong, even revolting, is glossed over and regarded as right because of mental jugglery. If we desire real soul-growth, let us not neglect conscience. The training of the mind is very important, but it must follow and not precede the training of conscience.

What is conscience? Modern Western psychology is not very definite. According to Theosophy, conscience is an organ of soul-consciousness. It is called in Hindu and Buddhistic psychology the "internal organ"—*Antahkarana*. It may be compared to the school monitor. It is the function of the teacher to teach; the monitor is his nominee who has to see that in the teacher's absence the pupils do not break the rules and the discipline laid down. That is all that the monitor can do; but before the teacher arrives in the classroom and the lessons begin, the monitor is an important functionary. So it is with conscience.

Conscience or *Antahkarana* has two aspects—of speech and of silence. It speaks only on certain occasions; for example, our conscience will not answer us if we request it to teach us painting! And when it speaks it always says, "Don't do this." It is peremptory, but speaks always in the negative. This is because *Antahkarana*, this internal organ called conscience, is made up of all our past experiences—our pleasures and pains gone through in many lives. But as our evolution is not complete and we have not gone through all possible experiences, we are not possessors of a perfect conscience. Conscience itself is in the process of evolution, therefore the growth of *Antahkarana*, culture of conscience, is very necessary.

This conscience, however, may be regarded as the highest aspect of our lower nature. In fact it is the bridge between the lower selfish and egotistic personality and the higher spiritual man—the Real Soul. In conscience are accumulated the lessons of all our past, the essence drawn

from pleasures and pains of many, many lives. And wonderful as this storehouse is, it has its limitations. One way, the fundamental way, of awakening our conscience is to brood over this silent and passive aspect of conscience. Just as a lighthouse conveys to passing ships the message, "Don't come near," so the voice of conscience says to us, "Don't do that; it is wrong." But what is *right*? The lighthouse cannot show the way to the harbour, and so with conscience. However, there is another light, another voice than the voice of conscience—the still small voice of the god in the heart of man. But that higher voice and that higher light cannot greatly aid us, in fact cannot help us at all, save through the voice of conscience. This is an important point. Because we do not heed the voice of conscience when it speaks, we atrophy its function; and once the conscience is atrophied, the soul whispers not to us, but, fatigued with the machinations of the lower man, it withdraws. Thus men and women by the thousands die soul-death.

Let us not delude ourselves. When we say, "My conscience tells me thus," how do we know it is conscience that is speaking? Are we sure? Many a time it is not conscience at all; it is the voice of flesh, the voice of desires and yearnings, which is mistaken for the voice of conscience. Conscience warns *against* a path, *against* an action: it won't speak the other way. Therefore let us seek for ways and means of illuminating our conscience. *Why* is it wrong to lose our temper? *Why* is it mean to be selfish? *Why* is it necessary to be moral? When we have taken that step, "conscience does make cowards of us all." When we pay heed to the voice of conscience, at the same time seeking the reasons, searching for the meaning of all things, real progress and soul-growth take place.

There are two points to be noted. First, the voice of passion, of the desires of the flesh, comes under supervision, though not under control. We shall do well to take time to analyse our desires by the light of our conscience. It is important to separate these two. Conscience never makes us go wrong, never prompts us to be cruel or wicked or immoral. It never deludes. It may not inspire or enlighten, but it never will degrade us, for the central quality, the basic virtue of conscience is self-respect. People are so anxious to be well spoken of by others; but can we in our own internal organ, *Antahkarana*, speak well of ourselves? Can our conscience respect us? That is the first point to be noted.

The second: as we seek energetically for the meaning of what

conscience says to us, we are able to throw away many fetters and limitations. Our customs and manners undergo a change; religious beliefs undergo a change; conventional views undergo a change. It is as wrong to be conservative and stick to caste, custom, creed, conditions, without understanding, as it is wrong to break conventions, to destroy traditions without understanding. The old and the orthodox do the first—that is the way of fossilization. The young do the second—that is the way of licence, though they call it liberty. Both are wrong. When these two extremes of orthodoxy and licence are avoided, when reason is used, when causes are humbly sought and knowledge eagerly acquired, then, from beyond the conscience, the voice of the Spiritual Soul, the still small voice of god in the heart, is heard.

So an important stage in human development is to distinguish between the voice of flesh or of desire, the voice of conscience and the Voice of the Soul. Exercise control by refusing the first; make it a practice to heed the second; seek knowledge to arouse the third, the Voice of the Soul. And then one can say with Emily Bronte:

No coward soul is mine,
 No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere;
 I see Heaven's glories shine,
 And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
 Almighty, ever-present Deity!
 Life—that in me has rest,
 As I—undying Life—have power in Thee!

ANGER is momentary madness, so control your passion or it will control you.

—HORACE: *Epistles*

THE ASTRAL LIGHT

A Theosophist's View of It

[This article by W. Q. Judge appeared originally in *Religio-Philosophical Journal* (Chicago), July 22, 1889.]

A NATURAL preliminary question is: "What is the Astral Light?" It is a difficult question to answer; as difficult as that old one, "What is life?" One that can be answered at first only by illustration and analogy; which can be guessed at perhaps best from viewing results. There are certain phenomena, very well known to Spiritualists and to all persons of a psychical nature, needing a hypothesis upon which we may hang our facts and thus try them. Nearly all the phenomena found in the great record of Spiritualistic seance rooms for the past forty years need hypotheses more reasonable than those so far advanced, to say nothing of a classification which never yet has been undertaken by competent hands. Whether this classification will be done by Spiritualists themselves seems doubtful. If ever the scientific world deigns to carefully and seriously investigate these psychic occurrences, many theories now having their day in the ranks of mediums and their friends will be exploded, and then perhaps the astral light and its place in the phenomena will be better understood.

The identity assumed so easily and quickly by a medium for an alleged spirit calling himself John Smith, would not be admitted at once if the function inherent in the astral light of retaining the image of John Smith for a vast period of time were understood; and then if it were discovered, as it could be by careful records and reports, that at the same time John Smith was declaring himself in a room in Boston through medium A., he was also asserting his identity in Florida, supported by identical proofs, through medium B.—some doubt naturally would surround the question of identity. Yet, just this is happening every day and especially in regard to alleged return of celebrated men to mediums, good and bad alike.

It is easy to prove this as far as the great dead are concerned, but until recording and comparison are undertaken it will never be known how often twenty different mediums in as many separate cities have given, at one and the same moment, messages from the one deceased person.

And this question of identification is one of the most important in all Spiritualism. Upon it the faith of thousands is built; through assumed proofs of identity many a doubter has become a believer in mediums. For we may see phenomena of a purely physical sort over and over again without being convinced of anything save the occurrence of a fact; but once we are persuaded that our dead friend has really returned to speak with us through an entranced living person, then all the rest comes easy; then we think that here is positive proof of life after death.

My contention is that this important point is built upon, believed in, and supported by flimsy proofs, and that flimsiness is due to ignorance of the astral light, its function and operation.

Furthermore, we can find in the reported utterances of "spirits" that there is great diversity as well as opposition in views. But it is apparent that whenever a "spirit" enunciates theories tending to upset preconceived ideas of Spiritualists on such points as identification, reincarnation, the astral light and the like, the "spirit's" opinions go for nothing. Before me lies a pamphlet printed over 20 years ago by a medium, in which most extraordinary views are given of cosmogony, and the teaching of reincarnation, but these although given to the medium by his own trusted "guide" have never gained a hearing among Spiritualists; and although correct and well argued views respecting the astral light, supporting all that the ancient East has claimed for this tenuous interpenetrating medium, have been given by a well-known "spirit," they have been ignored and lost sight of in the mad rush after the intoxication of physical phenomena and sentimental gushing over supposed messages from a deceased mother, sister, brother or wife.

It is time for the leading minds in Spiritualistic ranks—among which I cannot reckon myself—to call a halt, and to devote a little of the common sense used in daily business life to the analysis of the utterances of mediums and the conflicting views of alleged "spirits." Are you afraid of truth? Do you hesitate in case it should come in the process that your beloved dead will be removed a few steps higher, a little beyond the reach of your degrading desire to call them back to the mud and horror of earthly life before their cycle rolls round again? Such a fear veils the truth and belittles your manhood.

But such is the weakness, the utter emaciation, of spiritualistic

philosophy, I will venture a prophecy that even if the analysis and classification I have spoken of should never be attempted, the proper doctrines about these phenomena and about the "Spirit-world," would come to prevail—not through any increase of real knowledge on the part of the "spirits" and "controls," but just when the leading minds in your ranks begin out of their own thinking to believe in the true explanation. That is to say, the best expositions given through mediums are never in advance—save in isolated cases—of the best thought of living Spiritualists; and this comes about, or fails to, through the action of the astral light as affected by living beings with all their acts and thoughts.

Before closing these general considerations, I would like to ask how any reasonable Spiritualist can be sure that he is hearing from a deceased friend or relative merely because he has from a medium, who never knew the deceased and never before met the inquirer, some circumstances known only to the deceased or to himself? This is the common means of proof, almost always blindly accepted. But there are many elements of weakness in it. We may teach a parrot or an idiot some few sentences, and if put behind a screen no one on this side can tell whether the utterances proceed from a wise man, a fool, an animal, or an automaton. Then, again, if the proof be in the recital of some facts "long ago forgotten, and not known to the medium," we are touching upon the memory and its field of operation; a land as unknown as the South Pole. The brain matter cannot hold the facts of a lifetime; where, then, are they held, and how does the possession of them by the medium prove anything save that fact alone?

Nor does the taking on by the medium of the exact physical conditions of the last moments of the reporting deceased one, prove of itself identity. We see hysterics, clairvoyants, sensitives and others in daily life, surrounded by living men, taking on the state or condition of some living person who has just been near and gone away. We might as well say that this proves that such a departed living man is there present, whereas we know such is not the case.

And suppose we assume that the sensitive is also clairvoyant and we hear him using the words, tones and thoughts of this living person, are we to conclude that the latter is present before us in spirit? Such a conclusion is absurd, yet not more so than the other

as to the identity of that one whom we know is really beyond the veil and whom a medium declares is speaking through her.

It is here again that the astral light comes into play, its currents aiding the medium to produce astonishment and confusion, or wrong notions. How much do Spiritualists really know about vital electric currents? Much less those swift and wonderful currents in the astral light? How many laws of those life currents have been revealed to us by a consensus of reports from the "Spirit"-world? None. Forty years long since the first raps in Rochester, have the facts, the theories and the contradictions been piling up, but we are as innocent as ever of any authoritative and convincing statement of laws that will meet the facts. It is true a hundred systems have been evolved, living a brief life, each in their own little Pedlington, but they are not accepted, and most of them have been forgotten. All of this ground has been gone over by man in ages past, with the same struggles, the same confusion, the same heartburnings and mental ruin, and the record of the toilsome journey has been left, showing when light at last has broken, bringing order out of chaos. This is the record found in India, Egypt and other older lands. Is it meet because we are American and freemen that we should ignore this? Should not a patient hearing be given it in order to see whether the doctrines finally arrived at do or do not fit the greater number of facts and offer explanation for all?

I propose to offer a few explanations hereupon, trusting that intelligent Spiritualists will perceive a disposition to get at the truth, to exalt man to his rightful place and to prevent a fatuous running after the emanations of material and psychical corpses.

You cannot play with the animal in you without becoming wholly animal, play with falsehood without forfeiting your right to truth, play with cruelty without losing your sensitivity of mind. He who wants to keep his garden tidy doesn't reserve a plot for weeds.

—DAG HAMMARSKJOLD

THE INNER REFUGE

"I am the goal, the Comforter, the Lord, the Witness, the resting-place, the asylum and the Friend...."

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, IX, 18

HOW many times, when the pressure from other people, circumstances and events seems almost more than the harassed personality can "take," these words of Krishna have brought balm and solace to the troubled mind, the agitated nerves—Krishna, speaking as the Higher Self in each of us, "the Comforter...the resting-place, the asylum and the Friend"!

In former ages, asylum might be sought and found in a temple or a church or, as traditionally in India, in forests where Yogis dwelt in holy contemplation. That was in times when the right of sanctuary was held in such respect that to violate it was held to be a heinous sin. It would be vain to put one's trust in outer retreats today, save only that association with the good which we may trust will throw around us such measure as we may deserve of the protection which purity must naturally radiate. Certainly in times of world-wide peril as well as of national and personal tensions, the following words of the Buddha carry their own conviction:

Men driven by fear seek refuge on mountains, in forests, under sacred trees or at shrines. Such refuge is not secure, such refuge is not the best. Such refuge frees not a man from pain.
(*Dhammapada*, Verses 188-9)

It is only from blindness, from too exclusive concentration on outer things, that men do not turn within and find peace.

A triumphant faith in something higher and infinitely stronger than his personal self must have inspired the Hebrew psalmist when he exclaimed, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (*Psalms* xxvii, 1)

Why does the soul lose its firm hold on the calm spirit that inspires it? *Light on the Path* gives the answer that "it is by emotion, by sensation, that this hold is loosed." Or, in Krishna's words, "it is passion, sprung from the quality of *rajas*... the enemy of man on earth," which instigates one to commit offences.

There is great need, therefore, of cultivating the virtue of *Viraga*, "indifference to pleasure and to pain." If we have a deep devotion, care for outer things will weaken. Fortunately, however, we need not wait to gain perfection in either dispassion or devotion to assure ourselves of the secure retreat within. "Reliance and pressure upon our own inner nature, in moments of darkness, are sure to be answered by the voice of Krishna, the inner guide." (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 27)

Those who have found the "safe place" within, agree that it is closed to them whenever they waver from an absolute code of decency and honour, but it is there, even in the evil-doer who has not quite cut himself off from Spirit, however the path to it may be blocked by the rank growth of former errors. Earnest aspiration can clear the path of the undergrowth and righteous, disinterested action in the present can keep it clear. Does not Krishna say, "Even if the man of most evil ways worship me with exclusive devotion, he is to be considered as righteous, for he hath judged aright"? (*Bhagavad-Gita*, IX, 30)

Who has not touched sometimes upon an inner consciousness within and behind the personal mask, a consciousness that is strong and impersonal and sweet? And who has not glimpsed how different all life would be for him and those about him if he would but hold fast to that and allow it to shine out steadily through him, so that his peaceful eyes, his gentle voice, his quiet hands might give comfort to the suffering and kindle hope again in those who, feeling overwhelmed by circumstances, might have almost ceased to try?

Having realized, however, the touch of that inner peace, we must go forth to do our duty in the world, our duty as personalities by our own Higher Ego and by all life. Until we reach the point where such realization of our true nature can be unwaveringly held, we must seek it as often as we can but without failing to discharge our *dharma*. The inspiration of silent communion on the mountain top with the highest point of consciousness we can yet reach must be brought down to sweeten the sphere of our labours, be they in the marts of trade, in bank or office, or within the four walls of the home. We can bring down with us and spread the heartening thought expressed by the Buddha thus:

Fear there is not for him whose mind is not burning with desires, and which, having risen above likes and dislikes, is serene. He is awakened.

Looking upon his body to be fragile as an earthen jar, valuing his mind as a firm fortress, let a man fight Mara with the sword of wisdom. Let him guard what he has gained, but let him fight on. (*Dhammapada*, Verses 39-40)

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THE LARGER VISION

One single thought about the past that thou hast left behind,
will drag thee down...

—*The Voice of the Silence*

SELF-EXAMINATION is an essential part of Theosophical discipline. Correctly executed, it is an examination, conscious and cautious, of the lower self in the light of the Higher Self; but how difficult it is in this, as in other disciplines, to keep without deviation to the road ahead! How easy it is to slip unwittingly and by degrees from the extreme of complacency and sinfulness, even to the opposite extreme of the kind of self-disgust and self-contempt which urges ascetics to torment the body in an effort at expiation!

More than our sins and failings themselves can a preoccupation with them hold us back. Why grieve about the inevitable? By no miracle can our conceits and egotisms, our inadequacies, our weak and faltering powers of exposition, be transformed suddenly. They are part of the raw material with which we must work. In the grand reckoning they matter little, if we never let go the determination that the Work shall go on.

A mother living in the slums gives birth to a child in the midst of squalor. It is beautiful in her eyes, not lined with her cares or dogged by her weariness. However inadequate she may feel herself to be, it is within her power to nourish her child with her love until the independent life within it perhaps blossoms beyond her strength to destroy some of the ugliness which almost overwhelms her.

We labour to bring to birth a child, a truly united international body of students of Theosophy, which shall know a greater strength than ours to overcome the evils of unbrotherliness in the world. Its strength will be derived from its spiritual heredity, not from our personal weaknesses. But it will be a child created, not begotten. It must first be conceived in our imagination as a spiritual entity. No need to live in our sins and failings. However little we may think we share in the life and work of the Masters, however unworthy of Them our own work for Theosophy and its Cause may seem and however feeble our efforts for it may appear, nothing hinders our beginning to live with Them in imagination; nothing hinders our visualization of U.L.T. as a centre of work for Them; nothing hinders our nourishing it with our love.

THE KARMA AND RATIONALE OF PLANETARY INFLUENCES

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, June 1952.]

THE whole Kosmos is governed by natural inherent Law. No cause is without an effect. No effect is without a cause. Both are related to their producer in the One Life that sustains all.

These propositions are simple. They are fundamental. Yet they are extremely difficult of realization by irresponsible human nature. So prevalent are the personal-god idea and its endless ramifications that masses of human beings have come to think that they can either "get away" with some things or throw the blame for consequences on a power or a force, an influence or a circumstance outside themselves. If it is not the whim of a God or the caprice of a Devil that is blamed, then it may be anything from "the enemy" to "the weather." By this pseudo-psychology men deceive themselves and either attempt to dominate others or live in fear. An awakening from this nightmare of a supposedly lawless Universe is required to solve the problems of Life.

Nothing ever just "happens." "Dumb luck" and "blind chance" are terms devoid of meaning. They represent modern superstition, not the acquirement of knowledge.

The greatest of the Ancients inculcated by both symbols and books the absolute necessity for the acquirement of philosophical knowledge, inasmuch as strength or special faculties are useless without it. (W.Q.J, in *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 40-41)

From the point of view of essentials and the great, generally unknown, achievements of the ancients, modern science is endlessly superficial when not destructive; while the childish dogmas of so-called "religion" are absurdly immature. This is so despite the pride in "modern progress" and technological achievement. The great human need is for philosophical education in the eternal verities of Life itself, and a practical working knowledge of the Laws of Nature. Such knowledge attained reveals most effectively by comparison the utter uselessness of panaceas or expediences to accomplish anything worth while.

...the LAW for the birth, growth, and decay of everything in Kosmos, from the Sun to the glow-worm in the grass, is ONE. It is an everlasting work of perfection with every new appearance, but the Substance-

Matter and Forces are all one and the same. (*S.D.*, I, 145)

The would-be astrologer who attributes everything to the influence of the stars, as if a man were born with a stereotyped destiny and no free-will or power to choose, is just as absurd as the materialist who blindly labels anything and everything astrological as so much "hokum." This he does even in the face of his own admission that the vital power of the Sun sustains life on Earth. Theosophical teachings, however, are clear on the subject.

Science...has not yet learned to look outside of this ball of dirt upon which we live, and its heavy atmosphere, for the hidden influences which are affecting us day by day, and even minute by minute. But the ancients, whose "ignorance" is assumed...fully realized the fact that the reciprocal relations between the planetary bodies is as perfect as those between the corpuscles of the blood, which float in a common fluid; and that each one is affected by the combined influences of all the rest, as each in its turn affects each of the others. As the planets differ in size, distance, and activity, so differ in intensity their impulses upon the ether or astral light, and the magnetic and other subtile forces radiated by them in certain aspects of the heavens. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 275)

The rationale of planetary influences is plainly intimated in this passage. How does the Law of Karma operate in such case? "There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it or feel its effects" (First Aphorism on Karma). On the other hand, Egos who have no Karmic connection with an influence cannot be affected thereby any more than rain can wet a duck. In other words, the nature and consequences of any sort of Karma are determined by the being or beings who make it and feel its effects. Thus the Law is impartial and just. "We may sometimes appear to reap the effects of the actions of others, but this is only apparent. In point of fact it is our own action." Similarly, the Karma of the Earth is made by the beings in and on it. No starry influence can affect the Earth or any being thereon except in accordance with this immutable and eternal Law.

Speaking of the seven terrestrial *pralayas* that occur during this Round of evolution, *The Secret Doctrine* observes:

It is a *law* which acts at its appointed time, and not at all blindly, as science may think, but in strict accordance and harmony with *Karmic* law. In Occultism this inexorable law is referred to as "the great

ADJUSTER." (*S.D.*, II, 329)

In a talk on "Planetary Influences" Robert Crosbie explained in a very simple way:

The Sun shines on all the planets, but the effects received differ for each planet according to the conditions presented....

The Moon, the nearest planet to us, influences us physically, astrally and psychically, for of like nature are the forces in the Moon....

We are influenced by other planets just as we are influenced by other people in our daily walks in life....According to our attitude, and according to our understanding that all things material and physical evolve from and are ruled by the spiritual, will we—the real Thinkers—receive the effect of any planet....

If we have made up our minds not to be so influenced, then we cannot be: we simply do not follow those tendencies in ourselves which we have discovered to be wrong. So, we make another kind of birth possible. (*THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*, October 1959)

True astrology depicts what H.P.B. has referred to as "the grand panorama of the ever periodically recurring Law" (*S.D.*, I, 269). This is vastly different from the merely personal and materialistic nonsense that too often passes in its name. Theosophy shows genuine astrology to be the soul and spirit of astronomy (*S.D.*, I, 645) and in the same relation to astronomy as psychology is to exact physiology (*I.U.*, I, 259). "Humanity and the *stars* are bound together indissolubly, because of the *intelligences* that rule the latter." (*S.D.*, II, 352)

Therefore, the *sidereal* "prophecies" of the zodiac, as they are called by Christian mystics, never point to any one particular event, however solemn and sacred it may be for some one portion of humanity, but to ever-recurrent, periodical laws in nature....

Why see in the *Pisces* a direct reference to Christ—one of the several world-reformers, a Saviour but for his direct followers, but only a great and glorious Initiate for all the rest—when that constellation shines as a symbol of all the past, present, and future Spiritual Saviours who dispense light and dispel mental darkness? (*S.D.*, I, 653)

The world physical is a symbol of the world spiritual. To read that symbol with the eye of Spirit is the first requisite for an understanding of true astrology. When physical phenomena are viewed in this light, their hidden meaning and occult significance can be perceived. Mr. Judge,

because of what he was and knew, had a way of throwing out hints now and then for those who could see and take them. That he was a thorough student and knower of *The Secret Doctrine* is shown by such of his writings as *The Ocean of Theosophy* which epitomizes both *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. His "Hidden Hints in the Secret Doctrine" (*U.L.T. Pamphlets Nos. 15 and 16*) reveal not only his thoroughness in study but even more his realization of the subject. One such hint was given in a talk on "Cyclic Impression and Return and Our Evolution" in which he noted that when we look into our *moral character*, we find that "as we have the tides in the ocean, explained as they say by the moon—which in my opinion does not explain it, but of course, being no scientist, my view is not worth much—so in man we have tides..." (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 24*, p. 10)

The meaning of this affirmation and its bit of sarcasm has been misconceived even by some students of Theosophy. It has been imagined that there was a discrepancy between Mr. Judge's observation and certain passages in *The Secret Doctrine* on the moon and tides. The apparent discrepancy is the result of misinterpretation.

If the tides in the ocean were caused by the attraction of the Moon, in the gravitational sense of the term, then there would be only one high tide on the side of the Earth facing the Moon (with due allowance for retardation or time lag). This is not the case. There is also another high tide on the opposite side of the Earth away from the Moon. Modern astronomy and geology presume to explain this by centrifugal force and an angular component of the force of gravitation. Since the centrifugal force of rotation is exerted equally all the way around the circle of the Earth, and gravitation is considered as acting at the centre of gravity or mass, this is no explanation at all.

...there is no *gravitation* in the Newtonian sense, but only magnetic attraction and repulsion... (*I.U.*, I, 271)

Gravitation is only half of a law. The Oriental sage admits gravity, if one wishes to adopt that term; but the real term is attraction, the other half of the law being expressed by the word repulsion, and both being governed by the great laws of electrical force. (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, Ch. XVI, p. 145)

Can we not conceive from this that, as in the case of heat induced *in the Earth* by the Sun, according to the explanation of General Pleasonton (*I.U.*, I, 272), so the dual forces of attraction and repulsion

may be induced in the Earth "by the great laws of electrical force"? This, of course, requires that we understand attraction and repulsion to be explained somewhat differently in Theosophy from modern science. Attraction and repulsion are not a mere pull and push. They are caused by electrical and magnetic polarities induced in whatever exhibits them. Even a magnet cannot attract anything but that in which magnetism can be induced. The bit of iron attracted to the magnet is so by virtue of its becoming temporarily a magnet. When this magnetization is made "permanent," and the poles are reversed in their position relative to the first magnet, then there is repulsion instead of attraction between them. A similar dual force is exerted in the case of the tides, for there is more than one kind of magnetism.

"The sun, planets, stars, and nebulae are all magnets" (*I.U.*, I, 272). The Earth is a magnet (*Ibid.*, I, 282). "The sun, moon, planets, and stars...are highly magnetic; but they have become so by induction from living in the universal magnetic fluid—the Spiritual light" (*Ibid.*, I, 209). Can science explain "why the tides follow the moon in her circling motion"? (*Ibid.*, I, 273). The fact is that modern science still cannot demonstrate even so familiar a phenomenon as this.

The moon is far older than the Earth...it is the latter which owes its being to the former, however astronomy and geology may explain the fact. Hence, the tides and the attraction to the Moon, as shown by the liquid portion of the Globe ever striving to raise itself towards its parent. This is the meaning of the sentence that "the Mother-Water arose and disappeared in the Moon, which had lifted her, which had given her birth." (*S.D.*, II, 64)

By appearances only, this may seem to be a flat contradiction of Mr. Judge's statement regarding the tides and the Moon. It is not. Since there are two high tides on opposite sides of the Earth, both toward and away from the visible Moon, and two low tides between, also opposite each other, what can be meant by "attraction to the Moon"?

The Moon is virtually a dead planet whose inner "principles" have reincarnated here in *the Earth*. Therefore, it is in the Lunar nature of *the Earth* that the opposite forces of attraction and repulsion, ebb and flow, are generated or induced. How is this possible? "By the radiant light of the universal magnetic ocean, whose electric waves bind the cosmos together, and in their ceaseless motion penetrate every atom and molecule of the boundless creation..." (*I.U.*, I, 282)

In his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* (Ch. I, pp. 31-32), Mr. Judge explained:

There is in nature a law that operates in every department whether moral or physical, and which may now be called that of undulation and then that of inhibition; while at other times it reappears as vibration, and still again as attraction and repulsion, but all these changes are only apparent because at bottom it is the same. Among vegetables it causes the sap to flow up the tree in one way and will not permit it to return in the same direction. In our own blood circulation we find the blood propelled from the heart, and that nature has provided little valves which will not permit it to return to the heart by the way it came, but by the way provided. Medical and anatomical science are not quite sure what it is that causes the blood to pass these valves; whether it is pressure from behind communicated by the heart, or the pressure by atmosphere from without which gently squeezes, as it were, the blood upon its way. But the Occultist does not find himself limited by these empirical deductions. He goes at once to the centre and declares that the impulse is from the heart and that that organ receives its impulse from the great astral heart or the Akasa, which has been said by all mystics to have a double motion, or alternate vibration—the systole and diastole of nature.

All of the foregoing observations have tremendous significance when applied to metaphysical Nature—to the heart and soul of the Universe and Man. As the magnet can attract (or repel) only that in which magnetism can be induced, so we can influence or be influenced only by similitudes of nature. If astronomy can observe the living relationships of the visible Universe, astrology gives them soul-meaning. Logical, just and impersonally wise is the Law of Karma. A truer realization of this Law in all departments of Nature can enable men to live more wisely as brothers.

ADVERSITY introduces a man to himself.

—ANONYMOUS

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The diversity of life on earth is "one of nature's great riddles," observes Prof. Josef H. Reichholf, who teaches at the University of Munich, has authored many books, and has as his main fields of research evolutionary biology and tropical ecology. In his article on "Biodiversity" (*Universitas*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 1994), he discusses why there are so many different species on earth, whether species diversity is an accident or is purposive, and who has a say in "nature's household." Charles Darwin offered the theory of mutation and selection; for Ernst Mayr the isolation of small populations was the precondition for species formation. Reichholf asserts that even the joint interaction of mutation, selection and isolation does not explain the subdivision of species and the immense biological diversity.

Biologists estimate that there are 20 to 80 million species of plants and animals. The exact numbers are not known, for methods of determining them are still too imprecise. That such a strikingly great variety of species should have developed by accident is not very likely, Reichholf admits. What is a matter of concern is that more species are disappearing from the earth each day than new ones are uncovered. There are far more species in the tropics than in other regions, and with the continuing destruction of the tropical forests for purposes of industrialization and intensive exploitation of their produce, the greater portion of the earth's biological richness is being destroyed—an irretrievable loss the long-term consequences of which still remain to be felt in their entirety.

How and why did the rich variety of species come about in the first place? [asks Reichholf]. From the answer to the question, we should be able to infer strategies for preserving the diversity of species....In the tropics, particularly in the constantly damp tropical rain forests, the variety of life reaches its climax. Favourable environmental conditions have enabled life to develop in the most multifarious way. Animals and plants developed the most fantastic forms and adaptations: life in the tropics "luxuriates."....

In the tropics, many species have only very restricted areas of distribution....In these areas they occur at low abundances. That is why one notices so little of the rich variety of species during a short visit to the tropical forest: most species are rare to extremely rare!...The "ecological deprivation of the tropics," as the Freiburg ecogeographer

Wolfgang Weischet put it, is the deeper cause for the rich diversity of species. For many millions of years, untold species of insects and other animals, but also such other bird groups as hummingbirds, have adapted to shortages in the tropical rain forests by forming new species....

Biodiversity comes about from diversity of the information stored in the genetic material, the genome....In insects, genetic variety becomes most clearly visible in the differentiation of species. In vertebrates, matters are clearly different, especially in the most advanced higher vertebrates. Specific differences are no longer the strongest concern; far more important are apparently the differences of performance potential. Their ties to the particular given conditions of the environment are far weaker than with insects. Whereas many of the latter species feed specifically on certain plants, often even only on definite portions of these plants, higher vertebrates such as birds prove to be much less dependent on specialized niches....Even more adaptive are mammals, and of these, man takes absolute first place in this regard. He has emancipated himself almost completely from the constraints of the environmental conditions....We have preserved the biodiversity of our genome within one species and have not disintegrated into a variety of different mutually exclusive species.

H.P.B. stated that "to draw any analogy between the highly metaphysical teaching" of the Secret Doctrine and modern theories of physical evolution "would, in itself, seem rather a hopeless task." For, the esoteric teaching is that it is an invisible intelligence *outside* the vast multiplicity of forms which has guided the differentiation and evolution of species in the lower kingdoms of nature. The process of differentiation of species is explained by Mr. Judge in a succinct manner in *The Ocean of Theosophy* (pp. 139-141):

As man came to this globe from another planet, though of course then a being of very great power before being completely enmeshed in matter, so the lower kingdoms came likewise in germ and type from other planets....The Egos in these lower kingdoms could not finish their evolution in the preceding globe-chain before its dissolution, and coming to this they go forward age after age, gradually approaching nearer the man stage....The general forms of the various kingdoms being so brought over, we have next to consider how the differentiation of animal and other lower species began and was carried on.

This is the point where intelligent aid and interference from a mind or mass of minds is absolutely necessary. Such aid and interference was and is the fact, for Nature unaided cannot do the work right. But I do not

mean that God or angel interferes and aids. It is Man who does this. Not the man of the day, weak and ignorant as he is, but great souls, high and holy men of immense power, knowledge and wisdom.... Various names have been given to these beings now removed from our plane. They are the *Dhyanis*, the Creators, the Guides, the Great Spirits, and so on by many titles. In theosophical literature they are called the *Dhyanis*.

By methods known to themselves and to the Great Lodge they work on the forms so brought over, and by adding here, taking away there, and often altering, they gradually transform by such alteration and addition the kingdoms of nature as well as the gradually forming gross body of man. This process is carried on chiefly in the purely astral period preceding the gross physical stage, as the impulses thus given will surely carry themselves forward through the succeeding times. When the midway point of evolution is reached the species emerge on to the present stage and not showing the connection to the eye of man nor to our instruments.... At this spot [the midway point] the wisdom of the Masters comes in to show that back of this is the astral region of ancient evolution, where were the root-types in which the *Dhyanis* began the evolution by alteration and addition which resulted in the differentiation afterwards on this gross plane into the various families, species and genera.

On the eve of the United-Nations-sponsored international conference on population and development in Cairo, Aditi Kapoor looks at some questions that need to be asked and impressions that require to be altered (*The Sunday Review*, August 21). Is over-population a real problem, as the underdeveloped countries are being told by the industrialized world? Or does the problem lie in the development pattern set by the industrialized countries and copied by the third world?

India adopted a national family planning policy way back in 1951. Even today, bringing down the growth rate of population is one of the priority objectives.

The recently published *UN 1994 World Economic and Social Survey*, authored by economists and not demographers, says that the world is not running out of resources. It points to considerable errors in long-term population forecasts and does not support the theory that the growing numbers will be unable to feed themselves. Demolishing another myth, that poverty is the main

cause of environmental degradation, the survey says, "In the next 35 years, it is not the number of people on earth, but rather their production and consumption patterns, that will determine the level of environment degradation. Most of the world's present environment degradation is caused by the developed countries whose population is stagnant."

Family-planning methods in India and other third-world countries have focused almost exclusively on women. This is regrettable, says Aditi Kapoor, for,

umpteenth studies have shown how miserably inadequate and dangerous family planning services are for women. Yet, a woman and her health are viewed only in the context of motherhood. Says Ms. Saroj Pachauri, health expert at the Ford Foundation: "The target of woman in her reproductive role has taken precedence over the woman as an individual and over the Maternal and Child Health programme itself. We talk of fertility but not of mortality or morbidity related to fertility."...

And what of women empowerment? In the prevalent scheme of things, even when a woman is educated, it is not to empower her but to make her a better wife, mother or homemaker. It does not ensure changes in the power structures of the patriarchal society where women have equal political, economic and social say in matters which concern them.

It is reiterated by experts that the population problem is not a real threat and has been deliberately blown up in the underdeveloped world. Students of Theosophy know that reproduction is not an uncontrolled biological process following the Malthusian law. Changes in population figures are cyclic and the number of egos belonging to this globe is fixed. As the period between two births is, for the average individual, many times greater than the life period, a fluctuation in the average reincarnation cycle might double the population for a time, or decimate it, with a corresponding swing to the other extreme after some time. History shows that such fluctuations do occur in accordance with cyclic law.

A swing of the cycle too extreme leading to overpopulation is caused by extreme living. The growing and frantic thirst for life, the passion for sensation and the materialism so prevalent in our age cannot but have the effect of drawing back discarnate egos to earth life after a relatively short Devachanic period, producing

overcrowding here. If we have to suffer because of overpopulation it is because of the heat and fervour of the organized animalism termed "modern life."

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's address delivered on May 17, 1994, at the Culture Palace of Moscow State University in Russia, explored the theme of "the magnificent cosmos of the human being." Man, Mr. Ikeda said, has to be master of himself, but he cannot shut himself in a private world of his own. He has "to be present in the world and to make the world present within him." In the words of philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev, "Man is created as a microcosmos and his vocation is to recreate the cosmos within himself." (*Soka Gakkai News*, June 1994)

From ancient times [Mr. Ikeda observed], enormous attention has been devoted to what it is to be human. In spite of that, we cannot say that the mystery has been solved. We do know that the mind and emotions cannot be defined in scientific or economic terms alone. And though the human race has inherited a great spiritual legacy from its past, whether it is truly being utilized in contemporary society, shrouded as we are by the looming clouds of the last years of the century, is doubtful. In these times, if we wish to shed any light on the human condition, it must have a very bright source indeed....

In its wisdom, Mahayana Buddhism discusses three perspectives of transformation in an individual's life and human character development: "awakening," "perfect endowment," and "revitalization."...

First, "awakening" refers to the individual developing an awareness of the fundamental order of life. Buddhism teaches that each of us possesses the Buddha nature, that is, the seed or the potential to develop into an ideal human being....But in our daily lives this Buddha nature is buried deeply under delusions—various false, prejudiced, and mistaken views. Therefore, we must break through the many thick layers of delusions that have covered it and open a door to that Buddha nature, bringing it to full flower. To cast off these delusions is to awaken to the fundamental order inherent in each human being....

Next, the Buddhist principle of "perfect endowment" ensures that the fundamental order to which we awaken is not partial or prejudiced. In other words, the fundamental order must be whole and all-encompassing, equally embracing not only all human beings, but nature and

the universe as well. Perfect endowment, then, refers to the universality and underlying harmony of life as we shift our focus from the level of this planet to the level of the cosmos....This universality is a symbiotic order in which humans, nature and the cosmos coexist, and the microcosm and the macrocosm are fused in a single living entity....

Finally, "revitalization" means cultivating the creative dynamism of life that allows one to be reborn each day and keeps one from growing stagnant or rigid. Such revitalization is another name for self-renewal....

Humanity, facing the imminent arrival of a new century, will play the main role in transforming chaos into harmony. In the coming age, religion and philosophy, culture and government, and the economy as well must focus on that single point.

The most productive approach, Mr. Ikeda concluded, is for each nation to aim at character-building and at producing "fine global citizens."

Humanity today is faced with many global and individual problems which are interconnected either directly or indirectly—problems such as environmental pollution, nuclear weaponry, poverty, rapid increase in population, violence and crime, inflation, serious violations of human rights, family splits, mental tension, growing incidence of diseases like AIDS and cancer, conflicts between ethnic, racial, linguistic and religious communities, etc. Many attempts have been made to solve these problems, but it has been found that every "solution" has in the process created some new problems. The August issue of *Purity* suggests the missing element in our solutions:

Man's response to these problems generally emanates from his knowledge of some academic discipline, and is termed as economic, political, social, legal, technological, militaristic or diplomatic response....An analysis of human action, in general, would suggest that our response is invariably based on our belief system. There is no person, educated and cultured or rustic and unlettered, who does not have a set of beliefs which serve as the springboard for his behaviour and actions. Our belief system includes in it our chosen goal and our role model. Our values also emerge from our belief system. They all determine our perception and interpretation of a given situation and form our outlook and attitudes and, finally, lead to our response or action.

At present, our outlook, our values, our attitudes and our actions are

often prompted by the belief system that is built from our knowledge of science and technology and other disciplines such as economics, politics, etc., and therefore our response is mainly materialistic, secular, mundane or "body-conscious." Our belief system does not have moral and spiritual strength. Our motives, goals and efforts are coloured by merely worldly or material considerations and immediate concerns. They neglect the well-being of the soul to attain a short-lived, pleasurable, sensual experience....

The Spiritual Response is a blend of such benign values as universal love, goodwill, co-operation, concern for the well-being of the whole family of humankind based on the constant and living awareness that we are souls and children of one God and are divine in our nature and origin. Without this kind of Spiritual Response, no problem, whether you call it political, economic, ethnic or by any other name, can be solved....

Clearly, the solutions emanating from a Spiritual Response do not cost anything, they do not leave any problem behind them and they enhance the quality of life. In these solutions, no negativity is involved.

Dream researchers are now of the view that "for some types of problem-solving, one should consider not only 'sleeping on it,' as common wisdom would have it, but perhaps 'dreaming on it' as well." ("News from the World of Science," *Reader's Digest*, Indian ed., August 1994)

A study by Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science goes to show that dreaming helps people memorize new skills. Using test subjects, the researchers found that learning a new skill continues for hours or even days after a training session ends, and is "imprinted" in the person's memory while dreaming. Subjects whose dream stage of sleep was disturbed by the ringing of loud bells were less likely to acquire any new skills based on information received before sleep. The conclusion is drawn that though learning and memorizing occur simultaneously during waking hours, in the dream state, when no new images are introduced to the brain, it focuses primarily on memorization.

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