

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### KEEPERS OF THE FLAME

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There is a deep philosophy underlying the earliest worship in the world, that of the Sun and of Fire. Of all the Elements known to physical science, Fire is the one that has ever eluded definite analysis....What says the esoteric teaching with regard to fire? "Fire," it says, "is the most perfect and unadulterated reflection, in Heaven as on Earth, of the ONE FLAME. It is Life and Death, the origin and the end of every material thing. It is divine 'SUBSTANCE.' " ...The Rosicrucians, among all the mystics and Kabalists, were those who defined Fire in the right and most correct way. Procure a sixpenny lamp, keep it only supplied with oil, and you will be able to light at its flame the lamps, candles, and fires of the whole globe without diminishing that flame. If the Deity, the radical One, is eternal and an infinite substance...and never consumed, then it does not seem reasonable that the Occult teaching should be held as unphilosophical when it says: "Thus were the Arupa and Rupa worlds formed: from ONE light seven lights; from each of the seven, seven times seven," etc., etc.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 120-22

IN one of his letters Mr. Judge addressed his correspondent as "holder of the flame." "Holder of the flame" or "keeper of the flame"—each one can ask himself if either term applies to him.

In "A Curious Tale," published by Mr. Judge under his pen-

name of Bryan Kinnavan in the December 1888 issue of *The Path*, he told how a young acolyte in ancient Ireland had allowed a fire, that should have burned eternally on its tall tower, to languish and then die, with fateful consequences. The tower was an old one, one of several in Killarney. It was

used by the immediate descendants of the White Magicians who settled on Ireland when England's Isle had not arisen from the sea. When the great Masters had to go away, strict injunctions were left that no fires on these towers were to go out, and the warning was also given that, if the duties of life were neglected, if charity, duty, and virtue were forgotten, the power to keep these fires alive would gradually disappear. The decadence of the virtues would coincide with the failure of the fires, and this, the last tower, guarded by an old and a young man, would be the last to fail, and that even it could save the rest if its watchers were faithful.

The youth who shared the trust with the old man had recognized the seriousness of his responsibility, for he alone of all the young disciples was permitted to help the old man in the task. He had come late that evening to relieve his elder, and the latter, feeling a strange misgiving as he turned over the charge to the youth, had warned him solemnly not to let the fire go out. Nevertheless he was diverted from his watch at the crucial moment by being told that the fires on the other towers were dying out. Rushing in dismay to the parapet to see if this was true, he let his own fire die.

The other fires indeed had failed, but his could have burned on, bearing eloquent but silent witness to the high souls who first had kindled it, and to their teachings. A long line of faithful tenders of the flame had kept it burning down the intervening years, a gleam in the increasing darkness of the age—a line which ended with his momentary lapse. A small cause to produce calamitous effects? It was betrayal of a trust accepted, whatever the extenuating circumstances.

None can appreciate better than our Zoroastrian brothers the seriousness of allowing a sacred flame to expire; these know how zealously the flame in their own temples is tended night and day.

But everyone who reads "A Curious Tale" must feel on his own pulses the anguish and the sickening dread felt by the young attendant who, despite his good intentions, had proved faithless to his trust.

Each one associated with the Theosophical Movement shares the responsibility for guarding its sacred flame. Madame Blavatsky wrote in a letter quoted in "She Being Dead Yet Speaketh":

Have you so little faith as to need constant stimulus, as a dying fire needs fuel!...Would you let the nucleus of a splendid Society die under your hands like a sick man under the hands of a quack? (*She Being Dead Yet Speaketh*, p. 11)

The United Lodge of Theosophists makes no demands on its Associates for any help in money, time or work to keep its beacon light of pure Theosophy alight, its Lodge doors open several times a week for all to come who will; while accepting gladly from all such freely offered help as each may wish to give. It recognizes that the way of progress in the human kingdom is by self-induced and self-devised efforts. This policy seems to be in line also with the Master's words: "...nor are we especially anxious to have anyone work for us except with entire spontaneity" and that "in the fields of Theosophy *none is held to weed out a larger plot of ground than his strength and capacity will permit him.*" It is left to each to "cast the lot...into the lap of Justice," fully confident that its response will be absolutely true.

In joining the U.L.T., each, in fact, specifically disclaims on the Associate's card any responsibility other than that which he himself determines. But who that has experienced the illuminating and regenerating power of pure Theosophy in his own life can fail in pity for the multitudes who grope in darkness?

There is no privilege, self-earned though it be, that does not carry its implied responsibility. In proportion to what Theosophy means to us should be our sense of obligation to keep its life-giving teachings accessible to all in their pristine purity. There is encouragement for those who feel that what they have to give is limited—and who must not feel that, in contrast with the shoreless

ocean of immemorial wisdom? Those who feel that they need help themselves and fear to offer help to others can take comfort in Mr. Judge's reassurance:

It is not high learning that is needed, but solely devotion to humanity, faith in Masters, in the Higher Self, a comprehension of the fundamental truths of Theosophy and a little, only a little, sincere attempt to present those fundamental truths to a people who are in desperate need of them. That attempt should be continuous. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 104)

There can be few students of Theosophy so ill-grounded in its Teachings that they cannot correct flagrant misrepresentations of them; none who cannot point out to inquirers where its light shines forth. And every student who applies Theosophy in his own life teaches it, however silently, while keeping alive in his own heart the flame of aspiration and devotion kindled by contact with its message or with another who exemplified the Teachings in his own life. The flame is passed thus from a blazing torch to torches yet unkindled.

We are assured that the feeblest glimmer of the true Tathagata Light within any human being is noted by the gracious Masters and that it is Their law to approach the one in whom it shines, illuminating the surrounding darkness, though so far but at candle strength. Those who show the gleam become Their special care, not for their own sake but as potential servants of the race and sharers in Their labours for the common good.

The task of the aspirant-devotee is to prepare an altar in his heart and sacrifice thereon his selfish aims and passions, sparing none. His task also to lay with care the fuel—knowledge of the Teachings, gratitude to Those who place that knowledge within the reach of men, concern for all who tread their way in darkness. It is the law that when the task is done in appreciable measure, and all made ready for the quickening flame, no man shall wait in vain.

Few men can say what hour the altar fire bursts into blaze within; but by its effects its presence may be known. He in whom it is alight finds his mind-understanding of the Teachings gradually grow; his gratitude to Those who guard the Truth down the ages flowers in

devotion to Their purposes; his interest in human weal becomes at last a vast and all-embracing love, compassion for the pitiable state of mankind, the Great Orphan, which leaves him no rest but in service.

Not without effort is the prize ours. The fire if left untended may, nay must, go out. Like a candle in the wind that Light flickers in the gusts of emotion. It is quenched by self-seeking like a torch dipped in water. The heart-light must be tended, its flame fed by sacrifice renewed from day to day, and the lower nature purified until the light within shines forth, lighting the way for all, and kindling ready hearts to fervent flame.

What an inestimable blessing to have rest upon oneself, were it but for a moment, "the patient, spiritual eyes which bring peace and enlightenment"! To retain Their benignant notice, however, we must with altruistic motive study, apply and share, trying to make ourselves fit channels through which Their help can flow. The Masters have preserved the Teachings down the ages, but we can help to spread them in the world today. Is it not obvious that if we would know the Masters we should study Their philosophy? And how can we serve Them better than by serving Their humanity and trying to make ourselves ever better able to do so? By effort along those lines we can become capable of "such action...as makes of each one a centre for good, a force that makes 'for righteousness,' and that is guided by wisdom," and so become true keepers of the flame.

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REALITY is One. The levels are not so many drawers in a chest, or even so many skins of an onion; they are levels of experience, and each level is an experience of the whole but in a given manner or with a given emphasis of attention.

—SRI KRISHNA PREM in *Man, the Measure of All Things*

## THEOSOPHY ON KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

IN the *Mundaka Upanishad*, when Sage Angiras is asked, "Sire, through what knowledge does everything become known?", the Sage replies that "there are two kinds of knowledge to be acquired, the higher (*para*) and the lower (*apara*). The lower is composed of the four Vedas, *Rig, Yajur, Sama* and *Atharva*; and pronunciation; ritual; grammar; etymology; prosody; astrology. The higher knowledge is that by which the Imperishable, *Akshara*, is attained."

So there is ordinary knowledge on the one hand, and wisdom on the other. In fact, the human mind is capable of acquiring two kinds of knowledge, depending on which of its two modes of consciousness is more active, the rational or the intuitive. Rational knowledge, which is relative knowledge, is derived from the experience we have with objects, events, etc., which we come across in our everyday life. It belongs to the realm of the intellect, and its function is to compare, measure, categorise and analyse.

As against this, there is Absolute Knowledge or Wisdom. H.P.B. says in her article "The Dual Aspect of Wisdom":

Esoterically then, Job's statement ["With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding"] must read: "With the Ancient (man's Higher Ego) is Wisdom, and in the length of days (or the number of its reincarnations) is understanding." No man can learn true and final Wisdom in one birth. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 32, p. 5*)

Thus Wisdom is something that we have potentially, but its realization would take us many, many lives. So the Wisdom which comes "from above," *i.e.*, from our higher nature, is the only true Knowledge. But then naturally the question arises, What is the use of acquiring lower knowledge, or *apara vidya*? The answer is:

The seeds of Wisdom cannot sprout and grow in airless space. To live and reap experience, the mind needs breadth and depth and points to draw it towards the Diamond Soul. (*The Voice of the Silence, p. 28*)

For our potentialities to flower forth, life experiences are

necessary. Life experiences have to be reaped. Many events take place in our lives, but an event becomes an experience if it brings about a change in us. In Sanskrit, an experience is called *anubhava*, i.e., becoming something different, as a sequel to some event. To extract the essence from our experiences, the mind needs breadth.

*Breadth* of mind means, in one sense, a large scope of awareness. We must try to be aware of things around us. It means acquiring non-parochial views. We must be able to welcome truth from whatever quarter it comes. One must not say, "How can I read the Bible, as I am a Hindu?" Breadth of mind comes from the reading of good books. In the olden days, there were learned men who were called wandering scholars, as they used to move from city to city gathering knowledge. We must let our minds absorb universal ideas through the reading of ennobling literature, sacred texts, etc. We must get more and more knowledge, but this does not mean knowing various unconnected facts. *Depth* of mind comes from seeing the details of a subject, and examining the ramifications.

Acquiring knowledge might be useful at times, but it must be knowledge with understanding. A tape recorder can record and play back a whole lecture on advanced physics, but it understands nothing; whereas a student even of elementary physics will get something out of it. Sometimes our minds work like mere registers or recorders. All worldly knowledge is head-learning or "Eye Doctrine." It only produces misguided pride. It does not make a person more loving and kind, or help him discriminate between good and evil.

Purely rational knowledge has its limitations. Our knowledge of things is limited by our perceptive faculties. We know an object in terms of our sense perceptions; e.g., a blind person may know a rose only by its smell; a scientist may know even its chemical composition; but the rose as we see it is not identical with the rose as it is in itself. So Kant said that there is knowledge of the "thing-in-itself." That is Absolute Knowledge.

Unfortunately, by knowledge we mean that which we have acquired through our senses. According to science, it is not possible to know the constituents and properties of plants and minerals

without using chemical and mechanical processes; or know the thoughts and feelings of people till they express them in words or in some other manner. As against this, we are told in *The Voice of the Silence* that when the *Buddhi* in man is activated, he becomes a "Walker of the Sky," *i.e.*, he is able to overcome physical obstacles, gets the powers of clairvoyance and clairaudience, "hears the language of the Devas and comprehends it, and perceives what is passing in the mind of the ant" (p. 10 fn.). This is done by fully identifying one's mind with the object or subject one is trying to understand. So a Yogi sends out his consciousness to follow the pattern of some other consciousness. Thus it is that Seers can "penetrate into the very kernel of matter, and record the 'soul of things.' "

Relative knowledge is acquired by ratiocination; but reasoning is a laborious process, and if the premises are wrong, the conclusions too will be incorrect. We cannot go very far if rational knowledge is not supplemented by intuition or insight. This is seen in many of the scientific discoveries. As a result of intuition, one is able to get a complete picture of the field of one's inquiry. Reasoning is like sitting in a boat, from where one can get a partial view of what is at the left or at the right, in front or behind, whereas intuition is like looking down from an aeroplane. At our level too this insight comes into play when, for instance, we see as it were in a flash the solution to a problem that had long been bothering us, or remember suddenly the name of a person or of a place that we were long trying to recall. At these moments there is a temporary conjunction of our mind with *Buddhi*. There is no past, present and future as far as our higher nature is concerned. In the case of great beings whom we call wise men, there is a permanent conjunction of *Buddhi* and *Manas*. That is why we are told, "Blend thy Mind and Soul." So also, besides breadth and depth, the mind needs "points to draw it towards the Diamond Soul."

These "points" are the heart qualities of the mind. Our thinking must not be cold, but compassionate; so also our heart feeling must be enlightened, not just guided by emotions. We tend to think in compartments. We need to cultivate impersonality in our thoughts and feelings. Just as, besides food and water, our body needs sleep

as well, in the same way, besides the everyday experiences which are like raw materials, we need to develop qualities like love, goodness, altruism, etc. Our civilization does not regard morality as a vital factor. As H.P.B. writes in "The Dual Aspect of Wisdom":

Our age, we say, is inferior in Wisdom to any other, because it professes, more visibly every day, *contempt for truth and justice, without which there can be no Wisdom*. Because our civilization, built up of shams and appearances, is at best like a beautiful green morass, a bog, spread over a deadly quagmire. Because this century of culture and worship of matter, while offering prizes and premiums for every "*best thing*" under the Sun, from the biggest baby and the largest orchid down to the strongest pugilist and the fattest pig, has no encouragement to offer to morality; no prize to give for any moral virtue.

Again, in *Vernal Blooms* Mr. Judge writes:

Every impulse from above, every prompting of the Divine within, should meet at once with a hearty welcome and response. If you feel as if something urged you to visit some sick or afflicted neighbour or friend, obey the suggestion without delay....If some pathetic story of suffering has moved you, act on the emotion while your cheeks are still wet with tears. In short, put yourself at once in line with the Divine ways, in harmony with the Divine laws. More light, more wisdom, more spirituality must necessarily come to one thus prepared, thus expectant. (p. 32)

Conceptual knowledge is of little use. A blind person may know all about the sky's blueness, another person may know all about toothache, conceptually. But so long as one has not *seen* the blueness or *felt* the toothache, this knowledge is inadequate. So also in matters spiritual we achieve very little by somebody's telling us what the spiritual life is. We ourselves have to live it. Nor will any amount of someone's telling us about faith and love help us; we ourselves have to experience faith and love in our life to know what they are.

To gain wisdom, one has to be prepared to face hardships, to undergo the required discipline. As H.P.B. writes:

There was a time when the acquirement of Divine Wisdom (*Sapientia*) required the sacrifice and devotion of a man's whole life. It depended on such things as the purity of the candidate's motives, on his fearlessness and independence of spirit; but now, to receive a patent for wisdom and adeptship requires only unblushing impudence. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 32*, p. 6)

One needs to practise the spiritual teachings and so change the quality of one's mind that it can become porous to the influx from above. It means tearing oneself away from one's ordinary ways of living. We may then ask ourselves, Is this effort worth while? In the beginning, we may not feel convinced that we need to give up all our familiar ways to get a lasting benefit. It is like telling a child to give away the doll she is playing with, in exchange for a bigger and better toy. No amount of description of that new toy will induce her to let go of her favourite doll. Likewise, attachment to things familiar is so strong for most people that they are loath to let go of them, and thus miss their chance for a better life.

Once we acquire wisdom, we need to be humble. As *The Voice of the Silence* says, "Be humble, if thou would'st attain to Wisdom. Be humbler still, when Wisdom thou hast mastered." (p. 41). Pride and Wisdom do not go hand in hand. When the river enters the ocean, the level of the ocean does not rise; it does not overflow. Our higher nature is like the ocean. If we have acquired one or two college degrees, or mastered one or two skills, it is like a stream or two running into the ocean, and this is not going to make any perceptible change in the ocean level. As compared to the wisdom stored in our higher nature, our achievements are nothing. Some people have realized this fact. Newton, for instance, even with all his knowledge, had the humility to say:

I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

When one becomes aware of the larger context, humility comes naturally.

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## THE INWARD PATH

THOSE who work for Theosophy and strive to carry out Masters' Original Programme need discrimination. They are the "few" who make no claims, who demand no recognition, and upon whose quiet, silent, unremitting, sacrificial work U.L.T. and the wider work of the Theosophical Movement depend. The responsibility is already theirs.

Aspirants, with hearts and minds fired by the soul-satisfying and wise implications of the Message of Theosophy, dedicate themselves and their lives upon the altar of Service and become devotees, disciples. They constitute themselves "companions"—labourers for the salvation of their fellow men. They assume responsibilities.

Discrimination and responsibility form a pair. Discrimination is of the heart—Buddhi; wise, compassionate and ever steady, it focuses Divine insight upon all the events of life. Responsibility is of the mind—Manas; intelligent and querying, it is an enthusiastic and creative capacity that, ever active, seeks the Law in all things and motivates harmonious free will in each.

It is necessary that discrimination be intelligent and responsibility be compassionate. The intelligent hearts and generous minds of associates, aspirants, devotees, form the United Lodge of pupil-teachers. Silent and unknown, now in the light of publicity, then in the shade of solitude and secrecy, they "keep the link unbroken." They live and throb, united and responsive to the great heart of the Original Programme, the Original Impulse, the "single will" of the Great Masters.

*Unity, study and work* are their watchwords. Ever imbued with a sense of responsibility, one should hold fast to the ideal and to one's colleagues and co-workers. One requires calm discrimination when difficult situations arise or precipitations descend. One needs devotion to the Vision of the Higher Self and to the Lodge of Masters, who form the Bridge. Fearless discrimination and disinterested responsibility make of pride and self-regard bond-maidens to one-pointed devotion.

U.L.T. is an association of volunteers. Its meetings, its

publications, its library, are meant for all, without distinction. Similarity of aim, purpose and teaching unites its Associates. When a U.L.T. Associate, anywhere, gives up his individual responsibility of independent devotion to the Cause of Theosophy, then will he have proved false to the principles U.L.T. is trying to uphold. The failure of an individual student may influence and drag others along with him. This is a great responsibility. We should all make sure that our discrimination is cultivated and our knowledge made more complete, or we shall unconsciously fail in our responsibility.

The *principles* enshrined in the idea of U.L.T. cannot fail in this cycle, any more than the Theosophy of the Ancients can be eclipsed. Both can be obscured by personal opinions and interested assertions. The true student, who knows and lives by his principles, who builds his spiritual stamina by study, who respects the Higher Self in him and in all beings, will not be led away from his responsibility or his discrimination. "Vigilance is the path to Life Eternal. Thoughtlessness is the path to death. The reflecting vigilant die not. The heedless are already dead." (*The Dhammapada*, verse 21)

There should be no place in us for fear. Do we not trust Karma? Is not reincarnation rightly called the doctrine of hope? Is the heart, the spiritual "I," so puny, so remote, so powerless, that the fog of mind-feelings reduces its effluence to a dim glow, or have we allowed the dense clouds of our own personal doubts, fears and selfish desires to obscure it? U.L.T. is not concerned with outer observances, with mere appearances, but seeks to induce inner, moral reform. Each Associate should look on it as a training school, in which his lower mind-self is the pupil. No one has, therefore, the right to tell others what to do or not to do. There are no rights. Each has duties, and the chief of these is to do unto others that which we expect them to do to us. This implies the building of friendliness and tolerance and an active exemplification of true Brotherhood in daily life.

*The Voice of the Silence* contains numerous statements that are awakeners of heart discrimination. One who desires to discern the Path and to choose his way, between love of life and Nature's

changeless laws, needs to kill in himself the memory of the lower self's past experiences. The ever-present memory of the Higher Self will show us what our weaknesses are, and also provide us with the strength to fight them. This is not always easy. Mr. Judge in *Letters That Have Helped Me* suggests: "To meditate on the Higher Self is difficult. Seek, then, the Bridge—the Masters." No action should be done without first considering that it is being dedicated to the Masters. This thought ought to develop our discrimination.

One may be, intellectually, a good student, but, through non-use of the acquired knowledge (for application is of the heart) he may be keeping the Masters at a distance. Those who look, and wait and wonder if the Master will come and set matters in order, are likely to be disappointed. This is "other-reliance," lack of discrimination. Masters cannot help unless students take responsible hold of the philosophy and use it to work for humanity. Masters promulgate the philosophy so that the discriminative can purify themselves by assuming the responsibility of self-reform.

Theosophical application enables us to embody its vitality and clear our thought-processes. Working with others develops tolerance and solidarity. Responsible and discriminative thoughts and feelings, words and deeds, build Brotherhood. Let each of us ever bear in mind that H.P.B. is the Guru. All that we have, all that we are and all that we know is through her, is because of her sacrifice and labour. We are responsible to her, and, through her, to the Masters who stand behind. "The Masters are watching us all," wrote Mr. Judge to an inquirer. Each one of us can appeal directly to the Master, if we have fulfilled the requisite conditions. If we have no response, then let us look to *our* faults and shortcomings and not presume that They are unaware of our difficulty.

Help comes when it is least expected. Trials are first to be successfully undergone by the associates, the aspirants. The Path of discrimination and of responsibility leads to the Masters. None other does. Mr. Judge tells us to place our reliance on the law of Karma and also states that the Masters are Karma and are Atman itself. "*All is provided for*," he writes in one place. Are warrior-souls, then, to take it easy? If so, they will have abandoned their

responsibilities and will impede the progress of others. Our weapons are discrimination, constant vigilance, wisdom and compassion. These dissolve our errors of pride, of self-gratulation and of false-learning, which spring from the Karma of our past.

Let us then awake, arise and seek to be the *True of Heart*. To such, the Life, the Path, the Discipline, the Guru H.P.B., the Great Mahatmas, the Higher Self, mean everything. The fire of responsibility dissipates the dark clouds of fear, doubt, ignorance and other-reliance. Principles, not personalities, need to be followed. True Self-reliance is, then, within our grasp. The True in the Heart needs no spokesman—it welcomes inquiry. It unites the companions with its universal power, standing in the heart of each. It is quiet, not assuming. Outwardly it is silent, while inwardly chanting the song of daring to fearless pilgrims to the *Ashram* of the Holy Ones. It is friendly, brotherly, united. It is the Great Law, the Atman, the Ishwara. It is permanent, immutable, ever active. It is veiled from us only by the confusions of our lower imaginings, our temporary fancies. We alone can transmute the vapours of passion into the gentle, life-giving rain of compassion, as the higher discrimination points out the reasonable and responsible way of self-sacrifice—the Law Eternal—"for others' sake." Masters need *active* companions. The Brotherhood of Adepts of the "Deathless Race" is patiently waiting and perseveringly watching for those clear-eyed enough to seek and tread the inward Path—and, in spite of faults and failings, to pick themselves up and go on and on and on.

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WORDS of just admonition cannot fail to command a ready assent. But practical reformation is the thing that really matters. I can make nothing of the man who is pleased with advice but will not meditate on it, who assents to admonition, but does not reform.

—CONFUCIUS

## COUNTERACTING KARMA

IN the Aphorisms on Karma, we are told that Karmic effects may be mitigated or counteracted by the thoughts and acts of oneself or of another. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 21*)

H.P.B. states in *The Secret Doctrine* that there is not a misshapen day or a misfortune in our lives but can be traced back to some action of ours in this or in another life.

How can these statements be reconciled? How can the effects of our actions be mitigated or counteracted by ourselves or by another in a universe of Law? If we are responsible for them, then why should we be helped to escape the consequences? In what way is mitigation or counteraction different from forgiveness of sins?

We can gain some light in this difficulty if we grasp that when Karma has ripened we can do nothing to mitigate it; the effects are already being reaped by us and have to be faced with the right attitude. Therefore *The Voice of the Silence* tells us that we should let the ripple of effect run its course. So we can say it is only that Karma which has not ripened that can be mitigated or counteracted.

What does the ripening of Karma mean? Does it mean that the time has been reached when the effect *has* to come, that the circumstances obtaining at a particular time suit the precipitation of the effect? In that case it would seem that the effect comes to us under Law, and counteraction is not possible. In our storehouse of unexpended Karma, are there not actions which can be mitigated or counteracted? If there are, is not this accomplished by other actions of an opposite character? If all Karma is stored together, each new cause we generate must affect the whole. So if we generate more of good Karma it will counteract the stored-up bad Karma.

This can more easily be seen with respect to family, national or racial Karma, for here we have the interaction of all kinds of thoughts and actions, and the thoughts of all combine to make a composite whole. Hence the presence of the Great Ones on our earth, in bodies or as *Nirmanakayas*; and Their ideation and imagination keeps the balance in the world between good and evil. Each one of us, says *The Key to Theosophy*, can by his action "make

it either more difficult or more easy for humanity to attain the next higher plane of being."

What happens to our Karma when we die? What we have done of good, the Ego can assimilate in *Devachan*; and the bad that we have done is left behind, to cling to us again in our next life. Only that Karma manifests in one particular life which is suitable for the new vehicle and the new environment; the rest of the stored-up Karma is left over for future incarnations. Should a person so purify himself that his evil Karma of the past can never find a suitable vehicle or environment to manifest, what happens to it? Is it burnt up, so to say, by the spiritual power gained? If the evil done by us has hurt another being, must we not repay? "You hit me, therefore I hit you," is not the way the Law works, but many causes might converge to produce a cumulative effect; so, may we not pay our debts *before* the Karma ripens?

Truly, as H.P.B. said, the teaching of Karma is the most difficult of all the teachings in our philosophy, and its intricacies are a mystery to all save the true Adepts. We have had it so ingrained in us that we must pay our debts and that there is no escape from consequences, that we have treated this subject in too narrow a fashion. Since all actions start in the mind, the germ or root is there. Wrong actions spring from ignorance. The gaining of knowledge would transform the quality of our actions.

These few thoughts may help us to use the practical lesson to be derived from the teaching of Karma, while remembering that knowledge in time will resolve *all mysteries*.

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FEAR always springs from ignorance.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

## WATCHFULNESS

THE importance of true watchfulness or vigilance in daily life is hardly recognized by ordinary people. Instead of being mindful of themselves and their own activities, people fritter away much of their time and energy watching others and criticizing them. They are also keen to gain some material benefit for themselves. A warrior exercises watchfulness over his opponent's moves and makes it a guiding basis for his own. A businessman is watchful to take advantage over another for extending his own business and making profit, never mind if it brings about the downfall of that other! In playing games, one's aim is to defeat the opponent, for which one has to be alert. But true vigilance is of a different order. It is an essential virtue in the spiritual life because it is a means to overcome one's weaknesses, to cultivate virtues and to build a beautiful character.

With the very first inner awakening to something higher, something nobler than the ordinary humdrum existence, should come the recognition of the necessity for vigilance at every step and at every turn. In the chapter on Vigilance in *The Dhammapada*, Lord Buddha states: "The wise value vigilance as their best treasure." In this civilization of material prosperity and possessions, to consider vigilance as the best treasure might sound ridiculous! But it is really the most precious asset for the one who determines to tread the Path and aspires to gain Soul-Wisdom.

Where shall we exercise vigilance to begin with? First and foremost, on the plane of mind and thought. It is there that the seeds of Karma are sown. It is the mind which makes heaven of hell and hell of heaven. The mind is the source of all pairs of opposites—pleasure and pain, fame and ignominy, etc. All illusions and delusions arise in the mind; so it is necessary to watch it continuously. If it is well guarded, disciplined and trained, the owner of the mind is well fortified. To watch and control the thoughts, to make clean and clear the mirror of the mind, to make it dwell on universal, impersonal, archetypal ideas, are necessary tasks for the thinker and the perceiver within the body. Thus, through vigilance, the

mind is given another direction; from Kama it moves towards Buddhi, and so it becomes a real treasure.

Madame Blavatsky has stated in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 181): "When a thought of good or evil import is begotten in our brain, it draws to it *impulses* of like nature as irresistibly as the magnet attracts iron filings." So forces and lives of a nature akin to our thoughts are drawn to us. It is therefore the mind that needs to be trained, and what better discipline for the mind than that given in the seventeenth discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*! "Serenity of mind, mildness of temper, silence, self-restraint, absolute straightforwardness of conduct, are called mortification of the mind." It should be noted that straightforwardness of conduct is included in the mortifications of the mind. Does it not mean constant vigilance? All sorts of people are contacted throughout the day; they have different temperaments and different characteristics. Are we straightforward with each one of them? Are we straightforward with the high and the low, so called, or in buying and selling? In every sphere of life one has to be watchful to be straightforward. Another important mortification of the mind is silence. Is not the same advice given in *The Voice of the Silence*? "Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master, whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest."

It is necessary from time to time to silence not only the speech but also the mind so as to allow the Divine Voice of the Master to impress and influence it and enable it to reflect the light and the glory of the Eternal and Immortal Life. At present the mind flutters from subject to subject, object to object, without sequence or orderliness; so it is necessary to be deliberate in thinking. One of the Masters has stated:

The human brain is an exhaustless generator of the most refined quality of cosmic force out of the low, brute energy of Nature; and the complete adept has made himself a centre from which irradiate potentialities that beget correlations upon correlations through Aeons of time to come. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 29*)

To achieve this stupendous task, one has to make a humble beginning now and here, by always being vigilant and wakeful and

deliberate in one's thought so as not to drift with the tide but to oar the canoe to its proper destination, the terrace of wisdom and compassion and therefore of spiritual service.

Speech too is very much degraded in our civilization and needs purification through watchfulness. According to Krishna, its mortification consists in "Gentle speech which causes no anxiety, which is truthful and friendly, and diligence in the reading of the Scriptures." It is necessary to note that along with gentle, friendly and truthful speech, diligence in the reading of the Scriptures is emphasized. If the mind dwells on the ideas in the Scriptures, which are the instructions of the great Masters, if they are assimilated to some extent at least, then the *mantramic* phrases would have their beneficent influence and effect, and speech would naturally become gentle, truthful and friendly. It cannot be hypocritical; it cannot hurt others' feelings, nor can it create enemies. Once again this requires constant watchfulness.

Next we come to the performance of deeds. Are all our acts necessary to be performed? Are they for the good of all? Even congenital duties can be performed with a consecrated attitude. When there is thought of self-gain, conflict of duties results. There should be no claim for rights and privileges, only emphasis on duties and responsibilities. Skill in the performance of action is Yoga, says Krishna. When an act is performed with a pure motive, with all self-interest laid aside and because it is necessary to be performed, then it does not bind us in any way but leads us to freedom.

The very first verse of the chapter on Vigilance in *The Dhammapada* states:

Vigilance is the path to Life Eternal. Thoughtlessness is the path to death. The reflecting vigilant die not. The heedless are already dead.

So vigilance or watchfulness leads one from ignorance to wisdom and from death to immortality. Therefore it is necessary to be alert and awake all the time.

The whole world is governed by Law. Law operates in all forms

of Life, in all beings and creatures, and therefore within ourselves. To understand the law of one's own being, to move in terms of that law, to work in accord with the great laws of Nature, we need to be watchful. These words of the Buddha will inspire every aspirant to practise watchfulness, to be earnest in his endeavour and to sustain it at all costs:

Continually grows the glory of that man who is wakeful and mindful, whose deeds are pure, whose acts are deliberate, who is self-controlled and who lives according to Law. (*The Dhammapada*, verse 24)

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## SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM AND THE HUMAN SOUL

[The article reprinted here, in somewhat abridged form, was originally published by H.P.B. in *The Theosophist* for December 1879, under the title "An Old Book and a New One"—the former reflecting the cold negations of science and its soul-destroying sophistry, and the latter assailing scientific orthodoxy and the pretentious arrogance of men who would pull down all that they do not understand, but cannot build up anything to take the place of the wrecked structure.—EDS.]

THE nineteenth century is the century of struggle and strife, *par excellence*; of religious, political, social, and philosophical conflict. The biologists could and would not remain silent witnesses of this memorable crisis. Clad from head to foot in the panoply of exact sciences; hardened in battles against ignorance, superstition and falsehood, they rushed to their places in the ranks of the fighters and, as those having authority, began the work of demolition.

But who destroys ought to rebuild; and *exact* science does nothing of the kind, at least so far as the the question of the highest psychological aspirations of humanity is concerned. Strange to say, yet nevertheless an incontrovertible fact, the duty has fallen upon the daily augmenting body of Spiritualists, to sweep away the mangled debris of the warfare, and rebuild from the ruins of the past something more tangible, more unassailable than the dreamy doctrines of theology. From the first, Spiritualism has fortified its positions by ocular demonstrations, slowly but surely replacing fanciful hypothesis and blind faith with a series of phenomena which, when genuine, invite the crucial tests of the most exacting experimentalists.

It is one of the most curious features of the day, to see science in her double role of the aggressor and the attacked. And it is a sight, indeed, to follow the steady advance of the columns of "infidelity" against the strongholds of the Church, simultaneously with the pushing back of materialism towards its last entrenchments by the Spiritualists. Both the fundamental doctrines of theology, and the cold negations of science, have of late been successfully assailed by

learned and skilful writers. And, it can hardly be denied, that there are strong indications of wavering on the part of both the attacked parties, with an evident disposition to capitulate....

The most recent development of this double conflict is a work which comes just in time to palliate the evil effects of another one which preceded it. We refer to *The Mechanism of Man*, by Mr. Serjeant Cox, following the *Anthropogenie* of Professor Haeckel. The latter had sown wind and reaped the whirlwind; and a furious hurricane it was at one time. The public had begun to look up to the Jena professor as to a new saviour from the "dark superstitions" of the forefathers. Reaction had come. Between the dying infallibility of the Churches, the not over-satisfactory results of Spiritualism, and, for the average masses, far too deep and philosophical researches of Herbert Spencer, Bain, and the great lights of exact Science, the public was hesitating and perplexed. On the one hand, it had a strong, and ever growing desire to follow a progress that went hand in hand with science; but, notwithstanding its late conquests, science finds missing links at every step, dreary blanks in its knowledge, "chasms" on whose brink its votaries shudder, fearing to cross. On the other hand, the absurdly unjust ridicule cast upon the believers in phenomena, held back the general public from personal investigation....

*Anthropogeny* has plunged more minds into a profound materialism than any other book of which we have knowledge. In this famous work of Haeckel's, not only is man refused a soul, but an ancestor is forced upon him, in the shape of a formless, gelatinous *Bathybius Haeckelii*—the protoplasmic root of man—which dwelt in the slime at the bottom of the seas "before the oldest of the fossiliferous rocks were deposited." Having transformed himself, in good time, into a series of interesting animals—some consisting of but one bowel, and others of a single nose (*Monorhinae*), all evolved out of Professor Haeckel's fathomless ingenuity, our genealogical line is led up to, and stops abruptly at the *soulless* man!

We have nothing whatever against the physical side of the theory of evolution, the general theory of which we thoroughly accept ourselves; neither against Haeckel's worms, fishes, mam-

mals, nor, finally, the tailless *anthropoid*—all of which he introduces to fill up the hiatus between ape and man—as our forefathers. No more do we object to his inventing names for them and coupling them with his own. What we object to is the utter unconcern of the Jena professor as to the other side of the theory of evolution: to the evolution of spirit, silently developing and asserting itself more and more with every newly perfected form.

What we again object to is that the ingenious evolutionist not only purposely neglects, but in several places actually sneers at the idea of a spiritual evolution, progressing hand in hand with the physical, though he might have done it as scientifically as he did the rest and—more honestly. He would thereby have missed, perhaps, the untimely praises of the protoplasmic Huxley, but won for his *Anthropogeny* the thanks of the public. *Per se*, the theory of evolution is not new, for every cosmogony—even the Jewish *Genesis*, for him who understands it—has it. And *Manu* who places special creation with periodical revolutions or *Pralayas*, followed, many thousands of years ago, the chain of transformation from the lowest animal to the highest—man, even more comprehensively if less scientifically (in the modern sense of the word) than Haeckel. Had the latter held more to the spirit of the modern discoveries of biology and physiology than to their dead-letter and his own theories, he would have led, perhaps, a new hegira of science separating itself violently from the cold materialism of the age. No one—not even the staunchest apostle of Positivism—will deny that the more we study the organisms of the animal world, and assure ourselves that the organ of all psychical manifestation is the nervous system, the more we find the necessity of plunging deeper into the metaphysical world of psychology, beyond the boundary line hitherto marked for us by the materialists. The line of demarcation between the two modes of life of the vegetable and animal worlds is yet *terra incognita* for every naturalist. And no more will anyone protest against the scientifically established truism that intelligence manifests itself in direct proportion with the cerebral development, in the consecutive series of the animal world. Following then, the development of this system alone—from the automatic motions produced by the simple

process of what is called the *reflex action* of the ascidian mollusk, for instance, the *instinctive* motions of the bee, up to the highest order of mammals and ending, finally, with man—if we invariably find an unbroken ratio of steady increase in cerebral development, hence—a corresponding increase of reasoning powers, of intelligence—the deduction becomes irresistible that there must be a spiritual as well as a physical evolution.

This is the A B C of physiology. And are we to be told that there is no *further* development, no future evolution for man? That there is a prospect on earth for the caterpillar to become a butterfly, for the tadpole to develop into a higher form, and for every bird to live after it has rid itself of its shell, while for man, who has evolved from the lowest to the highest point of physical and mental development on this earth, all further conscious, sentient development is to be arrested by the dissolution of his material organization? That, just as he has reached the culminating point, and the world of *soul* begins unfolding before his mind; just as the assurance of another and a better life begins dawning upon him; his memory, reason, feeling, consciousness, intelligence, and all his highest aspirations are to desert him in one brief moment, and go out into eternal darkness? Were it so, knowledge, science, life, and all nature itself, would be the most idiotic of farces! If we are told that such a research does not pertain to the province of positive sciences, that no exact and accurate deductions are to be made out of purely metaphysical premises, then we will inquire, why should deductions, as hypothetical deductions, from purely imaginary data, as in the case of Haeckel's *Bathybius* and tailless anthropoid, be accepted as scientific truths, as no such missing link has ever yet been found, any more than it has been proved that the invertebrated *moner*, the grandparent of the lovely *amphioxus*, or that philosophical recluse—the *Bathybius*, ever existed?...

But the mischief is done, and it requires mighty powerful restoratives to bring the ex-admirers of Haeckel back to a belief in the human soul. Serjeant Cox's *The Mechanism of Man: An answer to the Question: What Am I?* now in its third edition, will remain as one of the most powerful answers to the soul-destroying sophistry

of Haeckel and his like. It is quite refreshing to find that a work upon such an unwelcome subject—to the men of science—a book which treats of psychology and its phenomena, is so eagerly welcomed by the educated public....

But we will now let the author speak for himself:

The Scientists began by denial of the facts and phenomena, not by disproof of them; by argument *a priori* that they *cannot* be and therefore are not. That failing, the next step was to discredit the witnesses. They were not honest; if honest, they were not competent; if competent by general intelligence and experience, in the particular instances they were the victims of illusion or delusion. That is the present position of the controversy. The assertion is still repeated here, with entire confidence, that the Mechanism of Man is directed and determined by *some* intelligent force within itself; that the existence of that force is proved by the facts and phenomena attendant upon the motions of that mechanism in its normal and its abnormal conditions; that this force is by the same evidence proved to be the product of *something* other than the molecular mechanism of the body; that this *something* is an entity distinct from that molecular structure, capable of action beyond and apart from it; that this *Something* is what is called SOUL, and that this soul lives after it has parted from the body.

This subject, that man *has* a soul—which so many men of science, especially physicians and physiologists, deny—is treated in the work under notice with the utmost ability. Numberless new avenues—as the result of such a knowledge when proved—are opened to us by this able pioneer; and under his skilful treatment that hope which was blighted for the moment by the brutal hand of Positivism, is rekindled in the reader's breast, and death is made to lose its terrors. So confident is the author that upon the solution of this enigma—which is one but to those who will not see—depend the most important questions to humanity, such as disease, old age, chronic and nervous sufferings, many of which are now considered as beyond human help, that he thinks that a perfect acquaintance with psychology will be of the utmost help in treating even the most

obstinate diseases. He pointedly reminds his readers that:

It seems scarcely credible, but it is literally true that the most learned physician cannot tell us by what process any one medicine he administers performs its cures! He can say only that experience has shown certain effects as often found to follow the exhibition of certain drugs. But he certainly does not know *how* those drugs produce those effects. It is strange and distressing to observe what irrational prejudices still prevail in all matters connected with the physiology of body and mind, and their mutual relationship and influences, even among persons otherwise well informed and who deem themselves educated. It is still more strange that not the least prejudiced nor the least instructed in these subjects are to be found in the profession whose business it is to keep the human machine in sound working condition.

Serjeant Cox need scarcely hope to count the practising physicians among his admirers. His last remark is more applicable to Chinese medicine, whose practitioners are paid by their patients only so long as they preserve their health, and have their pay stopped at the first symptoms of disease in their patrons—than in Europe. It seems rather the "business" of the European doctor to keep the human machine in an *unsound* condition. Human suffering is for European physicians, as the torments of purgatory for the priest—a perennial source of income.

But the author suggests that "the cause of this ignorance of the laws of life, of Mental Physiology and of Psychology" is that "they are not studied as we study the structure which that Life moves and that Intelligence directs." He asks whether it has

...never occurred to the Physician and the Mental Philosopher that possibly in the laws of life, in the physiology of mind, in the relationship of the conscious Self and the body, more even than in the structure itself, are to be found the causes of many of the maladies to which that structure is subject. Therefore, that in the investigation of these laws, the secret is to be sought of the operation of remedies, rather than in the molecular structure where for centuries the Doctors have been exclusively hunting

for them with so little success.

Dr. Wm. A. Hammond, of New York, the famous professor of diseases of the mind and nervous system, experimented for years with the celebrated "Perkins' tractors," metal discs, whose fame at one time nearly came to grief, through the cunning fraud of an English speculator. This man, who was making a specialty of the metallic treatment, was detected in imitating the expensive gold, silver, copper, and nickel rings, with rings of wood painted or gilded. But the results were not changed; patients were cured! Now this is a clear case of psychological and mesmeric power. And Dr. Hammond himself calls it "*nothing more than the power of one mind over another.*" This noted materialist is thoroughly convinced that if one person suggests an idea to another who has complete faith in that person's power, the one acted upon will experience all the sensations the operator may suggest to him. He has made a number of experiments and even published presumably learned papers upon the subject. And yet Mesmerism, Spiritualism, and occult psychological phenomena in general, upon the investigation of which Serjeant Cox lays the greatest stress, have no bitterer enemy or more active opponent than the New York celebrity. We need only recall his dogmatic attitude in the case of Miss Mollie Fancher, of Brooklyn, a respectable young girl, who, according to the statement of Dr. Charles E. West, has lived without any food for over nine years. This extraordinary girl never sleeps—her frequent trances being the only rest she obtains; she reads sealed letters as though they were open; describes distant friends; though completely blind, perfectly discriminates colours; and finally, though her right hand is rigidly drawn up behind her head, by a permanent paralysis, makes embroidery upon canvas, and produces in wax, without having taken a lesson in the art, flowers of a most marvellously natural appearance. In the case of this phenomenal patient, there are numbers of thoroughly reliable and well-educated witnesses to testify for the genuineness of the phenomena. The joint testimony of several respectable clergymen, of Professor West, of Mr. H. Parkhurst, the astronomer, and of such physicians as Drs. Speir, Ormiston, Kissam and Mitchell, is on record. With all this

examined and proved, Dr. Hammond, notwithstanding his personal experience of the "power of mind over matter," had not a jot to give the reporter in explanation of the phenomenon, but the words "humbug!—a clear case of deception!...Simply the deception of a hysterical girl, Sir."..."But has she deceived all these clergymen and physicians, and for years?" inquired the reporter.

"Oh, that's nothing. Clergymen are the most gullible men in the world, and physicians who have not made a study of nervous diseases are apt to be imposed upon by these girls."...(The *N.Y. Sun*, of Nov. 25th, 1878)

We doubt whether even Serjeant Cox's able book, though he is President of the Psychological Society of Great Britain and ought to be a competent witness, will make any more impression upon such a mind as that of the physician Hammond than a ball of snow upon the rock. And since the multitude suffers itself to be led by such sciolists as he, this able book may have to wait another generation before receiving that meed of appreciation which it merits. And yet, no author treating on psychology has ever built up with more scientific precision or force of argument his proofs of the existence of a soul in man, and its manifestation in the "mechanism of man." He concludes the work with the following remarks:

Scientists may sneer at Psychology as being visionary science, based upon mere assumption and dealing with that whose very existence is problematical. But its subject matter is as real as that with which *they* deal. Even were it not so, the more important it would be that the study of it should be pursued, with an honest endeavour to ascertain if the foundation on which it is erected be sound or baseless—that if, after due investigation, it be found to be false, the world may cease from a vain labour; but that, if it be proved a truth, Man may have the blessed assurance that, as a *fact* and not merely as a *faith*, he has a Soul and inherits an Immortality.

We wish all such learned authors completest success in their noble efforts to bring back humanity to the Light of truth—but we have but little hope for the XIXth century.

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## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, organized by the Unesco Institute for Education (UIE), was held in Hamburg (Germany) this July. The theme of the conference was "Adult Learning: a key for the 21st century." How vital the issue is, was tersely expressed by Jacques Delors, Chairman of the International Commission for the 21st Century, when he stated: "In the knowledge-based society that is emerging around the world, continuing education over a lifetime is no longer a luxury, but a necessity." It is even more important for the world's 800 million illiterates and, beyond them, the hundreds of millions of people in poor countries who, with their very meagre education, are finding themselves cut off from their place in society.

A dossier on "Learning for Life" (*Unesco Sources*, June 1997) tackles some of the critical aspects of this issue. Paul Bélanger, Director, UIE, states in his introductory essay:

It is evident that we now live in a world where brains count more than brawn....It is equally evident that education is in a very bad way. Learning can no longer be confined to one period in a person's life, as is now the case. This system doesn't work well and successive reforms have not yielded any concrete results.

What needs to be done is to change the whole framework. The break must be made on three levels: firstly the time we give to education must shift from one intensive period in childhood to a system of learning spread over a lifetime; secondly, subject matter must evolve with the aim being no longer just to learn how to do things (acquiring and developing professional abilities) but also to learn how to learn, to learn to live socially and to learn how "to be"—how to get the best out of oneself; and thirdly, learning space must be expanded—education obviously cannot be confined to the classroom. It has to reach out to wherever the pupil is—on the job, in public places, in non-profit organizations and of course in private life.

All this is crucial for taking part in the world of work....Change is also vital for other reasons which are often ignored. Shorter

working hours require that people learn how to use their extra leisure time in a more intelligent, creative and useful way. The environment crisis requires people to know and understand its cause and make radical changes in production and consumption habits. Investing in preventive education is a must as the cost of health care spirals.

But above all perhaps, we have to break with our old certainties, which are based on the notion of continual growth, and face an era of doubts and questions. The quest for a new sense of purpose will not succeed unless it is conducted by a society which is more thoughtful at all levels and thus equipped with instruments of learning to carry out such a quest.

Education, whether of the child or of the adult, should not just be the imparting of information; nor should it merely aim at training people to survive and succeed in a cutthroat environment in which professional advancement and material aggrandizement are the only recognized emblems of success. Education should teach men and women to be human, to be decent, to be civilized in the true sense, and to cope with life in a befitting manner. We find today a widespread depletion of moral values. Education fails unless it inculcates in men and women a sense of values—the love of one's neighbour and the feeling of interdependence and brotherhood, lack of which is the root of most of our problems. All our troubles may be summed up in these lines of T. S. Eliot's:

Where is the Life we have lost in living?

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

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The study of Life is the study of Consciousness. Science, however, is not getting anywhere in trying to understand or explain it, and the reason for it, says Peter Russell, scientist turned student of Eastern Philosophy, is that scientists are still stuck in a paradigm which has eventually got to crash—the paradigm that the material reality that we observe is the fundamental reality. Russell, author of several books and having degrees from the University of

Cambridge in physics, psychology and computer science, is currently engaged in the exploration of human consciousness, integrating Eastern and Western understandings of the mind, and exploring their relevance to our future evolution. *World Goodwill Newsletter* (1997, No. 2) features extracts from his talk on "Science and Spirituality" at the World Goodwill Forum, London. He said among other things:

The current scientific paradigm has no way whatsoever of explaining how consciousness arises in the universe. Yet, the one thing of which we're absolutely certain is that there is consciousness. There are several different schools of thought at the moment where scientists of all disciplines are coming together to try and explain consciousness. Some think it is something to do with quantum phenomena, others are looking at information theory, computer theory, the chaos theory or the complexity of the neuronal networks.

What these approaches have in common is that none of them have actually got very far at all...But I think where we are heading is towards a very different point of view, one that says that it's not space, time, matter and energy which are the fundamental reality; instead it is consciousness which is the fundamental reality, out of which space, time, matter and energy emerge.

Interestingly enough this view is something which you will find in most spiritual traditions. My own particular interest has been in Vedantic philosophy, and there you have the idea that the ultimate nature of the universe is consciousness. At the sub-atomic level we know there is no solidness. The appearance of the solidness of matter is an illusion. You find the same in eastern philosophy which talks about *maya*. It means literally "things are not as they seem"—the way we see things is not the way reality is....

People in very deep meditation states describe their experience as one in which there is no time and no sense of space. More than that, there is a unity, and, in very high states of consciousness, there is the experience not that I am in the universe, but the whole universe is within me. All this is pointing towards a new conceptualization of reality. We're not

there yet. I think we're just seeing the pieces. What I'm interested in is how the pieces are beginning to fit together. And it's not just of academic interest. I think the reason this shift really needs to happen is because the old materialistic paradigm is ruining our world today. I think it is this mode of consciousness that is leading us to destroy our environment, destroy our habitat and also destroy the very quality of our own lives. I also think it's really important that we begin to make this shift in ourselves. Again, this is what all the spiritual teachings have been saying. The real challenge is to carry out one's spiritual practice and finally arrive at the awareness that consciousness is fundamental and that everything else is a creation within consciousness.

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Does the moon influence life on Earth, and if so, in what ways? That it plays a major role in the ebb and flow of the world's oceans is well known. Its influence on vegetation and on many sea and land creatures, too, is admitted. Popular belief also has it that the moon influences man's psyche, and that this influence is not always beneficent; but those wanting "scientific proof" of this, still remain unconvinced. Some things, however, "can't be explained by the soulless calculations of science," says Jeff Rennie in his article, "Does the Moon Make Us Mad?" (*Reader's Digest*, July 1997, Indian ed.)

Ever since humans first turned their faces towards its pale light [Rennie writes], we have had a love/hate relationship with the moon. It symbolizes love, sex, birth, renewal and creation. But we've also linked it with death, demons, werewolves, vampires and insanity....

If the moon can stir the oceans, why not the blood of humans? We are, after all, more than 60 percent water ourselves. Perhaps tides within our blood cause an ebb and flow in our emotions and self-control.

Shakespeare sensed some truth in this, charging that the moon "makes men mad." And, in fact, that was the claim of the man who served as a model for Mr. Hyde in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*—he

blamed his crimes on moon-induced lunacy. Some studies supported this notion, suggesting that violent crime increases under a full moon. As a full moon approaches, hockey players were said to rack up more time in the penalty box, while emergency rooms also gear up for busier times. Other studies even pointed to a lunar influence on women's menstrual cycles and on birth rates. More recent research concluded, however, that there's no scientific proof for *any* of these claims....

Still, there's no denying the restlessness some of us feel beneath the moon.... "Under the full moon," naturalist Sigurd Olson wrote, "life is all adventure." And mystery, he might well have added.

The influence of the moon upon human and other forms of life is dealt with at length in *The Secret Doctrine*, especially in the section entitled "The Moon, Deus Lunus, Phoebe" (I, 386-403). Some pertinent remarks will be found in the same volume at pages 155-56. There are warnings in plenty about the "nefarious, invisible and poisoned influence which emanates from the occult side of her nature (I, 156). As H.P.B. remarks in this passage, "The Moon is now the cold residual quantity, the shadow dragged after the new body, into which her living powers and 'principles' are transfused. She now is doomed for long ages to be ever pursuing the Earth, to be attracted by and to attract her progeny."

We quote the following from an unsigned article entitled "Whence the Name 'Lunatics'?" which appeared in *The Theosophist* for April 1883:

It is well known that the moonbeams have a very pernicious influence.... Eastern Occultists had more real information about the genuine character of our treacherous satellite than the Western astronomers with all their big telescopes. Indeed "Fair Diana," the "Queen of Night," .... is the worst—because secret—enemy of her Suzerain, and that Suzerain's children vegetable and animal as well as human. Without touching upon her occult and yet generally unknown attributes and functions, we have but to enumerate those that are known to science and even the profane.

The moon acts perniciously upon the mental and bodily

constitution of men in more than one way. No experienced captain will allow his men to sleep on deck, during the full moon. Lately it was proved beyond any doubt, by a long and careful series of experiments, that no person—even one with remarkably strong nerves—could sit, lie or sleep for any length of time, in a room lit by moonlight without injury to his health. Every observing housekeeper or butler knows that provisions of any nature will decay and spoil far more rapidly in moonlight than they would in entire darkness. The theory that the cause of this does not lie in the perniciousness of the moonbeams but in the well-known fact that all the refrangible and reflected rays will act injuriously—is an exploded one.

---

Who is a *guru*, and what precise role does he play in the life of his disciple? Kedar Kamat addresses these questions in *The Times of India* for July 23:

To answer these questions, we ought to examine the etymology of the word "*guru*," which is conventionally derived from the two Sanskrit roots: *gu*, signifying "ignorance" and *ru* implying "remover." Thus he who dispels the darkness of ignorance from the mind of his disciple is a *guru*; a *guru* does not give, so much as he removes.

If you are in the grip of illusions, for instance, a true *guru* helps you to emerge from it by arousing the powers of discrimination that are latent within your own consciousness. So he helps you to uncover your own intrinsic nature rather than imposing his own doctrine upon you.

The *guru* acts in the conviction that nothing can be your own that was not yours already. Just as a person is not actually enriched by a loan, so too a person is not truly enlightened by a second-hand enlightenment.

Today, *gurus* of all shades and persuasions abound in the world; but those who shop in this supermarket of spiritual wares ought to be careful and not fall into the clutches of a charlatan who promises to transform them, no matter what their own nature and inclinations.

The true *guru* is one who fathoms the depth, or shallowness,

of the pupil before beginning to teach.

---

Glowing tributes from all over the world have been showered on Mother Teresa since her passing on September 5, in Calcutta, where she lived and laboured among "the poorest of the poor," for the greater part of her life of 87 years. Her deeds of altruism and charity, her uncompromising reverence for human life in all its forms, whether that of a dying leprosy patient, an aged and uncared-for destitute, or an abandoned child, have won her global recognition as "a living legend." An obituary in *The Times of India* for September 6 states:

In honouring her with the Nobel Peace Prize for 1979, the Nobel committee had honoured itself...."There rest thy feet where live the poorest, the lowliest, and the lost," said Tagore. She heard this message and left her teacher's job in Yugoslavia, as well as a comfortable life with the Loreto order, to tend to the destitutes of India and the world, renewing faith in the abiding power of charity and mercy....

The Nirmal Hriday (pure heart) home founded in 1952 was only the beginning. Homes for destitutes, uncared for children, leper colonies, orphanages and clinics for the poorest followed in subsequent years. Today, sisters of her Missionaries of Charity and also the Brothers of Charity (founded in 1963), run hundreds of these homes the world over....

She roused the scepticism of cynics with her self-denial, and the wrath of atheists who questioned a God who could "create" such misery. Her inconvenient notions often exercised liberals and secularists. But there was no wishing her away.

Mother Teresa's work recalls that of Sister Rose Gertrude, who, like Father Damien, chose voluntary Calvary on the leper island of Molokai. What H.P.B. wrote of Sister Rose Gertrude in her article "The Last Song of the Swan" (reprinted from *Lucifer*, February 1890, in *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*, January 1941) can well also be said of Mother Teresa:

The young heroine, like her noble predecessor, Father

Damien, is a true Theosophist in daily life and practice—the latter the greatest ideal of every genuine follower of the Wisdom-Religion. Before such work, of practical Theosophy, religion and dogma, theological and scholastic differences, nay even esoteric knowledge itself are but secondary accessories, accidental details. All these must give precedence to and disappear before Altruism (real Buddha- and Christ-like altruism, of course, not the theoretical twaddle of Positivists) as the flickering tongues of gas-light in street lamps pale and vanish before the rising sun....

Sister Rose Gertrude is, as was Father Damien before her—a *spiritual mystery*. She is the rare manifestation of a "Higher Ego," free from the trammels of all the elements of its Lower one....Thence the ceaseless and untiring self-sacrifice of such natures to what appears *religious* duty, but which in sober truth is the very essence and *esse* of the dormant Individuality—"divine compassion," which is "no attribute" but verily "the law of laws, eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF." It is this compassion, crystallized in our very being, that whispers night and day to such as Father Damien and Sister Rose Gertrude—"Can there be bliss when there are men who suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the others cry?" Yet, "Personality"—having been blinded by training and religious education to the real presence and nature of the HIGHER SELF—recognizes not its voice.

---

ASTROLOGY is the mother of Astronomy, and Alchemy is the mother of Chemistry, just as the plastic soul is the mother of primitive physical man. Astrology and Alchemy are equally the *soul* of the two modern sciences. As long as this truth is not recognized, Astronomy and Chemistry will continue to run in a vicious circle and will produce nothing beyond materiality.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

**INDEX  
TO  
"THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT"**

VOLUME 67 : NOVEMBER 1996 – OCTOBER 1997



# INDEX TO "THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT"

VOLUME 67 : NOVEMBER 1996 – OCTOBER 1997

## GENERAL INDEX

- Accuracy, Punctuality, Purity .. 381  
Action, A Philosophy of .. 54  
Adepts, The: Some Objections  
and Answers to Them .. 145  
Arjuna on the Antaskarana  
Bridge .. .. 22  
Asceticism—False and True .. 47  
  
Basic Questions, The .. .. 205  
Benefiting Humanity .. .. 348  
  
Cataclysms—A Cleansing Proc-  
ess .. .. 91  
Chain, Links in the .. .. 311  
Christ, The Risen—Message of  
Easter .. .. 148  
Consciousness and Its Manifes-  
tations .. .. 372  
Consciousness? What Is .. 132  
Corner Stone, The .. .. 207  
Counteracting Karma .. .. 411  
  
Dare, The Will to .. .. 235  
Desire, Will and .. .. 305  
Disinterested Forsaking .. 128  
  
Easter, The Risen Christ—Mes-  
sage of .. .. 148  
Education, Theosophy and .. 383  
Ethics, The Metaphysical Ba-  
sis of .. .. 20  
Evil, Resist Not .. .. 217  
Evolution, Rotation—Individual 276  
Evolution of the Soul, The .. 186  
Evolutionary Scheme, The .. 16  
Experience, Observation and .. 350  
  
Faith in the True .. .. 154  
Faith, The Light of .. .. 120  
Faiths, Unity of All .. .. 345  
Feeling Joyous .. .. 202  
Few Thoughts on "Light on the  
Path," A .. .. 73  
Fitting Into the Niche .. .. 233  
Flame, Keepers of the .. .. 397  
Forsaking, Disinterested .. 128  
"Fruits Meet for Repentance" .. 109  
Fruits of Study, The .. .. 194  
Fundamental Propositions .. 289  
  
Gnostics, The Spiritual Teach-  
ings of the .. .. 265  
God, Life Is .. .. 293  
Grouping, The Law of .. .. 331  
Growth, The Law of .. .. 272  
  
Happiness, True .. .. 336  
H.P.B., Thoughts on .. .. 181  
Humanity, Benefiting .. .. 348  
Humanity and Unity of Relig-  
ions, Oneness of .. .. 158  
  
Illusion, Maya—Overcoming  
the Great .. .. 57  
In the Light of Theosophy (Sep-  
arate Index)  
Inward Path, The .. .. 407  
  
Jesus, Sayings of—In the Light  
of Theosophy .. .. 100  
Joyous, Feeling .. .. 202  
  
Karma, Counteracting .. .. 411

Keepers of the Flame .. .. 397	Path, the Inward .. .. 407
Know, The Power to .. .. 28	Phenomena, Occult .. .. 313
Knowledge and Wisdom, Theosophy on .. .. 402	Philosophy of Action, A .. 54
Law of Grouping, The.. .. 331	Power to Know, The .. .. 28
Law of Growth, The .. .. 272	Power of Speech, The .. .. 226
Ledger of Our Life Journeys 341	Powers of the Soul, The .. 6
Lessons of Reincarnation .. 114	Preconceptions of Science, The 167
Letters to a Student .. .. 12, 52, 88, 125, 166	Promulgation of Theosophy .. 375
Life Is God .. .. 293	Propositions of Oriental Philosophy .. .. 301
Life Journeys, The Ledger of Our .. .. 341	Purity, Accuracy, Punctuality, 381
Life, The Way of—From Pain to Power .. .. 220	Questions, The Basic .. .. 205
Light of Faith, The .. .. 120	Regrets, Useless .. .. 136
"Light on the Path," A Few Thoughts on .. .. 73	Reincarnation, Lessons of .. 114
Light, Spiritual.. .. 199	Religions, Oneness of Humanity and Unity of .. .. 158
Lines Laid Down, The.. .. 256	Repentance, " "Fruits Meet for 109
Links in the Chain .. .. 311	Resist Not Evil.. .. 217
Materialism and the Human Soul, Scientific .. .. 417	Risen Christ, The—Message of Easter .. .. 148
Maya—Overcoming the Great Illusion .. .. 57	Rosicrucians, The Society of the 240
Metaphysical Basis of Ethics .. 20	Rotation—Individual Evolution 276
Nature, The Occult Side of .. 80	Sayings of Jesus—In the Light of Theosophy .. .. 100
Niche, Fitting Into the .. .. 233	Science, The Preconceptions of 167
Objects, The Three .. .. 366	Scientific Materialism and the Human Soul .. .. 417
Observation and Experience .. 350	Self—Personal, Egoic, Universal 96
Occult Phenomena .. .. 313	Self-Preparation .. .. 41
Occult Side of Nature, The .. 80	Self-Rule .. .. 325
Oneness of Humanity and Unity of Religions.. .. 158	Society of the Rosicrucians, The 240
Our New Volume .. .. 1	Soul, The Evolution of the .. 186
Pain to Power, The Way of Life—From .. .. 220	Soul, The Powers of the .. 6
	Soul, Scientific Materialism and the Human .. .. 417
	Speech, The Power of .. .. 226
	Spiritual Light .. .. 199
	Spiritual Teachings of the Gnostics, The .. .. 265

Student, Letters to a ..	12, 52,	Understanding Ourselves ..	262
	88, 125, 166	Unity of All Faiths ..	345
Study, The Fruits of ..	194	Unity Among Theosophists ..	253
		Useless Regrets ..	136
Theosophists, Unity Among ..	253		
Theosophy and Education ..	383	Volume, Our New ..	1
Theosophy, In the Light of (Sep- arate Index) ..		Watchfulness .. ..	413
Theosophy on Knowledge and Wisdom .. ..	402	Way of Life, The—From Pain to Power .. ..	220
Theosophy, Promulgation of ..	375	What Is Consciousness? ..	132
"Thou Art That" .. ..	37	What Is Truth? .. ..	361
Thoughts on H.P.B. .. ..	181	Will to Dare, The .. ..	235
Three Objects, The .. ..	366	Will and Desire .. ..	305
True, Faith in the .. ..	154	Wisdom, Theosophy on Knowl- edge and .. ..	402
True Happiness .. ..	336		
Truth? What Is .. ..	361		
Turning Point, The .. ..	63		

---

INDEX TO "IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY"

Anger, aberration of modern civiliza- tion .. ..	139	ed in Gospel of Thomas ..	251
Animal dissection in school laboratories, students' rebellion against .. ..	359	Buddhist influence on life and teachings of Jesus .. ..	321
Animal experiments in medical laboratories, alternatives to	142	Buddhist manuscripts, a new find .. ..	216
Apes, Self-awareness in ..	211	Business life, lack of moral val- ues in .. ..	107
Art, prehistoric, discovered in northern Australia .. ..	69	Christmas, pagan origin of ..	141
Atom, infinite divisibility of ..	353	Cities, mega-, mental health problems in .. ..	323
Australia once part of continent of Lemuria .. ..	70	Climate change, health effects of	143
		Climate change, potentially dev- astating consequences of ..	34
Bipedalism, origins of .. ..	102	Cloning, scientific and ethical implications of .. ..	245
Blood transfusion, safer alterna- tives to .. ..	360	Comets, scientific and occult viewpoints .. ..	248
Brotherhood, human, knows no distinctions .. ..	389	Computer intelligence <i>versus</i> human intelligence .. ..	317
Buddhist Eightfold Path reflect-			

- Conflicts, learning from .. 319
- Consciousness, the fundamental reality .. .. 426
- Cursed villages in Rajasthan—a continuing legend.. .. 215
- Depression and heart disease interrelated .. .. 250
- Dream sleep and memory, link between .. .. 71
- Education, adult, Unesco conference .. .. 425
- Education, alternative new trends 178
- Education, goal of .. .. 32
- Embryonic development in man and other vertebrates shows striking similarities.. .. 210
- Emotional intelligence, benefits of, to children .. .. 213
- Evolution, human, began simultaneously in different regions 138
- Evolution, human, enigma for anthropologists .. .. 102
- Evolution, human, preceded that of other mammals .. .. 210
- Fire, use of, known to earliest humans .. .. 391
- Future generations, safeguarding their rights .. .. 66
- Future, a learning process .. 33
- Genetic tests for diagnosing disease proneness breed fatalistic attitude .. .. 178
- Guru, role of, in disciple's life .. 430
- Health problems, life-style related, in 21st century .. .. 108
- Hibernation, a physiological and psychological secret of nature 176
- Human existence, social nature of 31
- Humankind's need to rebuild its identity .. .. 30
- Individualism and an ethical life 287
- Instinct cannot be explained on materialistic lines .. .. 177
- Intelligence, artificial, a misnomer .. .. 317
- IQ tests not the sole measure of intelligence .. .. 70
- Jesus' teachings a continuation of Buddha's teachings .. 321
- Jupiter's moon, evidence of life on .. .. 284
- Language, origin of .. .. 66
- Laughter, beneficial effects of.. 35
- Law governing seemingly dissimilar happenings .. .. 68
- Learning from life, a continuing process .. .. 286
- Learning, lifelong .. .. 425
- Life, asexual replication of—a raging debate .. .. 245
- Life on planets outside our solar system .. .. 174
- Lying, a complex and ubiquitous phenomenon .. .. 356
- Mankind, polygenetic origin of 138
- Mary, Virgin-Mother, mystery of .. .. 174
- Meditation without proper grounding, empty and dangerous .. 395
- Memory, brain not the sole storehouse of .. .. 106
- Metallurgy, ancients skilled in.. 285
- Mind, understanding its subtleties central to psychological research .. .. 282

- Moon's influence on earth-life.. 428
- Moral standards, debasement of 287
- Nubian civilization, antiquity of 320
- Ocean life undermined by man 103
- Order and pattern in apparently  
random phenomena .. 68
- Peace, international, depends on  
peace in individual lives .. 390
- Peace more than reduction of  
conflict .. .. 319
- Physics, modern, drawing closer  
to Eastern mysticism .. 353
- Planets other than Earth show  
evidence of life .. .. 284
- Printing, origin of .. .. 105
- Psychology a "visionary science"  
for scientists .. .. 282
- Science and Eastern Philosophy  
on consciousness .. .. 426
- Science, materialistic, receives  
deathblow .. .. 353
- Seas hold infinite possibilities for  
new pharmaceuticals .. 104
- Self-esteem, meaning and value  
of .. .. 214
- Sight and hearing interchange-  
able .. .. 250
- Sight and touch interchangeable  
senses .. .. 71
- "Speed trap" diminishes quality  
of life .. .. 393
- Steel production known to an-  
cients .. .. 285
- Talismans, charms, amulets,  
potency of .. .. 358
- Teresa, Mother, an obituary .. 431
- Tyrannosaur remains, earliest,  
discovered in Thailand .. 249
- Understanding, mutual, knows  
no barriers .. .. 389
- Universe, origin of—philo-  
sophical implications of recent  
discoveries .. .. 172
-





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