

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE PROBLEM OF ETHICS

In every conceivable case he [the individual] himself must be a centre of spiritual action, and from him and his own daily individual life must radiate those higher spiritual forces which alone can regenerate his fellow-men.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

The ethics of Theosophy are more important than any divulgement of psychic laws and facts. The latter relate wholly to the material and evanescent part of the septenary man, but the Ethics sink into and take hold of the real man—the reincarnating Ego.

—H.P. BLAVATSKY

“LIGHT and darkness are the world's eternal ways,” says the *Gita*. There have always been the pairs of opposites in the world. The rebels have co-existed with the god-fearing, and so, too, the law-abiders with the lawbreakers. For Rama there was Ravana and for Krishna there was Kansa. The problem of erosion of ethics is not a new one, but what causes concern is the unprecedented increase in unethical practices in our day. Immorality is not merely a social issue. The cancer of immorality has spread to almost all fields—business, sports, social, political, educational and even scientific—and is far more complex now than it was in days of old. Some of the ethical issues are so intricate and tricky as to make it difficult

to decide if an individual or group of individuals have overstepped the boundaries of morality. There are divided opinions regarding many scientific investigations, such as stem-cell research, cloning, genetically engineered crops, etc. For instance, grafting human brain cells into animal brains so as to get an insight into diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, etc., has evoked criticism. It is felt that "science is blurring the line between humans and animals. Researchers have stepped across the moral lines...that must be defined" (*Newsweek*, August 7, 2006). Do ends justify means? Are we interfering with natural processes? There are no cut and dried answers to these questions. For, though the ethics are *universal*—true at all times and all places—and there is nothing like "Christian" ethics as separate from "Hindu" ethics, for that matter, "business" ethics as distinct from "political" ethics, it does require a certain amount of reflection and ingenuity to apply the ethical principles to various fields.

We are in the Dark Age or *Kali Yuga*, the last of the four ages, which are in the order of declining morals. Golden Age is described as the age of spiritual innocence of man, when righteousness (portrayed as a beast) is said to stand on all four legs. In the Silver Age righteousness stands on three legs; in the Bronze Age on two legs, and in *Kali Yuga* it barely manages to stand on one leg. In *Kali Yuga*, when there is moral darkness everywhere, doing good and being good is difficult, as compared to the Golden Age, when everyone around is moral. We cannot do much *against Kali Yuga*, but we can do much *in* it. For instance, it is tiresome to walk a long distance in the hot sun, and if we did, it would call for more effort. However, the same is accomplished with much less effort in the winter.

However, men of morals and integrity are not as rare as we suppose even in this age; only their deeds are not highlighted. As H.P.B. writes:

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 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. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 32*, p. 2)

However, the fact that there are a few who are not willing to compromise when it comes to ethics and morals shows that it is useless to blame our environment—family, society or the world at large. It is true that by altering the surrounding of the person we can alter the person, but that is not the whole of the story. Often there is more honesty and uprightness to be seen in a poor and disadvantaged person than in one surrounded by the luxuries of life. How is it that a sweeper in a bank on finding a wallet containing a big sum of money returns it to the owner, while the officer earning twenty times the sweeper's salary is on the lookout for unfair ways and means of making extra bucks? We provide a chink in the armour. The Buddha says, "He whose hand has no wound may touch poison. Poison harms not one who has no wound. No evil is to him, who does no evil" (*The Dhammapada*, verse 124). However, none of us is so fortified and invulnerable. Each of us has one or more weak spots, in terms of lust for money, sex, fame, power, and what have you. As a first step then we may remain away from those temptations, while inwardly building up strength to combat them. Some of us are quite ready to practise ethics so long as we are not inconvenienced, but quick to compromise our principles the minute we are in a tight spot. When everyone in an organization takes bribes, the price we pay for remaining "clean" is, undergoing the trauma of being isolated, being taunted and persecuted. And yet there have been a few who have braved it all, sticking to their principles. The Buddha says, "From a heap of rubbish on the roadside, a lily blooms, fragrant and pleasing."

World reform follows self-reform. All evil we find in society, nation or race, the germs of it are in us too. The first step then is to

eradicate the germs of “corruption,” “greed,” “competition,” etc., in *us*. “The sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame; for you are a part of it.” We may feel that we are not corrupt—may be not in a big way. We must ask ourselves: What is our desire for wealth like? Do we welcome it no matter how it is earned? Or do we insist upon earning it by honest means—even when we are placed in a difficult financial situation? Immorality must be nipped in the bud before it acquires unmanageable proportions. For instance, many years ago, people used to give black money to builders. As the amount in question was small, no effort was made to check the practice. Today, the amount involved runs into lakhs of rupees. In the name of creating a broad-minded and liberal society, we have the bane of co-habiting, extra-marital affairs, unwed mothers, homosexuality, alcoholism, drug-addiction and so on. Often, it comes clothed in a beautiful garb, such as “ambition,” “self-improvement,” etc. Our society encourages ambition, so much so that the ambitious feel no qualms of conscience in using others as stepping stones to realize their ambitions. How can steps for correction be taken when people do not feel that they are doing anything wrong? Society has given tacit permission, drowning the voices of isolated reformers. Every criticism meets with the counter-question: “What is wrong with it?” But then life is found to be a great teacher and a tough taskmaster. Nature does retaliate against transgression of moral laws in every department, and we experience her fury in the form of incurable diseases like AIDS, and natural calamities like earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.

Not a single example of righteous living is unimportant. By our indifference or negative attitude, such as, “a single individual can make no difference,” we may allow the evil to swell. We are continually affecting one another for good or ill. There is the story of a grocer who always cheated his customers using faulty scales. In fact, he had spare scales to meet with emergencies. Once a vegetable vendor, who had broken his scales, borrowed the faulty

scales from the grocer. Now the wife of this grocer, who always bought her vegetables from the same vegetable vendor, complained of getting lesser quantity of vegetables than before. The grocer confessed that the vegetable vendor had been using faulty scales, borrowed from him, for the past few days. This apparently simple story has many implications. “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” In fact, it is the concrete example of what is happening on the invisible plane. Since we are all interconnected on the invisible plane, we are continually helping or hindering others in building their character, not only by our actions, but also by our thoughts—for good or ill. By not resisting the temptation to take bribe or tell a lie, or by allowing a material or sensual thought to enter the mind, we are giving an impulse to some weak person with similar tendency to indulge in sin. The converse is also true. Every attempt to overcome vices in us sends out an impulse for good that strengthens another individual who may be fighting similar weaknesses. Mr. Judge writes:

We attract what we love, and we may derive a greater strength from the vitality of thoughts infused from without than from those self-produced within us at a time when our nervous vitality is exhausted. It is a solemn thought, this, of our responsibility for the impulse of another. We live in one another, and our widely different deeds have often a common source.
(*Letters That Have Helped Me*)

H.P.B. points out that we are like cells in the body. One unhealthy cell may affect the whole body. There is no such thing as separateness. It is an occult law, “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 the sin, alone.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 201)

What is needed is an inner conversion, change in people’s minds and hearts. This also implies that it is not enough to impose laws

in order to improve any social, economic or political system. It has been noticed, for instance, that so long as men are dishonest, bullies and twisters, they always find out some new way of cheating, evading tax, etc. However stringent the laws are made, people succeed in finding loopholes. It is said that nobody would care to follow the Ten Commandments if there was an eleventh commandment that said: “Thou shalt not be found out.” We cannot have good society without good men, and we cannot have good men merely by imposing laws. The emphasis must be on individual morality.

He [the disciple] smiles at the socialist and the reformer who endeavour by sheer force to re-arrange circumstances which arise out of the forces of human nature itself. This is but kicking against the pricks; a waste of life and energy. (*Light on the Path*, p. 77)

Dryden wrote: “...virtue in distress, and vice in triumph, make atheists of mankind.” H.P.B. points out that it is so in the absence of knowledge of Karma. Karma is the law of ethical causation, the all-seeing law which brings back the exact consequences of our actions, and which none can bribe, fool or dodge. Doctrines of Karma and Rebirth provide a sure and logical basis for ethics. The belief that it is possible to escape the consequences of one’s own actions, is the fertile source of all crime and immorality. Once teach the people “that greatest of all laws, *Karma* and *Reincarnation*, and besides feeling in themselves the true dignity of human nature, they will turn from evil and eschew it as they would a physical danger.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 245-46)

We need to go back to the basics. “Contentment is the greatest wealth.” There is the suggestive story by Leo Tolstoy, “How much land does a man need”? It is about a man who had insatiable desire for possessing larger and larger areas of land. His greed leads him to a village where the elder tells him that as much land as he can cover by walking, from morning till sunset, will be his, with the

condition that he should return to the original spot by sunset. The greedy man tries to cover a very large area, with the result that he is breathless by sunset and dies of exhaustion as he reaches the original spot. Ironically, the villagers bury him by digging a patch of land, just long enough to hold his body, *i.e.*, seven feet! Some of the ambitious “achievers” of our day fall in the same category.

We need to awaken the conscience, which has been silenced, if not killed, by centuries of unethical living. H.P.B. explains the difficulty of achieving quick reform, even in one’s self, when she writes, “Man is a free agent during his stay on earth...[but] there are *external and internal conditions* which affect the determination of our will upon our actions.” It is comparatively easy to overcome the influence of the external environment, but it is not so easy to fight the inner environment. The inner environment of a person is the sum total of all experiences and circumstances of a given life as well as those of earlier lives. A stingy, greedy or unkind person often has the background of a difficult childhood or an exposure to severe poverty. So also, our mental, moral and psychic constitution is ours under Karma, from previous lives. A person born with an especially strong tendency towards gossip or sensuality or greed has to fight harder to curb these tendencies than another person who is not burdened with the weight of his past Karma. Hence H.P.B. points out:

All good and evil things in humanity have their roots in human character, and this character is, and has been, conditioned by the endless chain of cause and effect. But this conditioning applies to the future as well as to the present and the past. Selfishness, indifference, and brutality can never be the normal state of the race—to believe so would be to despair of humanity—and that no Theosophist can do. (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 232-33)

THE ART OF HEALING

IS there any human being who has not felt pain, who has not experienced bodily disturbance, and who has not had to send for a doctor? And yet how many among us have instituted any inquiry into the real causes of bodily ailments so that a real system of curing as well as preventing diseases may be understood! Though the philosophy of Theosophy has no detailed information and prescriptions about this or that disease, it shows that there is full knowledge to be obtained by one who proceeds from universal first principles to innumerable details and particulars. The Great Masters are not only Teachers, but also *Healers*. They know the Science of Herbs and Simples. They possess the power of magnetism that cures, and in their custody are the full and detailed results of generations of true and real Healers. If they do not broadcast their precious knowledge it is because of two very grave defects which largely prevail in our civilization: (1) People have not yet accepted the great truth that self-reliance is the basic law of life. There are certain types of pain and suffering which cause growth, like teething in a child. The Great Masters cannot take any step in the direction of the masses of mankind to reveal their great knowledge till men and women realize that they have to fight their own fights. Imagine full and complete knowledge in the hands of our modern doctors! People would go on from crime to crime, sin to sin, and run to the doctors, to be cured of the physical effects of their crimes and sins. And that brings us to the second factor. (2) People have to understand the tremendously important fact that bodily diseases are intimately connected with moral blemishes and mental defects.

On account of these two great philosophical principles which most men and women neglect, the right knowledge and the supreme art of Healing is not known to the world. Hence, there must be full and complete recognition that body, feelings, thoughts, and the soul who uses them, are all intimately related and affect one another

continuously in innumerable ways.

To understand the subject of bodily diseases and their cure, it is necessary to have some idea of the human constitution. Theosophy agrees with modern science that the human body is a tremendously active hive of living cells composed of living molecules. However, these cells and molecules are held together by an inner body, which in Sanskrit is known as *Pranamaya Kosha—Kosha* or Sheath of *Prana*, Life-Energy or Breath. It is our breathing that maintains our contact with the great universe outside of us. Occult psychology and Theosophical philosophy fully recognize that without the basis of *Pranamaya Kosha* which we call the astral body, the physical bodily functions and diseases cannot be understood. The health of our physical body depends upon the health of our inner body.

The astral body is composed of matter that is subtle and is electrical and magnetic in nature. Again, just as our physical bodily organs are composed of cells and molecules, so the astral body organs are composed of luminous, sentient points which are called “fiery lives.” These fiery lives are called *devatas* in Sanskrit and in Hindu religious books. There are different types of fiery lives. These lives are luminous and possess the power to attract, and also to repel what they cannot hold. The health of the physical body is wholly and entirely dependent upon the kind of fiery lives, upon the nature and character of the *devatas* that are present in the astral body.

What determines the type of fiery lives that any of us possesses in the astral body? Two important factors determine it: First, our past Karma. Our free-will actions in past lives have brought to us in the present certain types of fiery lives, some of which are so powerfully impressed that they have now become the very foundations of our astral body. They remain, more or less, immovable. Secondly, there are our own present thoughts and feelings that impress the fiery lives which are not so immovable. Thus Theosophy explains the phenomenon of congenital diseases—diseases with which we are born, most of which do not yield to

treatment leading to complete cure. People are born idiots, or born deaf and dumb—these are the results of Karma generated in the past and which in the process of time and through suffering can be wiped out.

Our feelings or emotions affect our bodily health, and modern science has fully recognized this. We find its corroboration in the book, *Man, the Unknown* by Alexis Carrel, a great scientific thinker, a surgeon of renown, who won the Nobel Prize in 1912. He writes:

Each state of consciousness probably has a corresponding organic expression. Emotions, as is well known, determine the dilation or the contraction of the small arteries, through the vasomotor nerves....Pleasure causes the skin of the face to flush. Anger and fear turn it white....Thus, envy, hate, fear, when these sentiments are habitual, are capable of starting organic changes and genuine diseases. Moral suffering profoundly disturbs health. Businessmen who do not know how to fight worry, die young. The old clinicians thought that protracted and constant anxiety prepares the way for the development of cancer....

When our activity is set toward a precise end, our mental and organic functions become completely harmonized. The unification of the desires, the application of the mind to a single purpose, produces a sort of inner peace. Man integrates himself by meditation, just as by action. But he should not be content with contemplating the beauty of the ocean, of the mountains....He must also be the soul which strives to attain the moral ideal, searches for light in the darkness of this world....

In the communities where moral sense and intelligence are simultaneously developed, nervous and nutritive diseases, criminality, and insanity are rare. But when psychological activities become more intense and specialized they may bring about certain disturbances of health....It seems also that certain states of consciousness determine true pathological changes. Most of the great mystics have endured physiological changes

and mental suffering, at least during a part of their lives. Moreover, contemplation may be accompanied by nervous phenomena resembling those of hysteria and clairvoyance. (pp. 141-43)

What is put forward above are age-old truths. The ordinary man's mind is called feeling-mind or *Kama-Manasa*. *Kama-Manas* affects first the astral body, and then through it the visible, physical body. Roots of health or ill-health are in this *Kama-Manas*. Ordinary doctors and surgeons deal with only *effects*. Hence, the same diseases grow; the roots are hardly touched, so new branches or new moods and new vices also result.

When we are ill, let us not try to cure our fever by the power of thought—that is foolish. Nor should we take the attitude, “This is my Karma, let me bear it.” That also is foolishness. H.P.B. points out that we must secure the best practical advice that we can get. Among the different systems of medicine and schools of doctors a choice must be made. Homoeopathy, Nature Cure, Ayurveda are comparatively better systems. Diseases which have already surfaced, are effects of past moods, past thinking—in short, results of past Karma, but our present moods and attitude are makers of our future health or ill-health.

These three—attitude, thoughts and moods—have a connection: they are like three lines of a triangle. These three also result from past Karma; however, in the present, now and here, all three of them can be modified and improved. Moods can be improved by new thoughts; general thinking can be improved by acquiring new attitude; new attitude can be acquired by the Soul within the body—the perceiver, the observer, the Immortal, Inner Ruler.

Let us begin with our moods: watch them take birth and grow. All of us without exception are in some kind of a mood. The background of particular moods is the general thinking that is energized by desires and feelings. General thinking may be compared to a sea in which waves of moods arise and fall again. In its turn, this general thinking is according to our general attitude

to life, to environment, to people. So attitude generates thinking, thinking generates moods, and moods generate good or ill health. When moods have become permanent, have become virtues or vices, then we have more lasting good or ill health.

When anger, hate and jealousy eat away or eat into the substance of our astral body, then precipitations in the physical body result and we have such diseases as cancer or leprosy, which eat away bodily tissues.

We must begin by changing the attitude and recognize the existence of the soul. The Soul exists and is the controller and the guide of our thinking. Mind is the immediate and for practical purposes the only instrument of the Soul. Mind is plastic and the Soul moulds or shapes the mind according to his own divine nature. However, our mind is already shaped and led by our *Kama*—personal desires and feelings. This mould of mind built by *Kama* has become hard—as hard as iron, and unless it is put in the blazing fire of knowledge and beaten by the hammer of practice it will not break.

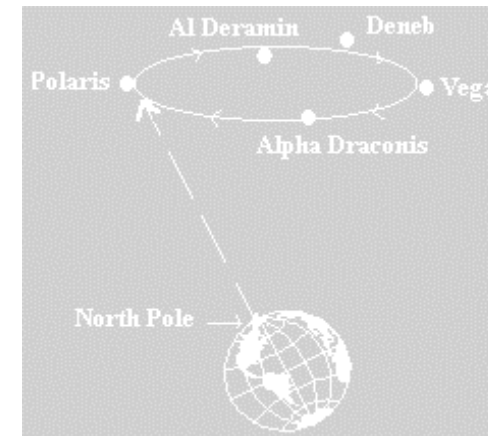
When we are in an evil mood, we must make a sincere and persevering effort to turn our attention to the Light of the Soul. In the heart, says Shri Krishna, the Highest Self dwells; turn to that inner divinity and soon you will overcome the mood. Secondly, by acquiring right ideas from Theosophy we can cleanse and beautify our general thinking. Thirdly, by practising Theosophical Truths daily, we can manifest Right Attitude.

The great Healers of human souls are Immortal Spiritual Beings, whose attitude to all life, to the whole world and to all humanity is that of Compassion and Sacrifice. They have but one continuous mood of helpfulness to the Nature whose living power they recognize. In their Divine Mercy, which is justice, they sympathize with the sufferings of our bodies, but more with the causal suffering which is of the ignorant or superstitious mind.

ASTRONOMICAL CYCLES

II

EARTH is not a perfect sphere. It bulges at the equator. The combined gravitational effects of the sun, moon, and planets on the Earth's equatorial bulge cause the Earth's axis to sway clockwise in a slow circle, like the wobbly motion of a spinning top which is running down before it comes to a stop. Earth's axis seems to sweep out a cone, making a circle in the heavens in approximately 25,868 years. As a result several bright stars by turn become the "North Pole Star" of our earth.



At the time when the Egyptians were building pyramids, the North Pole star was Alpha Draconis (Thuban) in the constellation of Draco. Today, our pole star is Polaris in the constellation of Ursa Minor. The next North Pole star will be Al Deramin and then the bright star Vega in the constellation of Lyrae in 14000 A.D.

Thus we are taught that the great Pyramids were built under their direct supervision, "when *Dhruva* (the then Pole-star) was at his lowest culmination, and the Krittika (Pleiades) looked over his head (were on the same meridian but above) to watch the work of the giants." Thus, as the first Pyramids were built

at the beginning of a Sidereal year, under *Dhruva* (Alpha Polaris), it must have been over 31,000 years (31,105) ago....“The stories told by Egyptian priests and others of time-keeping in Egypt, are now beginning to look less like lies in the sight of all who have escaped from biblical bondage,” writes the author of “*The Natural Genesis*.” “Inscriptions have lately been found at Sakkarah, making mention of two Sothic cycles . . . registered at that time, now some 6,000 years ago. Thus when Herodotus was in Egypt, the Egyptians had—as now known—observed at least five different Sothic cycles of 1,461 years. The priests informed the Greek inquirer that time had been reckoned by them for so long that the sun had twice risen where it then set, and twice set where it then arose. This . . . can only be realized as a fact in nature by means of two cycles of Precession, or a period of 51,736 years.” (*S.D.*, I, 435)

The completion of this grand period also brings the earth into newer spaces of the cosmos—because Sun itself revolves around a center of his own. And if earth’s rotation causes days and nights, its revolutions cause seasons, it is quite reasonable to expect humanity as a whole getting affected by the great sidereal cycle—the most important astronomical cycle.

It is not claimed that the conjunction causes the effect, but that ages ago the Masters of Wisdom worked out all the problems in respect to man and found in the heavens the means for knowing the exact dates when events are sure to recur, and then by imprinting in the minds of older nations the symbology of the Zodiac were able to preserve the record and the prophecy. Thus in the same way that a watchmaker can tell the hour by the arrival of the hands or the works of the watch at certain fixed points, the Sages can tell the hour for events by the Zodiacal clock. (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 130)

Another interesting cycle is that of the Moon—the Metonic cycle. It is a period of about nineteen years, which being completed the new and the full moon return on the same (solar) days of the month. Meton attempted to reconcile solar and lunar time. For

solar and lunar time to coincide, they have to have the Least Common Multiple, and that common multiple is 19 years, as we shall see later.

The Moon makes its full journey through the sky in, roughly, 27 days (the exact decimal figure is 27.322 days). It is called the Sidereal Lunar Month, or the Tropical Lunar Month. So the Moon returns to the same background stars (*i.e.*, returns to the same constellation) every 27.3 days.

The cause of moon phases is that from the Earth we see the part of the Moon that is illuminated by the Sun from different angles as the Moon traverses its orbit. So the appearance depends on the position of the Moon with respect to the Sun (as seen from the Earth). However, since the Earth itself moves around the Sun, it takes the Moon a little extra time (after completing a sidereal month, *i.e.*, a full circle) to catch up and return to the same position with respect to the Sun or the *same phase* as seen from earth. In other words, the time it takes the Moon to return from one full phase to the next is, roughly speaking, 29 ½ days. (Actual period expressed as a decimal is 29.5306 days). That period is called a Synodic Lunar Month. In other words, because of the relative motions of the Earth, Moon and Sun, the time taken by the Moon to return to the *same phase* is 29 ½ days, instead of 27 days (though it returns to the same constellation in 27 days).

The Metonic cycle is a period which being completed, the new and full moon return on the same solar day of the month. Thus, if it is a full-moon day, say on 1st January 2006, the Metonic cycle gives us a period after which we shall again have the full moon on 1st January in some future year.

Since 235 Lunar synodical months and 254 Lunar tropical months roughly equal 19 Solar tropical years, the Least Common Multiple for lunar and solar time to coincide is 19, as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 19 \text{ Solar tropical years} &= 365.24 \times 19 &= 6939.56 \text{ days} \\
 235 \text{ Lunar synodic months} &= 235 \times 29.5306 &= 6939.691 \text{ days} \\
 254 \text{ Lunar tropical months} &= 254 \times 27.322 &= 6939.788 \text{ days}
 \end{aligned}$$

Further, Meton fixed up the calendar in this way: out of this 19 year Metonic cycle, 12 out of the 19 years had 12 months in them and 7 had 13 months—lunar months.

(Concluded)

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SOUL’S PILGRIMAGE

PILGRIMAGE is seen as an integral part of religious life. A Hindu considers it his religious duty to visit Kashi, at least once before death, and so too, every devout Muslim wishes to make a pilgrimage (*Haj*) to Mecca and Medina. In fact, “the whole of India is dotted with such sacred shrines, to which pilgrimages are made,” writes Mr. Judge. These holy places are like “Spiritual Seminaries.” The Adepts founded these places in order to keep alive in the minds of the people the inner significance of pilgrimage. Moreover, it is asserted that at most of the famous places of pilgrimage there is an Adept, who is ready to guide and give spiritual insight to all pure-hearted pilgrims visiting the place.

However, these pilgrimages are a symbolic representation of the life of man from birth to death, and also that of the eternal pilgrim from the beginning to the end of a Manvantara, or period of evolution. But who is the pilgrim of this eternal pilgrimage? In H.P.B.’s words:

We are outwardly creatures of but a day; within we are eternal. (*Five Messages*, p. 26)

That which lives and thinks in man, and which survives the human tabernacle, the masterpiece of evolution—is the “Eternal Pilgrim.” (*S.D.*, II, 728)

This Eternal Pilgrim is the Reincarnating or Spiritual Ego, which is the only immortal and eternal principle in us—an indivisible part of the integral whole—the Universal Spirit. The spiritual Ego of man is a real pilgrim, which “moves in an eternity like a pendulum between the hours of birth and death.” Even the period of rest, *i.e.*, the interval of death, cannot stop the pilgrimage for the eternal pilgrim. Why does the Ego move in cycles of birth and death? To get the answer, we have to think about the evolution of man. The Monad (*Atma-Buddhi*) is like a spark detached from the central fire, which is “a Witness in us of the panorama of growth,

which has watched in the beginningless past as he is watching today and as he will watch in the endless future. This is the Atma, the One Life, mirrored in Buddhi, the unbreakable vehicle—the Eternal Spectator.” But there is that in us which is the experiencer, the sufferer, the enjoyer, gathering experience through the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms by natural impulse and finally, reaching the human kingdom. This is the immortal triad, *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*, the Eternal Pilgrim.

The responsibility for further progress lies with man because, at a certain point in the course of evolution, Divine Beings called *Manasaputras* lighted up or activated the mind of man, which was lying dormant like an unlit candle. This happened eighteen million years ago, endowing man with self-consciousness and the power to think and choose.

After reaching the human stage, by self-induced and self-devised efforts, under the Law of Karma, the reincarnating Ego has to pass through various experiences and return back “home,” like a pilgrim who returns home from his pilgrimage. By gathering the essence or nectar of all experiences of pilgrimage, in various lives, the Ego has to reach the divine state *consciously* while in the physical body. The only real help and guidance on this journey comes from the inner planes of one's being, besides spiritual books and Teachers. Buddha said to his disciples, “Be ye lamps unto yourselves.” In this way, from the beauty and perfection of one plane to the greater beauty and perfection of another plane, the Ego has to travel to its ultimate goal.

“Humanity is an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto.” In the *Gita*, Shri Krishna tells Arjuna, “You are born with the divine destiny.” But to come to the realization of the divinity within necessitates journeying on a long and difficult path. The journey of the pilgrims to the temples of Badrinath, Kedarnath or Amarnath, situated on high mountain tops, as they brave storms and snowfalls, is a reminder of the soul's pilgrimage beset with trials and suffering, described so graphically in *The Secret Doctrine*:

Between the Alpha and the Omega there is the weary “Road” hedged in by thorns, that

“...goes down first, then—
Winds uphill all the way,
Yes, to the very end...”

Starting upon the long journey immaculate; descending more and more into sinful matter, and having connected himself with every atom in manifested *Space*—the *Pilgrim*, having struggled through and suffered in every form of life and being, is only at the bottom of the valley of matter, and half through his cycle, when he has identified himself with collective Humanity. This, *he has made in his own image*. In order to progress upwards and homewards, the “God” has now to ascend the weary uphill path of the Golgotha of Life. It is the martyrdom of self-conscious existence. (I, 268)

Clearly, this journey is not for the faint-hearted, and one has to keep going without giving up hope. It is a journey from the alone to the alone. Hence, one may not always get the company of fellow-pilgrims. So at the outset it is better to cultivate the habit and strength to stand or travel on alone, if need be.

We may say that the journey accomplished merely by the legs is travelling, but when the heart participates and guides it, it becomes a pilgrimage. To be a true pilgrim, we should first know and understand the divine purpose of life and our place and duty in this world, else we would end up becoming wanderers instead of pilgrims.

Since the Path is narrow, hard and difficult to walk, and is not outside but within, a pilgrim has to prepare *internally* for the pilgrimage. The first step is to learn to discriminate between the everfleeting and the everlasting, as between the true and false, which in turn will help us cultivate detachment. As the captain of a ship throws away all luggage to prevent the ship from sinking, so one must discard all earthly belongings. “Empty the boat, O Bhikkhu; when emptied it will go lightly,” taught the Buddha.

But on the other hand one has to prepare the mental luggage. This means one has to prepare one's mind. The human mind is compared to a mirror. The dirt of passions, the ashes of moral death, the dust of false knowledge, does not allow the mind-mirror to shine and reflect. So, with the help of right philosophy and universal ideas, we need to brush away the dust and dirt so that the mirror can reflect the truth. Spiritual books are like maps and guides for the pilgrim soul. When one is thus prepared, internally, the time will come when the Guru himself will give further guidance for further progress. Teachers are but signposts. Every disciple has to prepare himself to pass through difficult tests of character, of endurance, of passions and of allurements.

All through the pilgrimage, one should not lose sight of the goal, the destination. Though alone, in a sense, we journey in the company of other pilgrims. And not only does this call for harmony but also calls for giving and receiving help. Each pilgrim has to be ready to help other pilgrims, in spite of his limited knowledge and experience. *The Voice of the Silence* says to the pilgrim that if he cannot become a sun then he should at least become a humble planet or an evening star so as to help the travellers who tread their path in darkness. Many are aimless wanderers, unaware of the purpose or goal of life. "Give light and comfort to the toiling pilgrim, and seek out him who knows still less than thou."

NOT all your decisions will be correct. None of us is perfect. But if you get into the habit of making decisions, experience will develop your judgement to a point where more and more of your decisions will be right. After all it is better to be right 51 per cent of the time and get something done, than it is to get nothing done because you fear to reach a decision.

— H. W. ANDREWS

THE PROCESS OF LEARNING

IF, as Sri Krishna says, knowledge springs up spontaneously within oneself in the progress of time, given of course the necessary prerequisites, why is it necessary to have books and teachers, *gurukuls* and *ashrams*, monasteries and brotherhoods for mystic study? Why even pore over books and diagrams, glyphs and symbols? The answer is that right study helps in the process of acquiring the very prerequisites that would open the flood gates of wisdom. These include devotion, steadfastness and mental discipline. Without the help that study alone can give, there can be no systematic questioning, no strong search, no planned approach, nor yet the easy familiarity with the abstract such as is necessary for enlightened reasoning and thought.

The living of the higher life demands that we understand the why of many a circumstance, the wherefore of many a calamity. The secret of the human heart in general has to be fathomed lest we fail to understand the mystery of our own heart. Study alone can help in the process—a study, moreover, which can make a person learn. Each one knows through personal experience that the good which he desires to do, he oftentimes fails to do. Worse still, he finds to his horror and shame that he indulges in the very evil that his better nature asks him to avoid. This force of a lure that weans the person away from paths of goodness and duty has to be known and analysed and its seats of power identified. This done, the student has to arouse in himself that force which in all circumstances will rise superior to any power which the cohorts of evil can muster. No light tasks these, nor can one expect to complete them in the span of one short incarnation. The knowledge garnered through learning in this life has to be so elevated that it can be carried forward into the next life, and this is not possible if it is mixed with the learning that pertains to the mortal aspects of man and nature. All knowledge that is acquired through selfish intent is inimical to spiritual progress and must in time perish, even though

it have its cycles of survival. The study of metaphysics and the search for that particular knowledge for which the incarnation was planned, have both to be entered upon in all earnestness. But this effort may be frustrated, its energies diverted by the mass of false and misleading knowledge that is being constantly poured out from press and pulpit, college and university.

It is a truism that when the mind is placed on cosmic ultimates and when pure metaphysics engages the mind of man, all earthly desires get stilled and even the ambition to secure knowledge for one's own self is lost. It is during such moments of unalloyed concentration that a conjunction takes place between the Manas of man and the ubiquitous Buddhi. It is then that knowledge comes and becomes a permanent acquisition of the Soul.

For the devoted disciple, *The Voice of the Silence* lays down the following obligation: "...seek out him who knows still less than thou; who in his wretched desolation sits starving for the bread of Wisdom and the bread which feeds the shadow, without a Teacher, hope or consolation, and—let him hear the Law." Fortunate he who can find the inquirer of the willing ear; more fortunate he who can expound the Law without allowing his personality to intrude. But the fear of giving expression to a misunderstood implication of that Law is no excuse for non-promulgation either through direct contact or through the more impersonal channels of unsigned articles and papers. If the fear does exist and is genuine, it can be removed by a deeper study and a diligent questioning of the Scriptures. The effort at promulgation necessitates a purposeful study, a learning of the basic fundamentals. These have then to be so presented as to induce the listener himself to go to the Scriptures. An inducement to study is thus held out to the inquirer and this is the best service one can undertake; for study is bound to furnish the mind of the inquirer with ideas round which the new-found life must be made to revolve. It is well to remember that there exist propagators of falsehoods and of such knowledge as weds the man to the perishable. All men do not woo learning for the purpose of

reaching to the higher life. The military scientist pursues his studies for the discovery of more diabolical engines of torture and destruction; the Alchemist studies to find the elixir that will prolong his physical existence; the miser and the profligate, the tyrant and the seeker after pleasure, study—each in his own way—to augment their greed, their desired pleasure and their thirst for power. The knowledge which panders to the gratification of all such appetites is to be shunned. It becomes the murderer of the souls of men.

Very few be they who take to the study that will enable them to people their current in space with ideas and images that are potent for good alone. Such study consists of hours spent in research and in imbibing spiritual knowledge while the good and noble intentions provide the throbbing, vibrant back-drop to their efforts. It is with such an attitude of dedication that study has to be undertaken. In such endeavour the attitude of mind with which the student approaches his study sets the pace for enlightenment. When the going becomes hard and the reading of abstruse propositions brings no appreciable understanding, there is the danger that study may degenerate into a chore; and where enthusiasm wanes, there no intellect can help to decipher the hidden meaning. To avoid such moments, preparation of the mind and body must precede by long hours the moment when study begins. This preparation is a necessary adjunct to study; is in fact an integral part of study itself. It requires the man to clothe himself in proper mind so that no breeze, however strong, can waft an earthly thought within. The school and college student knows the value of a calm mind for the prosecution of his studies. He knows this through personal experience, but fails to carry its lesson when he embarks upon the quest for the higher knowledge, the esoteric wisdom.

At the commencement of a consideration of such a vast subject as study, it becomes pertinent to ask what ideas, trends, habits, foods, environments, sounds and places are inimical to an all-out effort. Besides taking care of these, the student has to attain a psychic stability of his own. Moods of elation and depression;

cravings and thirst that intensify desires and force the mind to move towards their satiety; magnetic emanations of men and places as are destroyers of equilibrium; sights and sounds that are arousers of the viler passions—these provide the soiling substances that cling and make the eyes of the soul bleary and blind to the spiritual light which shines continuously in and around man. Has the student placed sentinels at all the doorways through which evil may enter? Has he forged the weapons that will turn the intruder away? The manner in which he sets about the task will constitute his first steps in self-study.

For applied study, the student has that little gem of a book called appropriately *The Voice of the Silence*. May be that the great ones who in aeons past had heard the message of that Voice had set its instructions down for those whose ears had yet to open on to the eternal. These teachings have been made public by Madame Blavatsky who dedicated her book “to the few”—to those who had the will to do; to those who had the soul to dare. In the Third Fragment of that book are set out the divine Paramitas—the transcendental virtues—deeds that the man must ensoul by his diviner part, deeds moreover that would make the action vibrate in tune with nature and with the divine will. The first of these virtues is DANA—the key of charity and love immortal. It represents the act of giving, a voluntary offering with no expectation of a reward. Since any personal bias would make mortal any act of love and charity, the student has to seek for and imbibe that knowledge which is rooted in the imperishable.

Study of such knowledge is priceless, for it builds up, howsoever gradually, the inner faculty that can perceive and evaluate. A deeper study of *The Voice of the Silence*, if undertaken daily, makes for an immortal companionship of great ideas, and therefore in larger or smaller measure of the great. It is from such study that enlightenment comes.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

[In this section we seek to answer frequently asked questions, at U.L.T. meetings or during private conversations and discussions with people who seek the answers in the light of Theosophy. Answers given in this section are by no means final. Only a line of thought is being offered by applying general principles of Theosophy.]

Question: We are told that the “Law of Analogy and Correspondence,” is the key to understanding *The Secret Doctrine* and other esoteric teachings. Please explain.

Answer: Correspondence implies similarity or likeness, as: “Good corresponds to light, and evil to darkness”; “Selfishness corresponds to frigidity and iciness, and generosity to heat,” explains Mr. Judge. In the article “The Law of Correspondences” Mr. Crosbie points out that not only is there a correspondence between the seven colours of the spectrum and the seven notes of the scale, but also each colour of each octave corresponds to the same colour of another octave. Colour and sound are vibrations and there are rates of vibration above and below those perceptible to us. When we understand that note “do” on the musical scale corresponds not only to every other “do” in the seven octaves that we are able to perceive physically, but also to “do” in all other great octaves of nature, above and below the ones we perceive, it helps us to comprehend the unseen universe. Hence Mr. Judge observes, “A more or less complete knowledge of correspondences gives the power to gain knowledge gradually from one plane to another.”

For instance, just like blood circulates in the physical body, so *prana* circulates through the astral body. Just as sponge absorbs water and on being squeezed slightly it throws it out again, so astral body is said to be like a sponge, which retains all impressions during life and throws them off under right conditions, in the séance

room. Heart works as a pump from which blood circulates in the body, so also, in the Cosmos, Sun is said to be the Heart of the Cosmos from which life energy or vitality flows out and returns back. The sun-spot activity is the replica of what happens in the human heart when the heart contracts and expands every second. In Alchemy, Mercury, salt and Sulphur are said to correspond to Mind, Body and Spirit respectively. Just as fire (represented by sulphur) is needed to change one substance into another, so too, help of divine fire or guidance of Higher nature is required for the transmutation of base nature into divine nature. Mercury represents malleability and we speak of moulding the mind. We say that mind becomes that to which it is devoted. Salt represents solidity and fixedness and so does body. Waking and sleep correspond to birth and death. Swedenborg points out that the whole natural world corresponds to the spiritual world, “not only in general but also in particular.” As man is the little copy of the universe, is the microcosm, he is governed by the same laws that rule the universe.

H.P.B says that *The Secret Doctrine* follows the Law of Analogy. In Logic, analogy implies a process of arguing from similarity in known respects to similarity in other respects. Hence, it is important to understand when analogy can be applied. We know that both man and horse need food. So it is correct for a man to conclude by analogy: Just as when I am tired and hungry I need food and rest, and having taken food and having rested I feel energetic, so also this horse must feel energetic with nourishment. Thus, having established the similarity of bodily constitution, the analogy holds.

The Secret Doctrine has been considered analogous to Ariadne’s thread. The story goes that once there was a hero called Theseus, the son of Poseidon, and he sets out on numerous labours. On his way he comes to Crete, the kingdom of Minos, and the daughter of Minos called Ariadne falls in love with Theseus and she asks him to slay her half-brother named Minotaur who lives in the middle of the labyrinth or maze. Ariadne was in possession of a ball of thread, known popularly as “Ariadne’s thread” or “Ariadne’s clue.”

She told the prince that she would tie the loose end of the ball of thread to the entrance-door and the ball would then roll along making various twists and turns through the labyrinth till he reached the monster. Then, upon killing the monster he could find his way back, by rolling back the thread into a ball.

Since it was with the clue or the thread given by Ariadne that Theseus could solve his problem, whatever enables one to solve a difficult problem or come out of a difficult situation is called “Ariadne’s thread.” *The Secret Doctrine* helps to resolve complex problems, in the sense that it helps in reconciling and understanding many stray facts that we observe in life.

As mentioned in *Theosophy*, Vol. 21, (January 1933), the Law of Analogy, properly understood, is the infallible key to the operations of Nature, macrocosmic or microcosmic. We must beware of false analogies. Every analogy must be subjected to exactly the same practical tests as reason; it must fit all the known pertinent facts....“It is interesting to note that in the realms of analogy, science is now paralleling Theosophy....Namely, it is discovering by mechanical and mathematical means the facts set forth in Theosophy as the spiritual, metaphysical, and physical discoveries made by the sages of old, which in turn are deducible in principle from the Three Fundamental Propositions.... Some of these analogies are set forth by Dr. Robert K. Aitken, of Lick Observatory. The moon revolves about the earth; the earth about the sun; the sun about some unknown centre—as set forth by H.P.B. in 1888. So far, nothing new. But Dr. Aitken goes on to say that the *galaxy itself*, our universe of stars, is also moving at an undetermined speed. Thus, not only does the Solar System move about the ‘Central Spiritual Sun,’ which lies at present in black obscurity, but that ‘Sun’ itself moves about a greater Centre—and so on and on and on. If the earth depends for its motion upon the sun, it must also depend upon it for its life—which no biologist or astronomer will deny. But why stop there? Theosophy teaches in the most positive terms that the sun itself depends upon its

nameless Primary for its own forces. Once science grasps this idea, it may find a happy release from the hopeless *cul-de-sac* in which it finds itself regarding the origin of solar power.” (pp. 109-10)

Question: In spiritual life, some seekers may become clairvoyants while some others may gain the power to heal. While these and many other known and unknown powers may awaken in some who are in pursuit of a sincerely devoted and altruistic life, there are many aspirants who do not find any such evidence of “progress.” Why is it so? And is there any measure to gauge spiritual progress?

Answer: To answer the last part of the oft-repeated question regarding the *test* of true progress, we may turn to Mr. Crosbie’s words:

If we are developing the child-heart; if we are learning to love things beautiful; if we are becoming more honest and plain and simple; if we are beginning to sense the sweet side of life... if we feel ourselves expanding in sympathy; if we love to work for Theosophy and do not ask position as reward...this is travelling on the path of impersonality. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 127-28)

The above could be more reliable signs of “true progress” than those based on one’s extraordinary abilities or psychic unfoldment, which may be mistaken for spiritual progress and may delude one into complacency and retard progress. In other words, it is the harmonious unfoldment of heart qualities and the progressive development of character and moral stamina, rather than the awakening of latent powers, that constitutes a better gauge for inner progress, for us and for others.

It has often been stated that we all possess certain latent powers appropriate to our nature and needs, which may awaken *naturally*, or under practices like *Hatha-Yoga* or *Tantra*. We are equally warned about paying undue importance to such phenomenal occurrences exhibited in ourselves or others.

If certain powers, such as mentioned in the question, slowly awaken on their own in the course of leading a truly theosophical (spiritual) life of altruism, inner purity and devotion, they are welcome. But they have now become an added responsibility on the aspirant to keep under control and to use only for the benefit of others. In fact, one of the Higher Rules is to keep such faculties well-guarded—never to be exhibited or talked about.

The one sure test for such powers—whether these are “psychic” and masquerading as spiritual development, or truly what St. Paul called “spiritual gifts from above”—is the altruistic bent and motive, and their harmonious functioning within the over-all human organism. However, there are human constitutions, physically, astrally, psychically and mentally so made, that they do not permit the inner development to become evident. One may not exhibit a single outer evidence of inner progress on the inner planes. Some trees for instance, take a long time to give out flowers and fruits. Yet the injunction throughout is that the aspirant must go on with his efforts and the duty he has resolved to fulfil and not bother about his progress. Any undue concern about one’s development is a sign of egotistic movement and, therefore, becomes a hindrance. Rather, a seeker after spiritual life must be more vigilant regarding any exhibition of lower propensities or thought-forms and images (waking or dreaming)—however fleeting and passing. On the other hand, one need never feel discouraged if no outer signs are given to the disciple. It needs spiritual intuition to detect them. However, we must continue to keep our faith intact. For, if we are sincere and striving on the right path with right motive, we are promised that “For every sincere student there is an invisible Escort.”

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

A study published in *Psychological Science* concludes that more than IQ or talent, self-discipline is the important factor in academic achievement. How shall we strengthen self-discipline? The answer is, by using will power. However, will power, seen as a “moral-muscle,” gets fatigued with use. It flexes and strains every time we use it to resist small temptations, such as an angry retort to our boss, or decline a dessert, writes Cordelia Fine in *The Australian*. If we use it to achieve one unappealing goal, such as going for a jog, then the moral muscle will be ineffective when we call on it to switch off the television and start essay writing. It is suggested that there are two approaches to the problem: We may build up this will power by exercising self-restraint and virtue in all areas of life, and then it will be easy to resist temptations. Another approach is to use the moral muscle sparingly and not waste brainpower on less important matters. For instance, we may eat a delicious chocolate, without trying to resist the temptation, or wear an old shirt if we cannot find a clean one. (*Sunday Times of India*, August 6, 2006).

Will is a colourless force and is defined as “the force of Spirit in action,” and this force is unlimited. The Will comes into the picture when there is the question of satisfying a desire. This Will we experience at two levels. There is what can be called personal will, as when we talk about a strong-willed person; it only implies that he has a strong drive at the level of lower Manas—a drive for making money, to excel in an examination, for acquiring fame, etc. This really implies weakness of will. Such a person in fact does not have much incentive to say “yes” or “no” to whatever comes to his mind. He just moves along the previously built-in grooves. As against this there is divine or spiritual Will. The most important thing is to be able to surrender self-will. Strong Will or Spiritual Will can be developed when we learn to “accept the woes of birth,” *i.e.*, when we are willing to undergo all that our Higher

Self has in store, by way of experience and discipline, as then the hold of the lower on the Higher Self is weakened. What is it that restricts the expression of will power and how do we build it up? Mr. Crosbie writes:

We contract the divine power of the Spirit within us to the pin-holes of personal desires and selfishness....Do we not see that we ourselves stand in the way of the use of the power within us because our ideas are selfish, small, mean?

The action of the will is through the ideas. The ideas give the direction. Small ideas, small force; large ideas, large force; the Force itself is illimitable, for it is the force of Spirit, infinite and exhaustless. What we lack are universal ideas. (*Universal Theosophy*, p. 59)

In fact, we can begin developing will power by denying small whims and fancies, but, let us not attempt too much at once, because then the personality rebels.

“Pushy” parents who pressure their children to succeed can leave the latter depressed, writes Madeline Levine, an American clinical psychologist and mother of three children (*The Times of India*, August 9, 2006). She describes them as “helicopter” parents, as they hover over all aspects of their children’s lives. Children from affluent homes are three times more likely to suffer depression and anxiety than the average teenager, claims Levine in her book *The Price of Privilege*. Further:

Those high-earning parents push their children so hard to excel at everything from maths and English to sport and music that they leave them feeling hopeless failures. Youngsters grow up miserable and confused after falling short of their parents’ unrealistic expectations....

They are also at greater risk of resorting to drug abuse, self-harming and even suicide. Levine says the struggle to please

over-ambitious parents lies at the heart of many of these problems.

Such excessive interference from parents hampers children's development by denying them opportunities to deal with difficult situations. Inability to meet parents' expectations can create a feeling of self-hatred in the child.

Every child is an old soul in a new body, having its own destiny to fulfil in the midst of his family with which he is karmically linked. Often, parents are projecting their unrealized ambitions on their children and thus vicariously satisfying their unfulfilled desires and ambitions. A little reflection shows that desires and ambitions of parents and elders are shaped in accordance with society's preferences. For instance, at one time it may have been prestigious to become a doctor or engineer, while at another time society may look up to and glorify models, actors and sports personalities. Each child has a unique "soul-background," character, temperament and capacity from its past lives on earth. Like gardeners, parents should preserve a balance between "nature" and "nurture," and help the normal development of the child, who happens to take birth through them, under Karma. Children are our salvation. Parents would do well to remember Kahlil Gibran's words:

Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. They come through you but not from you. . . . You may give them your love but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts. You may house their bodies but not their souls, for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams. . . . Seek not to make them like you.

Light on the Path has some sage advice to offer regarding ambition:

Ambition is the first curse: the great tempter of the man who is rising above his fellows. . . . Its results turn to dust and

ashes in the mouth; like death and estrangement it shows the man at last that to work for self is to work for disappointment.
(p. 15)

Taking literally the accounts in the Old Testament, archaeologist Adam Zertel has been surveying Jordan River's west bank for the past 28 years, seeking evidence that could make clearer how the ancient Israelites entered Canaan (or modern-day Israel and Palestine), in the late 13th century B.C. He believes he has excavated the structure that was the altar built by Prophet Joshua on Mount Ebal on instructions from Moses. In recent years, archaeologists in Israel debate whether the Bible should be read as historical fact or metaphorical fiction. There are those who argue that the Old Testament is literary rather than historical—the work of ideologues, written between the second and fifth centuries B.C., and that Moses, Joshua, David and Solomon never even existed. A third group considers the Bible to be folk memory transmuted into myth—a mixture of fact and fiction, writes Jennifer Wallace (*Smithsonian*, May 2006). The fundamental questions raised are: "Did the Israelites, under Moses and then Joshua, leave Egypt, conquer Canaan and establish settlements in the 13th century B.C.? And did David and then Solomon preside over a great united kingdom, with its capital in Jerusalem and its temple on the Temple Mount, 200 years later"? A decade ago, Israel Finkelstein challenged the biblical literalists, arguing in his book, *The Bible Unearthed*, that the biblical accounts of early Israelite history pertain to the time they were written, *i.e.*, seventh century B.C., while the biblical events they describe would have taken place centuries earlier. He cites the fact—now accepted by most of the archaeologists—that many of the cities Joshua is supposed to have sacked in the late 13th century B.C., had ceased to exist by that time. For instance, Jericho was destroyed in 1500 B.C. and Ai was abandoned before 2000 B.C.

Several archaeologists have challenged his finding that some ruins related to Solomon are too recent to fit into the biblical account of his reign. Finkelstein believes that early Israelites were actually Canaanites. The so-called golden age of Solomon, says Finkelstein, is not supported by archaeological evidence, but is a myth concocted by the authors of *Kings* and *Samuel* to validate Judah's expansion into the northern territory of Israel.

H.P.B. points out that names of places, persons and even objects can be traced from the original text of the *Bible* to the Chaldeans and Akkadians. There are proofs favouring the fact that the Akkad tribes of Chaldea, Babylonia and Assyria were cognate with the Brahmins of Hindustan (*Isis*, I, 576). Many historians claim—with good reason—that the Jews were identical with the ancient Phoenicians, but, H.P.B. observes that the “Phoenicians were beyond any doubt an Aethiopian race” (*Isis*, I, 566-67). Further:

All the Cyclopean races were Phoenicians. In the *Odyssey* the Kuklopes (Cyclops) are the Libyan shepherds; and Herodotus describes them as miners and great builders... They are the biblical *Zamzummim* from the land of the giants, the Anakim. (*Isis*, I, 567)

As for the Phoenicians being Canaanites, H.P.B. has this to say:

The name Phoenician affords its own proof. They are called... *Ph Anakes*, which shows that the Anakes or *Anakim* of Canaan, with whom the people of Israel, if not identical in race, had, by intermarriage, become entirely absorbed, were the Phoenicians. (*Isis*, I, 569)

The Bible mentions giants that existed in the times of Moses, David and Joshua. There was Goliath, described as “six cubits and a span in height” (or 10ft. 7 in.) (*S.D.*, II, 336 and 340). These giants belonged to Lemurian and Atlantean, the 3rd and the 4th Races.

“Is the story of *Exodus*—in its details at least—as narrated in the Old Testament... simply another version of the legend told of

the Atlanteans”? *Exodus* mentions the anger of “God” at the obduracy of Pharaoh, his command to the “chosen” ones, before departing, to spoil the Egyptians, of their “jewels of silver and jewels of gold” (*Exod.*, xi.); and the drowning of the Egyptians and their Pharaoh in the Red Sea (xiv). There is a great similarity of the fundamental features in the story of the Atlanteans and *Exodus*. The *Commentary* describes the cataclysm and the sinking of the Ruta and Daitya islands, wherein the evil among the Atlanteans, the gigantic, black magicians (comparable to the Egyptians and their Pharaoh) perished, while the adepts of the right hand path (comparable to the virtuous sons of Jacob, the “chosen people”) were rescued and became the Fifth Race adepts. (*S.D.*, II, 426-29)

Moses' account is copied from the life of the Babylonian king, Sargon I. In the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, George Smith, the Assyriologist, writes:

Sargon, an early Babylonian monarch, was born of royal parents, but concealed by his mother, who placed him on the Euphrates in an ark of rushes... like that in which the mother of Moses hid her child (see *Exodus* ii). Sargon was discovered by a man named Akki, a water-carrier, who adopted him as his son; and he afterward became King of Babylonia. The capital of Sargon was the great city of Agadi—called by the Semites Akkad—mentioned in *Genesis* as a capital of Nimrod (*Genesis*, x. 10), and here he reigned for *forty five* years (Moses reigned over the people of Israel in the wilderness for over *forty* years). Akkad lay near the city of Sippara, on the Euphrates and north of Babylon (the name of the wife of Moses was Zipporah (*Exodus*, ii)). “The date of Sargon, who may be termed the Babylonian Moses, was in the sixteenth century and perhaps earlier.” (*Isis*, II, 442 and fn.)

H.P.B. points out that the story of Samuel, David and Solomon is mythical. David is described as the Israelitish King Arthur (*Isis*, II, 439-40). “Solomon was never a living man. As described in *Kings*, his life and works are an allegory on the trials and glory of

Initiation....Solomon himself...being, simply, the emblem of SOL—the ‘Solar Initiate’” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 1*, pp. 4-5 fn.). As for Solomon’s Temple, H.P.B. writes:

Whether or not there ever was a real temple of that name, we may well leave to archaeologists to decide; but that the detailed description thereof in *I Kings* is purely allegorical, no serious scholar, proficient in the ancient as well as mediaeval jargon of the kabalists and alchemists, can doubt. The building of the Temple of Solomon is the symbolical representation of the gradual acquirement of the *secret* wisdom, or magic; the erection or development of the spiritual from the earthly; the manifestation of the power and the splendour of the spirit in the physical world, through the wisdom and genius of the builder. The latter, when he has become an adept, is a mightier king than Solomon himself....This is the “Temple” which can be reared *without the sound of the hammer, or any tool of iron being heard in the house while it is “in building.”* (*Isis*, II, 391)

IMAGINE you are standing on the seashore. A ship at your side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength and you stand and watch her until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky meet and mingle with each other : “There, she is gone.”

Gone where? Gone from your sight, that is all. She is just as large in hull and mast and spar as when she left your side and just as able to bear her load of living freight to the place of her destination. Her diminished size is in you, not in her.

And just at the moment when someone at your side says, “She’s gone,” there are other eyes watching for her coming and other voices ready to take up the glad shout, “Here she comes!” And this is what we call dying—this is life!

— *Words of comfort*

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TO
“THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT”**

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