

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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LOSE NOT COURAGE

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If you are at all cast down, or if any of us is, then by just that much are our thoughts lessened in power. One could be confined in a prison and yet be a worker for the Cause. So I pray you to remove from your mind any distaste for present circumstances. If you can succeed in looking at it all as *just what you in fact desired*, then it will act not only as a strengthener of your good thoughts, but will reflexly act on your body and make it stronger.

—W. Q. JUDGE

EVERY tyro in Theosophy knows that individual happiness and progress depend upon the discipline of life that each adopts and follows. Yet all who have tried it know that the discipline in which the mind is made to follow the perceptions of the Soul, in which human emotions are made pure by correct knowledge and in which skill in action is attained, raises many difficulties.

The difficulties and obstacles increase in number and variety and affect every part of the human constitution as evolution advances. Through the process of reincarnation, Karmic results produce one set of difficulties, but when the aspirant marches onward and makes progress on the Inner Path, which not only is long but also has depth, other sets of obstacles and unsuspected troubles, more complex in character, are encountered. By his own earnestness

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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and sincerity the aspirant not only stirs up his own latent weaknesses but also arouses opposition from others who do not view life as he does. This is an experience common to all aspirants to Occultism.

One-pointed tenacity to hold grimly to the Line of Theosophical Action through all ups and downs which Karma precipitates, through good and evil report, through success and failure, is the only salvation of the aspirant. This Kali-Yuga civilization is not of any aid in his attempts to unfold the power of steadfastness which will hold him together and enable him never to lose hope or courage. Constancy and perseverance are not natural to our civilization, where speed is regarded as a great virtue and where, as an ancient Chinese sage has put it, “a man looks at an egg, and expects to hear it crow.” In the words of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the philosopher-emperor,

Be not disgusted, nor discouraged, nor dissatisfied, if thou dost not succeed in doing everything according to right principles, but when thou hast failed, return back again, and be content if the greater part of what thou doest is consistent with man’s nature, and love this to which thou returnest.

Pitfalls are inevitable; but they provide an impetus. To fall is not to fail, provided we rise quickly once again to give battle to the foe. To fall and remain prostrate is to fail. He who desires triumph is the one who has seen the failings over which triumph is desired. Perception of failings is the first step towards overcoming them.

The right motive for undertaking the discipline of self and for waging the War of Righteousness against the darkness of the world is the aspirant’s best safeguard against failure. Not soul-liberation but soul-service through sacrifice—that is recommended as the basis for right motive. The yearning for personal soul-emancipation is but an exalted form of selfishness. Energized and sustained by the sole motive of the salvation of humanity, we are, as it were, equipped with a protective shield that will help us not to be overthrown but to “fight on, and to the charge return again and yet again.” There is nothing that we cannot survive; nothing that we cannot turn to beneficence. We must have faith in this.

Our widening and deepening knowledge of the Esoteric Philosophy is at once our bow and our arrow. What is needed is not only more knowledge but deepening insight into the knowledge already gained. To many a schoolboy, learning is not a delight; it is irksome. Some would-be practitioners find themselves in a similar position. Where the urge of the Heart is lacking, devotion to the Wisdom cannot arise, and study and meditation upon its truths are neglected.

Mere study is not enough; we must study and remember. Remembering the appropriate teaching, we do not fall; or, if we do, remembrance or recollection enables us to rise quickly. Practice of what is studied aids in the process of remembrance.

Instead of allowing the impersonal philosophy to shed its light on our mistake or our failing, we are prone to seek personal comfort from friend or co-student when we are feeling miserable. We feel satisfied when in response to our repentant confession we are told, “Well, you have learnt the lesson and you will not do it again.” This may comfort us for a time, but “men are not made into steel by comfort,” writes Mr. Judge. In a short while the mistake is likely to be repeated, the difficult situation to be encountered once again.

A quiet passing through any unpleasant experience which comes to us as an effect enables us not only to pay the debt and close the account; we can also learn from it and so unfold a new capacity or virtue, or strengthen old ones. We often talk of paying our Karmic debts, overlooking the method by which they are discharged. That method is passing through the experience in calmness, with the mind attentive to observe and learn. The debt is not paid when we are thrown off our balance by Karmic processes. We often add to the sum-total of our debt by newly-made Karmas; out of one effect several new causes spring. When we attend in quietude to the effect, soon we perceive the root-cause; we learn the lesson of the experience; the necessity of once again going through that experience ceases. This brings real comfort, and, what is more, we transform disabilities into abilities and unfold true perception.

Robert Crosbie offers sage advice in these words:

Are things going hard with you? If so, it is time to push harder along the way you know. That will inevitably destroy all obstacles, and if persisted in *during stress* generates and maintains greater powers of resistance. Everybody on the Path goes through similar obstacles; by having them and overcoming them, you become teachers with knowledge of how to help. If you had no obstacles, you would not know how. Thank Karma for “obstacles.”

“Even this will pass away” is a good motto to keep in mind when things come up that are hard to stand. The “easy” and happy times are the periods of rest; the “hard” times are the periods of training—opportunities for gaining strength and knowledge. If we can look at both in this light, we shall not be overcome by either.

We should strive for calmness, patience, and fortitude, and also have full confidence that the tide is bound to turn, even at the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour. “If the candidate has faith, patience and confidence, verily he will not have to wait too long.” There is one thing that should be remembered in the midst of all difficulties; it is this—“When the lesson is learned the necessity ceases.”

We did not start out expecting a “train de luxe” to heaven. We knew it was to be a fight every step of the way; and not only do we have to fight, but to meet and surmount all the obstacles that the enemy—this civilization—places in our way. But in view of the great prize—the uplift of humanity—these obstacles offer opportunity to get into fighting trim, and as such should be welcomed rather than decried or denied. We know all these things, yet we have to say them over and over again to ourselves and to each other for mutual encouragement. And it is right that it should be so. The comrades who are well, support those who may be suffering from illness and disability from whatever cause, and they are right glad to do so, for our army is an army by reason of mutual support. Think what OUR ARMY is, and despair—if you can.

THE DESTINY OF OUR RACE

THE whole universe is composed of intelligent beings. This does not necessarily imply self-conscious beings, such as we humans are. There are grades of intelligences, just as there are grades of matter. As matter is dense or subtle, solid, liquid or gaseous, so with intelligences. There is human intelligence, and we all use it, though all do not know what it exactly is. Human intelligence is called self-conscious intelligence; human beings are aware of their own existence and are capable of comparing and contrasting their intelligence with other intelligences. But elsewhere in nature intelligence is not self-conscious. There is consciousness everywhere, but only in human beings is there self-consciousness.

Animals have intelligence, but they are not self-conscious; the semblance of thinking or reasoning they display is rooted in instinct. To understand animal consciousness we must look at those processes of our body over which we have no direct control. Take the beating of the heart; the heart, as an organism, has intelligence of its own, which goes on functioning automatically; so much so that we become conscious of our heart only when that organ malfunctions. Or take the digestive process; we eat self-consciously, but we digest and assimilate non-self-consciously. Only a few know all the details of what happens after we have eaten. The stomach, the liver, the intestines, all function instinctively. Strange as it may seem, all animals act in the same instinctive way; we might say that the intelligence and consciousness of the dog, the cow, the bird, is instinctive.

In the vegetable kingdom too there is consciousness, but it is again different from animal consciousness. For instance, a dog or a cat instinctively goes in search of food, but a rose-bush, if not given water, air or manure, does not go seeking these—it dies. All the same, plant-life shows intelligence of its own kind. So do all minerals. Difficult as it may seem to us to understand, a little study reveals that the formation of crystals is a manifestation of intelligence. Again, chemistry teaches how intelligent are the

elements; how, for example, carbon and oxygen combine to form a deadly gas—deadly to us humans; or how hydrogen and oxygen combine to form health-giving water, without which human beings would perish.

So Theosophy recognizes, as does science, that there are various types of intelligences. But Theosophy goes further in two directions: (1) It says that, in the infinitudes of space, there is the invisible counterpart of the visible universe; and so there are “kingdoms” in that invisible universe as well. Thus Theosophy recognizes the ancient teaching that below the mineral kingdom there are kingdoms of invisible forms of life called elementals. These elementals are of many kinds. In Hindu psycho-philosophy, there are hierarchies of *devas* and *devatas*; and in Christian Gnosticism we come across the celestial hierarchies of angels and archangels. (2) Secondly, Theosophy not only recognizes intelligence in all the kingdoms of Nature, but says that there are mineral, vegetable and animal *beings* as there are human beings. The classification of the kingdoms of visible Nature is an extension or a reflection of the invisible kingdoms, and therefore in Theosophy the division of species and sub-types of animals, vegetables and minerals is different.

To sum up, the universe is made of many kinds of beings, each kind having its own consciousness and intelligence, but only in the human kingdom is there self-consciousness or reflective intelligence. According to Theosophy, the whole universe is composed of intelligences, sub-human and human, and in the sub-human are included all the intelligent beings who have yet to enter the kingdom of man, *i.e.*, have yet to acquire self-consciousness, which alone is capable of making the being say, “I am I and no other.”

Another way in which the classification and description of the universe, which is the field of evolution of all these beings and intelligences, differs from that of science, is this: Theosophy, like Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Gnosticism and Kabbalism, starts from the world of the Spirit and descends to the worlds of matter. The world of Spirit is made up of Divine Monads, called the Eternal

Pilgrims. Spirit-beings or Spirit-intelligences are entities, units of consciousness; hence the term Monad, *i.e.*, One. This entity called Monad has a spiritual intelligence and a material envelope; a Monad is a unit of Spirit-Matter, and each is the Eternal Pilgrim. But this Monad is not self-conscious; it is a unit of consciousness or intelligence that does not know itself. Each Monad is Atma clothed in a vehicle called Buddhi. It is Atma-Buddhi; Manas-mind is not there. The whole purpose of evolution, the one great reason for these Eternal Pilgrims to undertake their pilgrimage, is to acquire Manas, self-conscious intelligence, human mind.

The Third Fundamental, or basic idea of Theosophy, deals with the evolution of beings, Monads, Eternal Pilgrims. Each of these Monads undertakes a pilgrimage that will last for a whole Eternity—an age which, though very long, is still a definite cycle. The purpose of the pilgrimage is to acquire self-conscious intelligence, to become Man. This is called the descent of the Monads into matter. Monads come down, world by world, till they touch the world of physical gross matter, and passing through mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, become men. Having become men, having acquired self-consciousness, the Monad ascends in full knowledge, step by step and world after world, until the human Atma becomes Maha-Atma, the Supreme Atma.

Descent and ascent of the Monad is a large cycle and is called the Circle of Necessity, because it is *necessary* for the Monad to unfold powers, to know itself as divine, to become “that which it is,” as the mystic phrase goes. The Circle of Necessity is the Cycle of Evolution of the Monad, and the age of that Cycle is the age of the Universe, which Universe is composed of the totality of all the Monads evolving in that cycle. From this we can see that there are two great curves—the descent of the Monad till manhood is attained; and then the ascent of man till human perfection is reached.

The evolution of the Monad before the human stage is reached is by natural impulse. It means that the evolving Monad, or eternal pilgrim, does not know *why* it is descending, *how* it is descending. Each Monad has will, but it is not free will; it has consciousness, but it is not self-consciousness. Hydrogen combines with oxygen

without knowledge; the rosebud blossoms into beauty without knowledge; the dog feels the pangs of hunger without knowing why and how; and so forth. The urge of life which moves onward and forward is called natural impulse.

When the flow of evolution carries the Monad to the human stage, it acquires the power to choose for itself. It acquires individuality; *i.e.*, Manas, human self-consciousness, begins to unfold. Then only the Monad knows itself as itself. That Monad or Unit is not just Atma-Buddhi any more; it is Atma-Buddhi-Manas, or the three-in-one. That Monad which has become a human Monad has now free will; will is not free before the human stage is reached. The power to choose and determine comes to the Monad with the acquisition of individuality and henceforth its process of evolution changes. In the pre-human stage, evolution is by natural impulse; in the human kingdom that process is not altogether abandoned, but a new process is added—that of self-induction, the power of the human mind-soul to induce ways of progress, the faculty to devise means of quick and quicker growth. So human evolution proceeds in a double manner—by natural impulse and by self-induction. Natural impulse works only in certain departments of our make-up; *e.g.*, in the beating of the heart, in the automatic functions of the body. Our free will is not yet able to determine everything; we are part and parcel of nature, and its impulse is not fully under our control. In the perfected human soul or Mahatma, *all* processes of and in nature are under his control.

We human beings possess free will and the power of self-induction in the most vital part of our being. Our mind is not subject to natural impulse. We can think as we please; we can induce in our mind whatever resolves, whatever ideas we choose to have; we are able to devise ways and means of our own progress. Theosophy teaches an important truth in reference to human evolution:

The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series

of metempsychoses and reincarnations. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 17)

No gifts from anywhere come to us save and except those we ourselves have acquired by self-effort, by self-induced and self-devised ways and means. Our whole progress as souls depends upon our own choice, our own resolve, our own determination. The soul wins any and every merit by self-effort, and it has to learn the method of self-induction; it has to learn how to devise ways and means of progress. We have to take our evolution in our own hands and induct into our mind ideas which can serve as patterns. Just as in a foreign land a traveller is aided by a map of the city, its roads, landmarks, etc., so also one needs a chart or a map to guide one's steps in the daily affairs of life. This chart is composed of ideas, and these ideas have to be introduced into our mind, induced into our daily consciousness.

That is the beginning. In our life, our ordinary consciousness does not carry the stamp of the soul. Our mind has all sorts of stamps put upon it by our senses, by our desires, good and evil. These stamps come to us by natural impulse, and instead of examining them, evaluating them, accepting some, rejecting others by virtue of our manhood, we allow our mind to receive them all. It is our privilege to stamp on our own mind and consciousness the Divine Pattern of Divine Ideas, which not only quicken progress but also make it harmonious and rhythmic. We suffer in a variety of ways, in body and in mind; we make a variety of mistakes of motive and judgement; we demoralize and weaken our character in numberless ways because we do not recognize and assert the right method of evolution in the human kingdom—by self-induced and self-devised ways and means of living day by day.

Let us seek for Universal Ideas, for such ideas alone are true. A true idea is always and ever universal; a truth remains true for everyone and for all time. That which is true for one cannot be false for another. What is really true and great is common to all religions.

There are three great ideas which are universal truths and which

every one of us should introduce in our mind-consciousness:

(1) The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit.

(2) The principle which gives life dwells in us and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen, or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

(3) Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

The three Divine Truths are profound, though the words in which they are expressed appear to be simple. We have to memorize those words in the real sense.

The soul of man is immortal: If each one of us were to remember that when we speak and act and do the little routine duties of life we do them as immortal souls, the control of our weaknesses would be easier. When we study or meditate, we are brought back to that remembrance, but we have to learn that our soul is immortal, and all that the mind thinks and the senses perceive affects that soul for long eras and ages. We also have to remember that all other human beings are likewise immortal souls—the crying infant, the naughty child, the negligent servant, the employer and the employed, the man in his office, the woman in her home, are all immortal souls, each learning some lesson, performing some task, overcoming some weakness, unfolding some virtue. Our attitude to our fellowmen and to our world will change and peace and contentment will enter our hearts. At present there is iron in the hearts of some, gall in the hearts of others, and passivity, lethargy and inertia in still other hearts. Peace comes when the truth is recognized that the soul of man is immortal.

The principle which gives life dwells in us and without us: That Universal Principle is God or Deity, the Great Presence. The soul in man and the soul in the universe are indissolubly linked.

Each man is his own absolute lawgiver: Many people accept the truth that the human soul is immortal, and all who are not rank atheists recognize that some divine force or energy is at the base

of the universe. But without this third truth, life is bound to be a failure. This truth gives a meaning to life, reveals the purpose of the whole of evolution, shows the destiny of the Race. Each soul progressing and realizing its own immortality by self-effort, by self-induction, fulfils the high destiny of the Race.

We have seen a view of the stream of evolution which is carrying forward the whole human race to its sublime goal, and the method by which each one of us can participate in that grand task. What we are attempting, the Perfect Men of the Race have accomplished. Those Great Ones have, cycle by cycle, devised ways and means and induced into the Manas and the Buddhi of the Race great ideas which energize us to gain enlightenment, which inspire us to selfless service of humanity. They embody in themselves the Divine Ideas. They are living examples of what the Race will be when it has reached its destined goal. Let us try to follow those living examples by inducing into our minds the Divine Ideas they teach.

WE should not lose sight of the fact that other souls are reincarnating every day, bringing back with them the experience and Karma of distant past ages. That must show itself in them as they mature in this life, and they will furnish new impulses, new ideas, new inventions, new pieces of knowledge to the general sum, thus affecting the progress of the race, but all under cyclic law. And if we, by supinely sitting down, do not create for them, as they may have in the other days done for us, the right material, the right vehicle of civilization, the end of the cycle may be reached with *their* task unfinished—through our fault. The Karma of that will then be ours, and inexorable justice will bring us upon the scene in other cycles which eternally proceed out of the womb of time, to finish with heavy hearts the task we shirked. No theosophist, therefore, should ever begin to think that he need not offer any help because all will come right anyhow.

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE FUNCTION OF RELIGION

True religion must give us a basis for thinking, and consequently, a basis for acting; it must give us an understanding of nature, of ourselves and of other beings. Religion is a *bond* uniting men together—not a particular set of dogmas or beliefs—binding not only all Men, but also all Beings and all *things* in the entire Universe, into one grand whole.

—ROBERT CROSBIE (*The Friendly Philosopher*)

“RELIGION is the best armour that a man can have, but it is the worst cloak,” wrote John Bunyan. Translating the thought, we might say that religion is the best unfold of humility, piety, unselfishness, but it is the worst and most prolific developer of hypocrisy, humbug, cant, credulity and fanaticism. Every religion can lead its votary to the light through inquiry and honest search for truth; but every creed without exception has acted as an intellectual extinguisher because its adherents do not use their minds, and do not inquire like rational beings into the meaning and purpose of this, that or the other belief they hold as sacred.

The much discussed subject of prayer affords an example. People pray in the hope of securing pardon for their sins; some say, in words they understand: “O God, forgive me this transgression”; others repeat words in a language they do not know; others confess in privacy to a priest. Having gone through this or that form, they commit the same crime again; they repeat their sin, and they go through the ritual once more. The logical deduction as to their belief to be drawn from their behaviour is this: “What is God for if not to give us remission of our sins? Why a confessor if we are not to be free to blunder over and over again?” This is hypocrisy and all who indulge in such a useless and immoral performance are using religion as a cloak.

What kind of prayer, then, would show us religion as an armour? When a person who has blundered repents before his own conscience and in his own consciousness, and resolves not to repeat such a mistake; when as a protection he seeks knowledge as to

how he blundered, as to what caused him to slip into his mistake, and so forth, he is using prayer as a true power. Such a sinner, in spite of his blunder, is a religious person who uses his religion as an armour.

Turn now to the fundamental misunderstanding which causes this confusion. People fancy that a person’s religion is a matter of the birth of his body, of the family and of the community to which he belongs; more, the general opinion is that religion is a matter of beliefs, of the heart, about which there need be no inquiry, no questioning and no seeking of explanations. This is wrong. Man is a thinking being and it is his duty to understand the meaning of life, of religious beliefs, of communal customs, of family habits and so on. Generally people identify religion with truth, and in their dogmatism claim their own sect or creed to be the only true one. A little reflection would clear away the fogs of superstition. It is intrinsically true that Truth agrees with Truth and does not agree with falsehood. Two plus two makes four—that is the one truth; all other answers to the sum of two plus two are false and should be unacceptable.

People must learn to apply this test to religious truths. Our serious thoughts, our rational ideas about religious matters are conspicuous by their non-existence. It never occurs to religious people to test their opinions and beliefs in the light of reason and of knowledge. To the very fact of the existence of sectarianism we should apply the test of knowledge; if any one particular religion is the only true one, then, naturally and necessarily, all men and women belonging to that creed must be virtuous and wise, healthy and happy. If, for example, the Jews are really the “Chosen People” of God, then there ought not to be among them the ignorant, the wicked, the diseased. Similarly, if Christ is the only begotten Son of God (an absurd claim which Jesus never made) and if, let us say, the Roman Church is the only true church, then all Roman Catholics and all Christians ought to be full of faith, hope and charity, of which the Apostle Paul wrote, and they ought to be loving their neighbours as Jesus taught. Christendom is, however, not a loving family; much less is it full of love for the poor heathen;

may more—periodically Christendom becomes a mighty slaughterhouse where the strong butcher the weak. Similarly, neither Hinduism, nor Islam, nor Jainism, nor Zoroastrianism, is a perfect, God-given, true religion. In the ranks of them all are liars, profligates and drunkards, as well as sober, virtuous and God-loving men and women.

We need, therefore, to turn to some other factor to ascertain the truth about religion or, to be more exact, the Truth which *is* Religion. In the words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, we come upon a line of thought appropriate to our subject: “Faith without principles is but a flattering phrase for wilful positiveness or fanatical bodily sensations.” We must beware of “wilful positiveness” in the matter of our own religion. Also, we must guard against “fanatical bodily sensations” where our religious views and beliefs are concerned. Leaving emotionalism aside, we must look for the principles of religion. This is not only a matter of secular education; otherwise logical-minded men and women become fanatical in religious affairs. Ordinary university education is no passport to religious honesty or to reasoning liberalism.

Courage of mind and of heart is needed to be honest in religious habits and beliefs—courage to search for truth, courage to insist on learning the meaning of the phenomena of life which surround us. Our common humanity is a good starting point. Each one of us is beset with weaknesses, is endowed with virtues; feels joy and pain by turns; is affected by beauty of form, by moral strength, by the light of wisdom and by deeds of mercy; and each, in turn, expresses beauty in life, virtue in deed, wisdom in words. Though the same traits are common to all, yet each is different from all others. No two people are alike—not even twins. What moral law governs this diversity in unity? A wise God would not create ignorant people, nor a loving God, deformed children. Heredity does not answer the problem either. Reincarnation does clear away the confusion. The truth of Reincarnation becomes a religious principle by its logical reasonableness, by the wonderful light it sheds on the problems that agitate our hearts and puzzle our minds, problems that surround us on every side.

Religion to be true must be One, Universal and Eternal. To take again the example we have considered earlier: not only does two plus two make four on every continent today, but it has made four in every era for millions of years. So also with any other truth; it must be universally true, true everywhere; it must be eternally true, true in every age. This is the position of Theosophy which is so grossly misunderstood. Theosophy is not *a* religion; Theosophy *is* Religion itself. Why does Theosophy proclaim as its first object “Universal Brotherhood”? Because, in the words of H. P. Blavatsky:

A Religion in the true and only correct sense, is a bond uniting men together—not a particular set of dogmas and beliefs. Now Religion, *per se*, in its widest meaning is that which binds not only *all* MEN, but also *all* BEINGS and all *things* in the entire Universe into one grand whole. This is our Theosophical definition of religion.

From this definition of Religion emerges its function. However different each one of us may be from all other human beings, we are united in one grand Brotherhood. To aid others, to be altruistic, is the very first lesson we learn as we reflect upon the basic principle of the One True Religion. In this function, we encounter within us, as in the world outside, the forces of good and of evil, and if we are observant we find these forces existing in our own beliefs. Theosophy gives us knowledge as to how to discard the cloak of religion and likewise teaches us to use its armour. Thus, the student of Theosophy retains and sustains his understanding of Universality. But what about the orthodox? They have to begin to use their own religious beliefs, asking every time—“Is my religion a cloak to hide my ignorance or my weakness or my fanaticism or my sectarian unbrotherliness, or is it an armour against the foes of ignorance, of vice, and above all of the spirit of intolerance and of exclusiveness?”

Is the sacred thread of the orthodox Hindu a cloak or an armour? Is the sacred shirt of the orthodox Zoroastrian a cloak or an armour? Is the Sunday church-going by the orthodox Christian a cloak or an armour? Are the periodic prayers of the orthodox Muslim a

cloak or an armour?

In every case, if these are expressions of the cloak, hiding something, the man is irreligious in spite of his thread or his shirt, his church-going or his kneeling for *Namaz*. If these are expressions of his armour, then soon will he pass out of his narrowness into the liberal light of Wisdom, which is universal and which knows no heathen, no *kafir*, no *durvand*, no *mlechchha*. All sectarian creeds become corpses for the man in whose heart the One Religion is born.

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THE PATH OF RAJA-YOGA

INDIA is famous for its yogis, and today there is a good deal of talk in the West about Hatha-Yoga and Raja-Yoga, and even some vague notion that there is a distinction between these two, but comparatively few understand the real difference between them. Even the word common to both, Yoga itself, has been misunderstood and misinterpreted.

Yoga is translated Union—Union between man and Deity, which really means between the individualized man and his divine impersonal Self. As a process leading to unification, Yoga is Discipline; it is called the means of salvation whereby the human Soul frees itself from the continuous round of birth and death. However, its less well known but higher and truer goal, which is the Renunciation of that freedom of salvation for the sake of the sorrow-laden men and women of this earth gives to Yoga a new value. Yoga is then seen not only as the yoke of discipline for gaining Soul-enlightenment, but also as that highest and noblest of all yokes, one by which an emancipated Soul sacrifices his emancipation for helping humanity, uses his acquired Wisdom to lighten the darkness of men's minds, and dedicates his perfection on the altar of service to bring to his younger brethren the radiance of eternal love.

Hatha-Yoga has its own range—from bodily exercises which keep the corpus fit, to very complicated breathing and other practices which lead to psychic development. Numerous are the modes and methods employed by this school of many branches. All of them, however, may be defined in a general way thus: Hatha-Yoga uses physical and material means for purposes of self-development. But Indian mystical philosophy includes in the material more than that which ordinarily is known as matter, *i.e.*, physical matter; it includes in matter that also which it calls subtle substance, *sukshma padartha*, of which the electronic particles and waves of physics are perhaps the grossest constituents. Therefore people in general, and especially Westerners, fail to see that many forms of mental exercises belong to the Hatha-Yoga school. There

are many, many Indian sects and schools—Tantrik and other—and some of these, even though they disregard the physical body and follow mental practices, are Hatha-Yogic all the same. The highest branch of Hatha-Yoga was brought to perfection, it is said, in ancient Egypt, Khem, the name from which, as is commonly known, such terms as Alchemy and Chemistry are derived.

Raja-Yoga, on the other hand, means the Kingly Science, the Royal Discipline. This discipline elevates the human Soul to a truly royal state. It is the king of sciences and its knowledge enables a person to control all the forces of Nature, so that the Adept of that Science is able to perform at his own will what are called miracles. Round about a Hatha-Yogi “miracles” happen, but it is otherwise with the Raja-Yogi; he controls all potencies in the whole of Nature. In reality, there are no miracles in Nature; there is only the operation of the laws of Nature, most of which remain still to be discovered by modern science, but some of the aspects and effects of which, like gravitation and rotation of the earth, are recognized. Hatha-Yogis, like Spiritistic mediums and psychic sensitives, become, unconsciously to themselves, channels of invisible forces, while the Raja-Yogi consciously and deliberately uses those forces to benefit mankind.

Raja-Yoga may be defined as the true system of developing the higher psychic and spiritual powers (*Siddhis*) and achieving union with one’s own Higher Self, or, as the profane express it, with the Supreme Spirit. It is primarily the Discipline by which the Soul controls and educates the mind, and with its aid purifies and elevates the personal man. Many Hatha-Yogic teachers call their own doctrines Raja-Yoga, just as so many mediums denounce “controls” and messages other than their own; and as in Hatha-Yoga, so too in the Kingly Science, a wide range of practices is included. But removal of all the accretions which have formed through the ages will reveal the discipline of Raja-Yoga as a single and indivisible one, consisting of two sections—the exoteric, or that known to the public, and the esoteric, known as *Gupta-Vidya*. This Discipline is not a Hindu speciality, though in the public world of today its Hindu form is the best known.

The exoteric and esoteric divisions are not arbitrary; they are only a legitimate device adopted by the high proficient in the art of Pure Living. These proficient are Adepts of the Good Law who assume the solemn responsibility of instructing those who are willing to learn. To facilitate Their work, They have kept alive in the world the exoteric knowledge of the Divine Discipline. When the learner has, by his own efforts, progressed sufficiently in controlling his senses and organs and in impersonalizing his emotions by a preliminary educating of the mind, he finds the truth of the statement that when the Chela is ready the Master appears. Both the Hatha- and the Raja-Yogis recognize the place of the Guru or the Teacher, but here, as in other matters, they differ in reference to the functions, etc., of such guides. Thus, the teacher of Hatha-Yoga has to be found by the pupil, and when found he requires the pupil to adopt practices, bodily and mental, without question, and often without understanding.

The person who plans to walk the Path of Raja-Yoga, on the contrary, does so after acquiring a theoretical knowledge of the Discipline, and fully understanding, therefore, what he is about and what is expected of him. With full confidence born of clear intellectual perception, he knows that Gurus of the Secret Wisdom exist and that he will get to know them when as a chela he has become ready. This “becoming ready” is a self-chosen task, a self-chosen discipline, and the practitioner knows what are the qualifications that he must strive to unfold. The very first test of his discrimination consists in the selection of the particular scheme, among several which exist. As we are making use of Hindu terminology, we will mention that among such schemes are those outlined in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, in the *Yoga-Sutras* of Patanjali, in the *Viveka-Chudamani* of Shankara, etc. These three are mentioned as the most reliable of Hindu texts. Their study, if dispassionately carried on, will bring insight, and then only can the practical exercises begin on a sound and safe basis. There are many in India and many more abroad who read these treatises, so to speak, upside down and bring discredit upon themselves through failure and worse.

We shall very briefly consider in outline the exercises advocated in these texts, culling from them not their metaphysical and philosophical teachings, but only those which pertain to our subject.

To begin with Shankara's *Crest-Jewel of Wisdom*: The practitioner is assumed to possess sufficient theoretical knowledge of the Science of the Spirit, so that the exercises he undertakes are intelligently practised. Four are the qualifications to be acquired: *Viveka*, *Vairagya*, *Shat-Sampatti*, and *Mumukshuta*. Let us define these very concisely:

(1) *Viveka* is discrimination—discernment between the Eternal and the non-eternal. These two are not distant, somewhere far away, but here, near at hand. Both the Eternal and the non-eternal envelop everything, and we have to discriminate between them in eating and drinking, in waking and sleeping, in all the affairs of life.

(2) *Vairagya* is dispassion or desirelessness, and freedom from self-indulgence. When we indulge the self of sense we follow the non-eternal; when we free ourselves from the senses it is because the Eternal has been glimpsed, however dimly.

(3) *Shat-Sampatti* are the six virtues: (a) *Sama*: Quietude in holding the mind steadily on the object of attention. (b) *Dama*: Control—mastering of the powers of perception and of action, holding them from running away. (c) *Uparati*: Cessation from leaning on outer things and external objects. (d) *Titiksha*: Endurance of afflictions without rebelling against them and without lamentation or grumbling. (e) *Shraddha*: Faith or firm conviction of the truth about the soul, the science of the soul and the Teachers of that science. (f) *Samadhana*: Self-settledness in the Pure Eternal in an increasing measure till permanency therein is attained.

(4) *Mumukshuta* is aspiration and ardent longing to realize the real nature of the Divine Self.

Turning next to the *Yoga-Sutras* of Patanjali, we find that eight steps are given there: *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, *Samadhi*. Roughly, their meaning is as follows:

(1) *Yama* are vices to be overcome and they are violence (*Himsa*), falsehood, theft, incontinence and greed.

(2) *Niyama* are observances to be practised in a sustained manner so that the integration of the whole being becomes a certainty; they are purity, contentment, direction of one's thoughts to the realization of spiritual aspirations, study, resignation to the Lord in the Temple of the body.

These ten practices, five of *Yama* and five of *Niyama*, make up the first two steps; they are the initial steps. People rush into practising the third and the fourth steps before proper and adequate mastery of these two; hence occur not only many failures, but also numerous breakdowns in bodily and in mental health. We are not detailing here what the significance of these terms is; they are fully explained in the text.

(3) *Asana*, the posture to be assumed for meditation, should be steady or firm and easy or without strain. The poise of the Soul will find its natural reflection in right posture for the body; that Soul-poise comes from the practice of the first two steps. Without that practice, postures are assumed which, being false, prove dangerous. It is said that Right Posture prevents attacks from all the pairs of opposites—a statement neither understood nor taken into serious account.

(4) *Pranayama*, literally translated, means breathing exercises. In reality it means the right guidance of the life-breaths or the vital currents. Inhalation and exhalation do not, in the final analysis, bring enlightenment and immortality. Right ideation is necessary to harmonize the psychical and the physiological breathing. Gross ignorance prevails and people who undertake breathing exercises ruin their bodily health and endanger their mental balance. Warnings have been given before, but novices rush in where chelas themselves fear to tread. Occidentals who want quick results run after claimants who teach for a fee, and then they blame the Eastern Science of Yoga for the disastrous results that only too frequently follow. Let us repeat—*Pranayama* is an inner psychic practice and not merely an outer bodily exercise; outer breathing follows naturally the course of mental breathing.

The above four may be described as preparatory to the direct dealing with the mind with which the remaining four steps are

concerned.

(5) *Pratyahara* means withdrawal of the mind from all external objects and from all internal images. The senses make contact with the external objects; fancy creates internal images. The mind must withdraw from these and refuse to be affected by any of them. This implies the mind's withdrawal from the power of the senses and its freeing itself from its previous involvement in the fancy-pictures with which it had connected itself. This withdrawal does not call for mental vacancy; it is not a passive condition, for it is but a preliminary to the setting up of the Idea on which the mind has to be placed. The goal or the object of contemplation is *Ishwara*, the Spiritual Lord in the Temple of the body.

(6) *Dharana* is the attentive holding on to the subject-object-goal to which the mind is directed, that is, *Ishwara*. By this exercise the wandering nature of the mind is transformed into the steady nature. This is the practice of Concentration.

(7) *Dhyana* is contemplation on the nature of *Ishwara* in a prolonged state of *Dharana*. *Dhyana* is prolonged *Dharana* in which the mind perceives and absorbs *Ishwara*. The human mind-soul sees the Spirit-Being, and contemplating on the latter, becomes like it. That becoming results in—

(8) *Samadhi*, unification, in which the two, the contemplator and the object contemplated upon, become one. Man becomes God and his mind-soul experiences God-realization.

The reader of this article will please bear in mind that the above is but a most succinct outline and meant only to afford him a glimpse of the scheme. The Yoga School of Philosophy of which Patanjali is the Master is one of the six schools of Indian Philosophy, and the *Yoga-Sutras* form the textbook of that School.

Turning to the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the first fact to note is that it is only in the sixth chapter that some hints at "sitting for meditation" are given, and that these are in a form generally misjudged and therefore misapplied. Yoga, or the Divine Discipline of the Golden Mean, culminates in the sixth chapter, and in practising what is given, two facts should be borne in mind. In chapters two to six of the *Gita*, Krishna, the Synthesizer, examines and reviews the

teachings of the various schools of thought then prevailing, and to his analysis of each he adds his own teaching. If the Yoga method of the *Gita* is to be understood we should remember that in the sixth chapter Krishna reviews—rejecting or accepting—certain ideas and forthwith proceeds to give his own instruction, including the teaching of Reincarnation—that more than one life is necessary for the fulfilment of Yoga, which begins with the control of the mind, "restless as the wind." Secondly, what is given in the twelfth and the eighteenth chapters corresponds to the teachings of the sixth on a higher spiral, and furthermore the preceding teachings in chapters two to five form the background for the Yoga of the sixth chapter. We say all this because people, especially Westerners, err in picking and choosing the *Gita* teachings according to their own inclinations. They fail in consequence and bring discredit on the School represented by the *Gita*.

The discipline of Yoga, we may summarize, consists in :

(1) Purification and withdrawal of the thinking mind from desires—attachments and repulsions.

(2) Control and purification of the senses and the organs which are the windows of the soul.

(3) Right performance of Duty without any interest in the results which might accrue, which injunction also implies that one should not run away from the world.

(4) Turning the mind inwards towards the Spirit—the real Actor—and contemplation upon its nature, till the thinker becomes what the Divine Actor is.

This is a difficult task and a serious enterprise, not to be lightly undertaken, and certainly any kind of practice should follow a full theoretical understanding of what is to be attempted. Study of the philosophy of Yoga is absolutely essential before any practice is taken up. Greater and graver dangers surround the earnest aspirant than he himself suspects. A clean life and an altruistic motive will reveal the correct method. Without those two prerequisites, ignominious failure and worse awaits the rash practitioner.

MUTUAL ADAPTATION

THE chief problem of nations as of individuals is always the problem of inner adjustment, of adaptation to the environment and the circumstances. Inner adjustment and spiritual adaptation are the key to happiness, wisdom and peace. The world is unhappy and inharmonious because it has not found that key. Instead of adapting oneself to one's environment and bringing out the best in it, thus raising the level of the whole, the effort of nations and of individuals is to make others accept their ideals and adjust and adapt to their concepts of what is best and most desirable.

The claim is made that the world has grown smaller and more united with all the modern inventions for improved transportation and communication. But this in itself is of little avail without the moral and spiritual elements. All recognize the desirability of union, of harmony, of brotherhood, but brotherhood is not possible on a personal or selfish basis. Physical proximity does not bridge the barriers between people. The problem of disharmony between individuals and nations must be recognized as a moral and spiritual problem. The petty regional view must be transcended in the consideration of universal aims and mutual adaptation.

Though modern scientific knowledge is misapplied and divorced from moral and ethical aims, science in itself is not a barrier to the realization of universal brotherhood and its application in practice. There are two main barriers to brotherhood—religion and politics. Religion has become sectarian and separative; it does not unite its followers. Politics has become party politics, and strife and division and war are the logical result. People who want to defend orthodox religion claim that social customs are responsible for the divisions between people, but the social customs that divide are kept up because of orthodox religions. The different communities are generally tolerant so long as their own prejudices are not offended and so long as others adapt themselves to their views and their ways of doing things.

Orthodox religion is not based on knowledge but on feeling.

Feeling and belief are two aspects of the same principle. The *feeling* of sectarian religion must be purified. A man is truly religious only when he applies knowledge, not when he indulges in blind belief. True religion is a religion of mind and of heart, a religion that not only brings knowledge and correct understanding, but energy to act in terms of that understanding.

The problem of the individual man or woman is the same as that of the nation and the community. Individuals suffer from a sense of frustration and misery because they have not found the key to inner adjustment, because they have not learnt to adapt themselves harmoniously to the people and the circumstances surrounding them. We have friction and discord even in the family group because of differences in tastes, in likes and dislikes, all personal, and because each tries to force the rest into the mould of his own preferences. For the individual as for the nation, a larger altruism must be substituted for the limited personal view; a true religion of knowledge must be found and practised, if universal brotherhood is to be realized and put into effect.

LOVE is the face and body of the Universe. It is the connective tissue of the Universe, the stuff of which we are made. Love is the experience of being whole and connected to Universal Divinity.

All suffering is caused by the illusion of separateness, which generates fear and self-hatred, which eventually causes illness.

You are the masters of your life. You can do much more than you thought you could, including cure yourself of a "terminal illness."

The only real "terminal illness" is simply being human. And being human is not "terminal" at all, because death is simply transition to another level of being.

— BARBARA ANN BRENNAN

A FEW NOTES ON THE THREE GUNAS

[As described in *The Dream of Ravan*]

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IN the mystery allegory, *The Dream of Ravan* (published first as a series of articles in *The Dublin University Magazine* of 1853-54, and later in book form), the unknown author gives us what is said to be “an authoritative utterance of Hindu psychology.” As such, therefore, we have to regard it.

It will be remembered by those who have read this book with a message, based on a little known philosophical episode in the *Ramayana*, that Mandodari broke down with grief after she heard that there would come a time in the future when she would no longer remain Ravan’s wife and would be superseded by another. The Chorus of Rishis, in its endeavour to cheer her up, told her of the three qualities arising from Prakriti or nature: Tamas (darkness or indifference), Rajas (passion or desire), and Sattva (truth or goodness). She was told that she was of the Tamasic nature and was, therefore, the complement of the predominant Tamas quality in Ravan; but when in a future birth he rose to the stage of Rajas he would need as companion and partner someone who was of a higher quality than Tamas to spur him on. But as the Tamasic quality—which is the characteristic of brute matter, that pertaining to the animal man—even when no longer predominant, is not annihilated but continues to exist as the basis which affords fuel to higher emotions, so Mandodari would always be necessary to Ravan to minister to his Tamasic nature. A strong bond would exist between them in the future, not the bond of husband and wife, but of beloved master and devoted servant.

It is important for us to note this, for it shows that Tamas is not to be despised at any stage of evolution; it is necessary to all stages. We have a hint here as to why we are told later in the book of the Rishi Maricha who “carried to excess” severe austerities, maltreated

his body and looked like a skeleton, and of Ananta, also a Rishi, but one who avoided all excesses and treated his body with care.

A further point is made that progress in the Tamas sphere of life is helped forward by love. Therefore we learn that Mandodari, in serving Ravan in the future with her love and devotion, would receive at his hands much kindness and help. Theirs would be a new relationship of mutual trust, sympathy and gratitude. Indeed, in helping Zingarel, Ravan’s companion-to-be in his future appearance on earth, with a mother’s tenderness, Mandodari would receive in return the blessing of her love. Love, care, service—wife, husband and servant—make the triad.

There is much practical advice for us here as to the attitude we should adopt towards those who serve us in a so-called low capacity. If we adopt this idea of mutual trust and respect, the result will be that those who minister to us as attendants now will grow towards the higher gunas in a natural way, and their devotion will be our recompense. Is it because we do not act in this way that there is so much unrest among the working classes, whose labour helps to give us comfort and to fill the coffers of their masters—for which service all they get is a meagre wage?

To understand the gunas we have to see that their base is the “primordial and eternal unity.” This unity, we are told, divides itself into the three radical, prismatic qualities of Tamas, Rajas and Sattva, when reflected in time, through the prism of Maya, into the multitudinous universe. Every soul born into natural life partakes in greater or lesser degree of these qualities, each of which is necessary to the others. For man to evolve, he must know these gunas, how to use them and how to control them.

First, it is necessary to understand that, no matter what descriptions we are given of the qualities, the threefold egoity or self-consciousness is Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic, and in each of these states the power or energy peculiar to it appears radiantly developed. Tamas, for example, is not merely darkness, but the self-consciousness of darkness, and in it resides the power and energy of substance, or brute, insensible matter. Rajas is not merely

passion, but the self-consciousness of passion, in which exists the power or energy of action. Sattva is the self-consciousness of truth or goodness, and in it is the power and energy of knowledge or wisdom.

Of these three qualities we and all nature partake. The consequences produced by their workings and interactions imprison us, and by observing them we get to know which is the predominant guna in us.

To help us, we are told that Tamas, which springs from ignorance and is the confounder of all mental faculties, imprisons us through intoxication, sloth and idleness. Rajas, which is of a passionate nature and arises from the effects of worldly thirst, imprisons us through the consequences produced from action. Sattva, by reason of its purity, wisdom and freedom from defect, “entwines” us—which conveys a slightly different idea from “imprisons”—through sweet and pleasant consequences.

If we would recognize our jailers or entwiners we must familiarize ourselves with their moral characteristics. Tamas tends towards gloominess, idleness, foolishness and distraction of thought; when, therefore, we give way to any of these tendencies, we must know that we are in the Tamasic state. If we are industrious, if we like to begin works and love to gain from them, if we are intemperate and our desires are immoderate and unrestrained, we must know that it is Rajas which has imprisoned us. If we are wise in all we do, and are happy, but still are attached to the consequences springing from wise action, then we must know that Sattva entwines us. If we continue to remain in the Tamasic sphere we shall become distracted and unstable. If we continue in Rajas we shall become covetous. If we dwell in Sattva we shall have wisdom.

A further description of these qualities is given, which helps us to understand them from another angle. Tamas is said to be the absence of all knowledge, feeling, motion, penetrability or transparency, its demerit thus being negative. It is “that stolid state or form of spirit, which causes it to appear and be what we call matter.” It is, in fact, “the moral basis of matter.” Its highest form of organic development cannot go beyond the mere animal life

and the region of sense.

Still it must be kept in mind that this quality is necessary for evolution and therefore necessary for both Rajas and Sattva and also for the condition when these three qualities will blend into one. Without Tamas, which is the characteristic of stolid, brute matter, there could be no basis either for Rajas, consciousness in action, or Sattva, consciousness in goodness. Neither of these could function or even come into being without a form through which to work. Without some kind of stability there could be no form. We are told that “within it is the movement, the fire, and the anguish of the Rajas, and the light and joy of the Sattva. And in proportion to the large basis of the Tamas quality is the intensity and power of that Rajas fire and Sattva light, which movement can evolve.” For “heroic greatness and energy of character,” a basis in the animal or Tamas energies of man is needed.

To help us see that Tamas contains within itself potentially the other two qualities, which have to evolve from it, we are given an illustration: Tamas is the coal, and coal is necessary if we want fire, steam, or light. “Through the anguish of the fire alone can the black coal of the mine become transmuted into light. And so the sorrow and anguish, which result inevitably from the passions in the Rajas, or emotional life, constitute the purifying fire designed to purge away the dross of our Titanic nature, and transmute it into the pure Sattva, where purity, goodness, and truth are predominant.”

The “dark plastic love” of Tamas, the “simple, unreflecting, spontaneous kindness of nature,” devoid of passion and unawakened to the light of knowledge, is necessary for our material existence. Therefore it is that Mandodari’s love for Ravan, which is of the Tamas quality, her affectionate discharge of her duty in looking after his physical needs and comforts, is necessary to him at his present stage and also will be needed by him in the future when he advances to a higher stage.

As the human soul progresses from Tamas to Rajas, brute appetite and blind impulse are superseded by passion, and the life of the senses becomes the life of emotion and desire and therefore of pain, which in time awakens the mind. Yet it is this very emotional

life which is the fire that purges this quality in time because of the sorrow and suffering connected with it. It is only through pain that we begin to reflect and try to gain knowledge so as to alleviate or avoid this pain and suffering. In doing so, we begin to reach outside our own Rajasic nature and turn to a still higher sphere of ideal life. Reason, knowledge, universal sympathy grow up within us and awaken the Sattvic quality. Passion dies, “killed by its own pain and swallowed up in love and absolute resignation.” The restless activity of the emotions is transformed into the unruffled constant activity of Sattva, which is universal Joy. All other passions expire in giving birth to an eternal sentiment of justice and love, which are ultimately one.

The Dream of Ravan also gives a description of these qualities in terms of colour. Tamas, matter, is dark purple or violet; Rajas is red; Sattva is orange. When Sattva re-enters into Rajas and Tamas and penetrates them with its influence, all three isolated prismatic colours coalesce into pure universal light, and a consciousness of divine reunion. This is a stage beyond Sattva, the stage of pure being, pure truth, pure goodness, all merged into one, and is attained only when all isolation is renounced.

When Sattva, which is the characteristic of spirit in antithesis to body and soul, matter and life, escapes from the chains of individuality and limitation and loses itself in pure light, then we are beyond the three qualities. As our book puts it, this is attained

“When man becomes God”...when the plastic, and the emotional, and the ideal, become absolutely one, and there is, properly speaking, neither matter, nor soul, nor spirit, but something which is all and yet none of these—call it Brahm; call it the constant or eternal Life; call it, if you will, that true Hindu trinity in unity—SACH—CHID—ANANDA-GHANA—“SOLIDARITY OF BEING, THOUGHT, and JOY;” in which the eternal going-forth and reintroduction of the One, is expressed in the most perfect harmony with the deepest speculation of Platonism....

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Globalization, says George Soros, chairman of the Open Society Institute, based in New York, is the answer to many of the world’s ills—but not just globalization in its current form of international trade. For globalization to work, he says, nations—especially affluent nations like the U.S.—will have to start making moral considerations an integral part of their foreign policy: “I think there is now greater awareness that what goes on in the rest of the world is of vital importance to us. We can’t have failed states and corrupt and inefficient governments in the rest of the world if we want to be safe and prosperous at home.”

Extracts from his recent book, *George Soros on Globalization*, are printed in *New Scientist* for April 27:

The lesson we have to learn is that morality has to play a larger role in international affairs. The asymmetric threats that confront us arise out of the asymmetry that we have identified in globalization: we have global markets but we do not have a global society. And we cannot build a global society without taking into account moral considerations.

It requires a profound change of attitude, a veritable change of heart. Such a radical change is not possible in normal times, but these are not normal times. We have become aware how precarious our civilization is. It does not make sense to devote all our energies to improving our relative position in a social system when the system itself is drifting toward disaster...We must abandon the unthinking pursuit of narrow self-interest and give some thought to the future of humanity.

Failure to accept the interdependence of humanity on the part of individuals and nations is the root cause of many of the problems we are facing.

It is an occult law [says H.P.B.], that no man can rise superior to his individual failings, without lifting, be it ever so little, the whole body of which he is an integral part. In the same way, no one can sin, nor suffer the effects of sin, alone. In reality, there is no such thing as “Separateness”; and the nearest approach

to that selfish state, which the laws of life permit, is in the intent or motive. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 20)

Flowering plants changed the face of our world millions of years ago. The drab earth got transformed into a bouquet of colours. This was about 130 million years ago, during the Cretaceous period, say today's researchers. (*National Geographic*, July 2002)

Paleobotanists are searching for an answer to the question as to how the first flowering plants emerged. They are seeking for clues in fossilized flowers, discovered throughout the 1900s on several continents. At the same time, they say, the field of genetics has "brought a whole new set of tools to the search."

The search goes on, with some molecular biologists working to decipher the genealogy of flowering plants by studying the DNA of today's species. Elizabeth Zimmer of the Smithsonian Institution and her colleagues, for instance, are looking in their shared data for groups of plants with common inherited traits, hoping eventually to identify a common ancestor to all flowering plants.

Is the origin of plants in general any more understood than the origin of flowers? Physical changes in any organism are preceded by internal changes. This is at the heart of every evolutionary development. It is now an acknowledged fact that plants have a consciousness and intelligence of their own, but until the "life force," which is the guiding force in the evolution of any organism, is accepted and understood, biological secrets will not be unravelled.

H.P.B. repeated an ancient teaching when she said:

The different variations of plants, etc., are the broken rays of one Ray. As the ray passes through the seven planes, it is broken on every plane into thousands and millions of rays down to the world of forms, every ray breaking into an intelligence on its own plane. So that we see every plant has an intelligence, or its own purpose of life, so to speak, and its own freewill, to a degree.... A plant can be receptive or non-receptive, though *every plant without an exception* feels and has a consciousness

of its own. But besides the latter, every plant—from the gigantic tree down to the minutest fern or blade of grass—has, Occultism teaches us, an Elemental entity of which it is the outward clothing on this plane. (*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, p. 97)

H.P.B. goes on to explain that each plant has its Karma and it is on this that its growth depends. "This Karma proceeds from the lower Dhyana Chohans who trace out and plan the growth of the tree."

Plant intelligence manifests in various ways. Plants have more than thorns and thistles to protect themselves; they use chemical signals as well, which not only repel insect enemies but also help to put neighbouring plants on alert so they can mount their own defences, says Ian Baldwin, a biologist and the director of the Molecular Ecology Department at the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology in Jena, Germany. Baldwin, with the help of his team and his equipment, which he has stationed in the Utah desert, has launched a new study of how plants defend themselves—a question he has pursued for 20 years. *Discover* magazine (April 2002) reports:

He and his colleagues are using chemical sensors to investigate plant communications: cries for help, invitations, even warnings, each in the form of odour molecules that float past human noses unnoticed. The harder biologists look for these signals, the more they find. They have already discovered that plants can send chemical cues to repel insect enemies, as well as signals that attract allies—other insects that are pleased to eat the insects eating the plant. But that is only the start of a more complex scenario, for Baldwin and others have also found that nearby plants can listen in to this conversation and gear up their own defences.

"Eventually, we will use the information we get here to breed agricultural crops that call out to their insect allies more loudly and more consistently," says Baldwin....

In 1988 Marcel Dicke and his colleagues at Wageningen University in the Netherlands offered evidence that plants under insect attack could enlist help from the enemies of their enemies. Dicke found that when spider mites attack lima bean plants, the plants release a chemical SOS that attracts another mite that preys on the spider mite....“Today,” Dicke says, “the scientific community agrees that plants talking to their bodyguards is likely to be a characteristic of most, if not all, plant species.”

With time, persistence, and the use of new techniques, scientists’ attitudes are changing. What was once dismissed by them is now being accepted. Researchers now find it reasonable that plants can pick up on—and use—each other’s signals. “If plants talk to their bodyguards,” says Dicke, “then why would their neighbours not take advantage of that and eavesdrop on the message? The topic of plant-to-plant communication is back on the agenda, and the evidence is accumulating.”

Some years ago, Soviet biologists found that plants have a sophisticated and perfect nervous system. They respond sensitively to the least changes in the environment, and send relevant reports to a nerve centre which, like the human or animal brain, controls their functioning. Furthermore, it was found that plants have memory and a language of their own.

Should this not breed in us a respect for the lower kingdoms of Nature which the ancients possessed and which we have since lost?

Wilderness, says Roderick Frazier Nash, is a moral resource. “We desperately need the ethical discipline wilderness provides.” Nash, who is professor emeritus of history and environmental studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, writes in *New Scientist*:

Conceived as the habitat of other species, not as a human playground, wilderness is the best environment in which to learn that humans are members in, and not masters of, the community of life. And this ethical idea, working as a restraint

in our relations with the environment, may be the starting point for saving this planet....

The largest part of the energy of early civilization was directed at conquering wilderness in nature and disciplining it in human nature. For the first time humans saw themselves as distinct from—and, they reasoned, better than—the rest of nature. They began to think of themselves as masters, not members, of the community of life....

It was hard to imagine other living things as relatives, or nature as sacred. The community concepts, and attendant ethical respect, that had worked to curb human self-interest in dealings with nature declined in direct proportion to the “rise” of civilization. Nature lost its significance as something to which people belonged and became something they possessed: an adversary, a target, an object for exploitation....Our species has become a terrible neighbour to the 30 million and more other species sharing space on this planet.

This is not really an “environmental problem.” It’s a human problem. What needs to be conquered now is not the wilderness, but ourselves. We need to understand that it is civilization that is out of control.

Mind-pollution is more serious than chemical pollution. It is time to understand that there is no “good life” without a good environment and that it is a false prosperity that cannot be sustained over the long ecological haul. Growth must be dissociated from progress. Bigger is not better if the system is destroyed. As the deep ecologists recognize, we must now emphasize wholes over parts, and pursue justice at the level of entire ecosystems. A new valuation of wilderness is an excellent place to start.

Wilderness preservation expresses a belief in the rights of nature. Our species is intoxicated with its power and has so far failed to recognize that our basic interests are inextricably linked to those of the greater environmental whole. The concept of “growth” has been carried too far. Respecting wilderness, then, “is prudent as well as ethically enlightened.”

What is the aim of all medicine? All drugs, surgeries and medical research programmes have one end—to relieve physical suffering. Yet few ask—why do we suffer? How does one really cure suffering? Is there another way? Nolini Kanta Gupta's article (*Namah*, 15 July 2002), reproduced from his *Collected Works*, explores these questions:

The world is ridden with diseases and privations and calamities. And if something is done to alleviate them, it is as it should be; activities in that direction deserve full encouragement. But this does not go far enough, does not touch the root of the matter...

It is not true that when one's wants are met, one always becomes or remains happy. Happiness is a quality that depends upon something else and comes from elsewhere: it is not directly proportional to material well-being. Unhappiness too is a psychological entity and consists in a special vibration of mind and vitality—and consequently of the physical being—due to a warp in the consciousness itself, in the core of the inner personality. The material conditions serve only to manifest it, maintain or aggravate it, but do not create it—truly they are created by it. That is why the unhappy mortals are always called to turn to the Divine in their distress.

True charity consists in laying the healing balm upon the sore that lies hidden behind all external miseries. And it is in the sole possession of him alone who has found the bliss of the Spirit and dwells in it always. Such a person does not require external accessories for his work of healing and comforting. His presence itself is a healing power: the patient feels it and wonders at the ease and happiness that come into him...

The healing power is in the spiritual consciousness, the inalienable bliss of one's status in the Spirit. One becomes identified with each and every object—person or thing—in one's own self, in the true being and substance; and the light and happiness that one possesses there inalienably go out in a spontaneous flow to others who are not really others but integral parts and portions of the same self.

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