

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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## THE SHADOW OF LIGHT

We live in an atmosphere of gloom and despair, but this is because our eyes are downcast and rivetted to the earth, with all its physical and grossly material manifestations. If, instead of that, man proceeding on his life-journey looked — not heavenward, which is but a figure of speech — but *within himself* and centred his point of observation on the *inner* man, he would soon escape from the coils of the great serpent of illusion. From the cradle to the grave, his life would then become supportable and worth living, even in its worst phases.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

The problem of the origin of evil, with which are so intimately bound up the problems of the cause of sorrow and of the extent to which the will of man is free, has exercised thoughtful minds from times immemorial.

In Nature, there is no evil *per se* — only “the shadow of light, without which light could have no existence, even in our perceptions.”

Indeed, evil is but an antagonizing blind force in nature; it is *reaction*, *opposition*, and *contrast* — evil for some, good for others. . . . If evil disappeared, good would disappear along with it from Earth. . . . Everywhere the speculations of the Kabalists treat of Evil as a FORCE, which is antagonistic, but at the same time essential, to Good, as giving it vitality and existence, which it could never have otherwise. There would be no *life* possible (in the *Mayavic* sense) without *Death*, nor regeneration and reconstruction without destruction. Plants would perish in eternal sunlight, and so would man, who would become an automaton without the exercise of his free will and aspirations after that sunlight, which would lose its being and value for him had he nothing but light. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 413-14)

The ultimate root of Good and Evil, metaphysically speaking, is Spirit and Matter — the two aspects of the One Life.

Archaic philosophy, recognizing neither Good nor Evil as a fundamental or independent power, but starting from the Absolute ALL (Universal Perfection eternally), traced both through the course of natural evolution to pure Light condensing gradually into form, hence becoming Matter or Evil. (*S.D.*, I. 73)

“Evil” in Nature, which is coeval with matter, is one thing; moral evil, which is peculiar to the human kingdom and has its roots in human selfishness and in the delusion of separateness, is quite another. One of the great Masters has written:

The real evil proceeds from human intelligence and its origin rests entirely with reasoning man who dissociates himself from Nature. . . . Evil is the exaggeration of good, the progeny of human selfishness and greediness. Think profoundly and you will find that save death — which is no evil but a necessary law, and accidents which will always find their reward in a future life — the *origin* of every evil whether small or great is in human action, in man whose intelligence makes him the one free agent in Nature. It is not nature that creates diseases, but man. . . . Food, sexual relations, drink, are all natural necessities of life; yet excess in them brings on disease, misery, suffering, mental and physical, and the latter are transmitted as the greatest evils to future generations, the progeny of the culprits. Ambition, the desire of securing happiness and comfort for those we love, by obtaining honours and riches, are praiseworthy natural feelings, but when they transform man into an ambitious cruel tyrant, a miser, a selfish egotist, they bring untold misery on those around him; on nations as well as on individuals. All this then — food, wealth, ambition, and a thousand other things we have to leave unmentioned, becomes the source and cause of evil whether in its abundance or through its absence. . . . Therefore it is neither nature nor an imaginary Deity that has to be blamed, but human nature made vile by *selfishness*.

Was it inevitable that our natures should have become involved in evil? Need we ever have made wrong choices? We need not have, though it is probably safe to say that all did, at least in ignorance.

When mind was first lighted up in us we all knew ourselves as one with the Divine All. Each felt within himself his *inner* God. Each recognized the Divine Pattern set for his copying. Because we, alone of all beings, have mind, we have had the power to choose from the moment

we became self-conscious, and we could equally well have chosen rightly if our human consciousness had retained its close union with the God whose ray it at first knew itself to be. But alas, though each of us knew himself at first as a Man-God in his nature, the physical self of each was an animal not yet brought under control.

The struggle between the two began from the very day they tasted of the fruit of the Tree of Wisdom; a struggle for life between the spiritual and the psychic, the psychic and the physical. Those who conquered the lower principles by obtaining mastery over the body, joined the "Sons of Light." Those who fell victims to their lower natures, became the slaves of Matter. (*S.D.*, II. 272)

The Demon of Pride, Lust, Rebellion, and Hatred, has never had *any being before* the appearance of physical conscious man. It is man who has begotten, nurtured, and allowed the fiend to develop in his heart; he, again, who has contaminated the indwelling god in himself, by linking the pure spirit with the impure demon of matter. And, if the Kabalistic saying, "*Demon est Deus inversus*" finds its metaphysical and theoretical corroboration in dual manifested nature, its practical application is found in Mankind alone. (*Ibid.*, II. 274)

The Soul stepped back to make room for the physical intellect. "There never was an *original sin*," declares H.P.B., "but only an abuse of physical intelligence — the psychic being guided by the animal, and both putting out the light of the spiritual." (*S.D.*, II. 413)

Once man by selfish action had allowed the consciousness of the Divine Presence in his heart to become obscured, its positive directions became more difficult to catch; its clear tones became the still, small voice which can be heard only when the clamour of the personal is quieted. But it can be heard, for "there is latent within every man a power which can give him true knowledge, a power of perception of Truth."

The root cause of all our troubles and difficulties, therefore, can be traced to the duality which is within man. Good and evil are struggling in the blood of every human being. Virtues and vices are waging a war in the individual, and as long as the war lasts there is neither peace within nor brotherliness without. The Esoteric Philosophy warns us against the religious doctrine that places the Devil, Satan, Ahriman, or God, Creator, Ahura Mazda outside of man. "As the whole philosophy of the problem of evil hangs upon the correct comprehension of the constitution of the *inner* being of nature and man, of the divine within the

animal . . . we cannot take sufficient precautions against theological subterfuges." (S.D., II. 476)

*The Secret Doctrine* devotes many pages to that which is called "the War in Heaven." That war stands for conflicts of different types, but all rooted in the archetypal war between good and evil in man. Good and evil, then, should not be looked upon as entities or as outside ourselves; they are more truly our own reactions to the experiences we go through in our self-evolving process. For this reason a man can change an evil into a lesser evil, and it again into a still lesser evil, until at last he sees it disappear. Little by little he can come really to understand that the One Life, by its all-inclusiveness, must contain all phases of both evil and good; and that to look upon them as positive, separate and permanent opposites is philosophically a mistake.

Our self-made Karma has brought us to the crossroads. If we choose the side-road branching off from the straight way to our goal, we may be led far astray before we find out our mistake and painfully retrace our steps. But we need not choose blindly, for, as we have seen, the divine compass is in the heart of each. Its needle, ever and always, points straight to the goal. If we consult the compass with eyes unclouded by personal desires, we need not take false turnings.

Man is free to choose, but once he has chosen and acted on his choice he must inevitably receive the reaction. Every wrong choice, under the beneficent law, brings its painful reaction, so that wrong choices made from ignorance, if we learn their lesson, may subserve our progress.

The Occultists . . . recognize in every pain and suffering but the necessary pangs of incessant procreation: a series of stages toward an ever-growing perfectibility. . . . Woe to those who live without suffering. . . . How can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage? Is it not those only who have learnt the deceptive value of earthly hopes and the illusive allurements of external nature who are destined to solve the great problems of life, pain, and death? (S.D., II. 475)

*The Voice of the Silence* puts the same teaching in phrases of rare beauty:

Out of the furnace of man's life and its black smoke, winged flames arise, flames purified, that soaring onward, 'neath the Karmic eye, weave in the end the fabric glorified of the three vestures of the Path.

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## MOON'S MYSTERY AND FATE

[This article first appeared in *The Path*, Vol. IX, pp. 91-94 for June 1894, and was reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for May 1946. It was signed "William Brehon," a pen-name of W. Q. Judge.—Eds.]

Probably no heavenly body has received as much attention from men in all ages as our moon. Many causes contributed to this. The moon is near us; she is a remarkable and large object in the sky; she enlightens the night; she appears to have much to do with man and his affairs. Omens, spells, wishes, oracles, divination, traditions cluster around her during all time. It would be difficult to find a scripture that does not exalt the moon. The Christian Bible says that God ordained that the sun should rule the day and the moon the night. The Roman Church depicts Mary, the Mother of God, holding the child while she stands upon the crescent moon. The twelfth chapter of *Revelation* opens thus:

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

Other religions are the same as this modern Hebraic one in giving the moon a very great prominence.

Even science cannot escape the fascination. The brilliancy and nearness of the moon and her many recurring changes all aid in fixing the attention of science. Modern and ancient science alike unite in watching the night's great light as she performs her journey round us. Nations regulate themselves and their acts, religious and commercial, by the moon. Feast days of the church are fixed more by the lunar than the solar calendar, for all the movable feasts depend on the moon. Calendars rule commercial affairs in credits, obligations, and settlements.

From earliest times the calendar, ruled in fact by the moon's motion, has been of immense interest to man. Periodically rulers of the earth try to reform the calendar of days and months when it as periodically gets out of order. The present arrangement of months with twenty-eight, twenty-nine, thirty, and thirty-one days was invented to make a calendar which would last some centuries before another one will be needed, just because the moon's motion will not give twelve regular months, but twelve regular ones and one small one of about six days. And when the present style of reckoning was introduced, many communities

of men in Europe rebelled because they thought they had been deprived of some actual days of life.

Cæsar ordered a reformation of the calendar by attempting to use the sun, but in time it fell into great confusion. Pope Gregory XIII directed ten days to be suppressed, and then found that the Julian calendar had an error which would amount to three days in four hundred years — quite a serious matter. The Gregorian year now prevails, except in Russia. But still the greater number of men and the greater number of festivals depend on the moon and her motion. While if we examine the records relating to superstition, we will find that whatever may have been the place once held by the sun, it has been usurped by the moon, leaving one nation distinctly worshippers of the Lord of Day.

Modern Theosophy, coming on the field as the uniter of all religions by explaining the symbols and traditions of each, is not exempt from the mystery of the moon. H. P. Blavatsky is our sole originator of a theory regarding the satellite which one could not have invented with the most wonderful imagination. She says her teachers told her, and leaves us to work out the details; but her theory will bear investigation if taken as part of the whole evolutionary scheme reported by her. If we had thought to escape from lunar dreams and puzzles we were in error, for while she plainly asserts that the former body of the entity now called Man's Earth is the very moon in our sky, the existence of a mystery is as plainly declared. The first mystery which she claimed to reveal — and, indeed, she first of everyone states it — is that in a remote period, when there was no earth, the moon existed as an inhabited globe, died, and at once threw out into space all her energies, leaving nothing but the physical vehicle. Those energies revolved and condensed the matter in space near by and produced our earth; the moon, its parent, proceeding towards disintegration but compelled to revolve around her child, this earth. This gives us a use and history for the moon.

But then the same messenger says that the "superstition" prevailing so long and widely as to the moon's bad influence, as in insanity, in necromancy, and the like, is due to the fact that the moon, being a corpse intimately associated with earth, throws upon the latter, so very near to her, a stream of noxious emanations which, when availed of by wicked and knowing persons, may be used for man's injury. Then the same writer goes on to assert that six mysterious doctrines or facts remain yet untold, and all relating to the moon.

It would be idle to speculate on these mysteries, for it has ever been found that unless the Great Initiates speak, the general run of

men can but modify, enlarge, or intertwine by their fancy those facts and doctrines of which they have heard. But as to the fate of the moon, H.P.B., speaking for those Initiates, says plainly what is to become of our satellite.

In the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, in a footnote on page 155 of the first edition, she writes:

Both [Mercury and Venus] are far older than the Earth, and before the latter reaches her seventh Round her mother Moon will have dissolved into thin air, as the "moons" of the other planets have, or have not, as the case may be, since there are planets which have *several* moons — a mystery again which no Œdipus of astronomy has solved.

This is extremely plain as to our moon, yet raises another mystery as to the general subject of moons. If correspondence is a law of nature, as I firmly believe, then it would be in accordance with it for the moon, considered as earth's former body, to dissolve all away in course of time. And as evolution proceeds with uniformity, the upward progress of our races and earth should be marked by the gradual fading and final disappearance of the moon, as H.P.B. says. It is likely that before our sixth round is ended, it being the round relating to *Buddhi* as the vehicle of *spirit*, the body of the moon, which was the vehicle for *prana* and astral body, will have disappeared. Very probably one of the unrevealed mysteries has to do with the uses and purposes of and for the whole mass of matter now constituting the moon's bulk. But whatever those mysteries are, the fate of our satellite is very clearly asserted, for the benefit of those who have confidence in H.P.B.'s teachers, and who are willing to take the key of correspondence for the unlocking of the lock of Nature.

—WILLIAM BREHON

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If we would be free from the assaults of evil influences, we must keep ourselves clear of those things over which evil influences have power, for they attack not the pure soul which has no affinity with them.

—PORPHYRY

# MESMERISM—ANCIENT AND MODERN

## I

Friedrich Anton Mesmer, the famous physician who applied practically that magnetic fluid in man which he called "animal magnetism" by the method since known as Mesmerism, was not the first to use this method of healing. Down the ages there have been Adepts who have been of the healing profession, and who have used the same or similar methods.

In the healing line of the Theosophical Movement, Anton Mesmer, as he is more familiarly known, was preceded by Paracelsus, who in turn was preceded by the great Arabian physicians who worked from the sixth to the thirteenth centuries. Before that, there was Apollonius of Tyana, whose "miracles" surpassed even those of the Adept known as Jesus. Æsculapius founded the healing Temples bearing his name, and Hippocrates, the "Father of Medicine," gave the moral code of the medical profession. And so we can go back to the Egyptian Hermes Trismegistus, who was not only the head of a great Fraternity of Adepts, but a noted physician as well.

The principles underlying Mesmerism are not new. That which passes today under that name has, however, nothing to do with the art of healing as practised by Mesmer. Mesmerism as known today is confused with hypnotism, but in reality the two are as different from each other as night is from day. The prevalent mistaken notions can be seen from the dictionary definition of Mesmerism: "The system by which a hypnotic state can be induced by the influence of an operator over the will and nervous system of the patient. . . ." In *true* Mesmerism, the reverse is the case; the effect is produced from within without, and the operator does not interfere with the free will of his patient.

H.P.B. remarks in *Isis Unveiled* (I. 71-72):

Theophrastus Paracelsus rediscovered the occult properties of the magnet . . . which, twelve centuries before his time, had played such an important part in the theurgic mysteries — and he very naturally became the founder of the school of magnetism and of mediæval magico-theurgy. But Mesmer, who lived nearly three hundred years after him, and as a disciple of his school brought the magnetic wonders before the public, reaped the glory that was due to the fire-philosopher.

Both men believed and taught that man was more than his physical body, that there was an inner, astral or pattern body, and that the latter

was the real seat of diseases. In *The Theosophical Glossary*, H.P.B. calls Paracelsus "the greatest Occultist of the middle ages," and adds:

He was the cleverest physician of his age, and the most renowned for curing almost any illness by the power of talismans prepared by himself. He never had a friend, but was surrounded by enemies, the most bitter of whom were the Churchmen and their party. . . . Many of his utterances have proved prophetic. He was a clairvoyant of great powers, one of the most learned and erudite philosophers and mystics, and a distinguished Alchemist. . . .

Of Anton Mesmer she says:

He was an initiated member of the Brotherhoods of the *Fratres Lucis*, and of Lukshoor (or Luxor), or the Egyptian Branch of the latter. It was the Council of "Luxor" which selected him — according to the orders of the "Great Brotherhood" — to act in the XVIIIth century as their usual pioneer, sent in the last quarter of every century to enlighten a small portion of the Western nations in occult lore. . . . Mesmer founded the "Order of Universal Harmony" in 1783, in which presumably only animal magnetism was taught, but which in reality expounded the tenets of Hippocrates, the methods of the ancient *Asclepieia*, the Temples of Healing, and many other occult sciences.

From the above it will be easily seen that both were more than qualified to teach and repromulgate the ancient doctrines as to the real nature of man and the cause and cure of diseases. Not only did they teach that it is the inner or "sidereal" body which is the real seat of our senses and organs, but Paracelsus further wrote:

You have hidden within yourself a magnet which attracts those influences which correspond to your will, and that magnet attracts that which you desire out of the elements. (*Philosophia Occulta*)

Paracelsus taught, further, that our universe is a living, vibrant whole, and man is a miniature copy of the universe. He has within him a complete "solar system." There is a very intimate correspondence between man and the universe in which he lives, for one vital principle pervades and underlies all. Magnetism is one of the manifestations of this vital principle, and when human magnetism is acted upon by contact with a patient or by the will of an operator, it is known as Mesmerism.

In other words, a true healer, such as Mesmer was, is able to draw upon that portion of the astral light which is needed to heal the diseased organ. If he is a clairvoyant, he is able to see not only into the astral light but also into the magnetic aura surrounding the patient, to know

what is wrong, and thus effect a real cure. H.P.B. wrote in *Isis Unveiled* (I. 129):

The thaumaturgists of all periods, schools, and countries, produced their wonders, because they were perfectly familiar with the imponderable — in their effects — but otherwise perfectly tangible waves of the astral light. They controlled the currents by guiding them with their will-power. . . . Mesmerism is the most important branch of magic; and its phenomena are the effects of the universal agent which underlies all magic and has produced at all ages the so-called miracles.

Mesmer at first performed his cures by magnetizing some object belonging to the person he was healing. To do this effectively, a healer must know the occult properties of the objects he is using. Because Mesmer knew these properties, as also the powers and forces he was dealing with, he was able to effect cures that in many cases were regarded as miraculous.

Time came, however, when he discarded the use of objects and performed his cures directly, using what he called "animal magnetism." It is a fluid, or emanation, which exudes from all and which some people can emit for curative purposes through their eyes and the tips of their fingers. "The phenomena of mesmerism," says H.P.B., "are explicable upon no other hypothesis than the projection of a current of force from the operator into the subject" (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 500). This is what Mesmer did; this is what Jesus did, for, "at the moment of his miraculous cures, the Nazarene felt a *power* issuing from him."

If Mesmer's cures had been successful before, they seemed indeed "miraculous" now, after he started using the invisible "fluid," and he gained immense popularity especially after he had restored sight to a young girl who had been blind from her babyhood. The Medical Council of Vienna, where he lived and worked, had not objected to his cures by means of magnetized objects, but when Mesmer performed his cures without any visible object, it was too much for his colleagues, who termed his cures "humbug."

The Empress of Austria was appealed to, and Mesmer was denounced as an impostor. He left Vienna in 1778, and went to Paris. In one of her articles (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 19*), H.P.B. describes his reception in Paris. He enjoyed the patronage of the Royal family for a time; the fame of his cures spread far and wide, and all Paris thronged to his rooms. When Mesmer arrived, says H.P.B., "Paris divided its allegiance between the Church which attributed all kinds of phenomena except its own

*divine miracles* to the Devil, and the Academy, which believed in neither God nor Devil, but only in its own infallible wisdom.”

There were, however, minds which could not be satisfied with either of these beliefs, and thought it was time the real truth of Mesmer's cures was found out. They appealed to the King, who commanded his learned Academies of Science and Medicine to look into the matter. In the report they handed to the King, they honestly admitted the efficacy of Mesmer's cures. However, as they could not perceive the power behind the cures with any of their physical senses, they concluded that the cures were due to “the imagination of the patients themselves.” The report further affirmed that, since

the commission has found that the fluid of animal magnetism cannot be perceived by any of man's senses, the commission has come to the conclusion that there is nothing to show that the fluid of animal magnetism exists, and that, consequently, this non-existing fluid can serve no useful purpose. Therefore, to proceed with these methods in the presence of others cannot fail in the long run to be unwholesome.

This decision was to have far-reaching consequences, for, as H.P.B. remarks in *Isis Unveiled* (I. 171):

It will demonstrate how much ignorance, superficiality, and prejudice can be displayed by a scientific body, when the subject clashes with their own cherished theories. It is the more important because, to the neglect of the committee of the French Academy of 1784, is probably due the present materialistic drift of the public mind; and certainly the gaps in the atomic philosophy which we have seen its most devoted teachers confessing to exist.

Mesmer left Paris and went to Frauenfeld, a little village about 20 miles from Zurich, in Switzerland. There he continued his research and gave free treatment to his humble peasant neighbours. He never spoke to them of his past glory, never complained about his reversals of fortune, but steadily maintained that attitude of patience and resignation which is a common characteristic of all agents of the Theosophical Movement. It is also a matter of record that Mesmer was offered money if he would but sell the secret of his cures, but spiritual truths and powers cannot be bought or sold, and so Mesmer refused.

Though Mesmer's work was denounced during his lifetime, there were efforts to revive it after his death. Perhaps the most illustrious of Mesmer's disciples was Baron du Potet, whom H.P.B. described as “the greatest adept of Mesmerism in Europe of this [the nineteenth] century.”

The Baron was for years an honorary member of the Theosophical Society, and, in the letters received from him, he deplored the "flippant unscientific way" in which Mesmerism (then on the eve of becoming the "hypnotism" of science) was handled.

Does it always take an adept to perform cures? How can we account for the cures performed by many of those who were not adepts, who had no knowledge even of medicine? In *Isis Unveiled* (I. 217-18) H.P.B. mentions some who were able to lift and lighten the burden of pain; who, though lacking in medical knowledge, had that purity so necessary for real healing. They were able, through intuition, to hear the voice of their Higher Ego.

One of the primary requisites for healing, therefore, is absolute purity on the part of the healer. Further, "*every mesmerizer knows the power of will during an intense desire bent on any particular subject*" (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 21). There also must be absolute concentration of thought, for, as pointed out by one of the Mahatmas: "... the mesmeric healer will always bear you witness that if he permits himself to think of anything but the vital current he is pouring into his patient, he is at once compelled to establish the current afresh or stop the treatment."

It is for this reason that, in the hands of the unenlightened and the self-seekers, we see the sacred science in its absolute travesty as hypnotism. H.P.B., towards the close of *Isis Unveiled* (II. 634), warned: "A sorcerer is a public enemy, and mesmerism may most readily be turned into the worst of sorceries."

(*To be concluded*)

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It cannot be denied that there are correspondences, relationships and mutual attractions and repulsions in Nature, the existence of which scientific research is constantly making more apparent. Nor can it be contradicted that, under this law, the theory of omens and portents has some basis of truth. But the credulity of the superstitious has carried the matter to absurd lengths. The subject is too vast to enter upon until we have exhausted the more important branches of Occultism.

—*The Theosophist*, July 1882

## IS THE DESIRE TO "LIVE" SELFISH?

[Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, pp. 242-43, for July 1884.—Eds.]

The passage "to live, to live, to live must be the unswerving resolve," occurring in the article on "The Elixir of Life," published in the March and April numbers of Vol. III of *The Theosophist*,<sup>1</sup> is often quoted by superficial and unsympathetic readers as an argument that the teachings of Occultism are the most concentrated form of selfishness. In order to determine whether the critics are right or wrong, the meaning of the word "selfishness" must first be ascertained.

According to an established authority, selfishness is that "exclusive regard to one's own interest or happiness; that supreme self-love or self-preference which leads a person to direct his purposes to the advancement of his own interest, power, or happiness, without regarding those of others."

In short, an absolutely selfish individual is one who cares for himself and none else, or, in other words, one who is so strongly imbued with a sense of the importance of his own personality that to him it is the crown of all thoughts, desires and aspirations, and beyond that all is a perfect blank. Now, can an Occultist be then said to be "selfish" when he desires *to live* in the sense in which that word is used by the writer of the article on "The Elixir of Life"? It has been said over and over again that the ultimate end of every aspirant after Occult Knowledge is *Nirvana* or *Mukti*, when the individual, freed from all *Mayavic Upadhi*, becomes one with *Paramatma*, or the Son identifies himself with the Father, in Christian phraseology. For that purpose, every veil of illusion which creates a sense of personal isolation, a feeling of separateness from THE ALL, must be torn asunder, or, in other words, the aspirant must gradually discard all sense of selfishness with which we are all more or less afflicted. A study of the Law of Cosmic Evolution teaches us that the higher the evolution, the more does it tend towards Unity. In fact, Unity is the ultimate possibility of Nature, and those who through vanity and selfishness go against her purposes cannot but incur the punishment of annihilation. The Occultist thus recognizes that unselfishness and a feeling of universal philanthropy are the inherent laws of our being, and all he does

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, July and August 1966.—Eds.

is to attempt to destroy the chains of selfishness forged upon us all by *Maya*.

The struggle, then, between Good and Evil, God and Satan, *Suras* and *Asuras*, *Devas* and *Daityas*, which is mentioned in the sacred books of all nations and races, symbolizes the battle between unselfish and selfish impulses, which takes place in a man who tries to follow the higher purposes of Nature, until the lower animal tendencies, created by selfishness, are completely conquered, and the enemy thoroughly routed and annihilated. It has also been often put forth in various Theosophical and other Occult writings that the only difference between an ordinary man who works along with Nature during the course of cosmic evolution and an Occultist is that the latter, by his superior knowledge, adopts such methods of training and discipline as will hurry on that process of evolution, and he thus reaches in a comparatively short time that apex to ascend to which the ordinary individual may take perhaps billions of years.

It is evident that an average man cannot become a MAHATMA in one life, or rather in one incarnation. Now those who have studied the Occult teachings concerning *Devachan* and our after-states will remember that between two incarnations there is a considerable period of subjective existence. The greater the number of such *devachanic* periods, the greater is the number of years over which this evolution is extended. The chief aim of the Occultist is, therefore, to so control himself as to be able to regulate his future states, and thereby gradually shorten the duration of his *devachanic* existence between two incarnations. In the course of his progress, there comes a time when, between one physical death and his next rebirth, there is no *Devachan* but a kind of spiritual sleep, the shock of death having, so to say, stunned him into a state of unconsciousness from which he gradually recovers to find himself reborn, to continue his purpose. The period of this sleep may vary from twenty-five to two hundred years, depending upon the degree of his advancement. But even this period may be said to be a waste of time, and hence all his exertions are directed to shorten its duration so as to gradually come to a point when the passage from one state of existence into another is almost imperceptible. This is his last incarnation, as it were, for the shock of death no more stuns him. This is the idea the writer of the article on "The Elixir of Life" means to convey when he says:

By or about the time when the death-limit of his race is passed, he is actually dead, in the ordinary sense; that is to say, he has re-

lieved himself of all or nearly all such material particles as would have necessitated in disruption the agony of dying. He has been dying gradually during the whole period of his Initiation. The catastrophe cannot happen twice over. He has only spread over a number of years the mild process of dissolution which others endure from a brief moment to a few hours. The highest Adept is, in fact, dead to, and absolutely unconscious of, the World; he is oblivious of its pleasures, careless of its miseries, in so far as sentimentalism goes, for the stern sense of DUTY never leaves him blind to its very existence. . . .

The process of the emission and attraction of atoms, which the occultist controls, has been discussed at length in that article and in other writings. It is by these means that he gets rid gradually of all the old gross particles of his body, substituting for them finer and more ethereal ones, till at last the former *sthula sharira* is completely dead and disintegrated, and he lives in a body entirely of his own creation, suited to his work. That body is essential to his purposes, for, as "The Elixir of Life" says:

To do good, as in everything else, a man *must have* time and materials to work with, and this is a necessary means to the acquirement of powers by which infinitely more good can be done than without them. When these are once mastered, the opportunities to use them will arrive. . . .

In another place, giving the practical instructions for that purpose, the same article says:

The physical man must be rendered more ethereal and sensitive; the mental man more penetrating and profound; the moral man more self-denying and philosophical.

The above important considerations are lost sight of by those who snatch away from the context the following passage in the same article:

And from this account, too, it will be perceptible how foolish it is for people to ask the Theosophists to "procure for them communication with the highest Adepts." It is with the utmost difficulty that one or two can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs. The ordinary reader will say — "This is not *god-like*. This is the acme of selfishness." . . . But let him realize that a very high Adept, undertaking to reform the world, would necessarily have to submit once more to Incarnation. And is the result of all that have gone before in that line sufficiently encouraging to

prompt a renewal of the attempt?

Now, in condemning the above passage as inculcating selfishness, superficial readers and thinkers lose sight of various important considerations. In the first place, they forget the other extracts already quoted which impose *self-denial* as a necessary condition of success, and which say that, with progress, new senses and new powers are acquired with which infinitely more good can be done than without them. The more spiritual the Adept becomes, the less can he meddle with *mundane, gross* affairs, and the more he has to confine himself to spiritual work. It has been repeated, times out of number, that the work on the spiritual plane is as superior to the work on the intellectual plane as the latter is superior to that on the physical plane. The very *high* Adepts, therefore, do help humanity, *but only spiritually*: they are constitutionally incapable of meddling with *worldly* affairs. But this applies only to very high Adepts. There are various degrees of Adeptship, and those of each degree work for humanity on the planes to which they may have risen. It is only the *chelas* that can live in the world, until they rise to a certain degree. And it is because the Adepts *do* care for the world that they make their *chelas* live in and work for it, as many of those who study the subject are aware.

Each cycle produces its own Occultists capable of working for the humanity of the time on all the different planes; but when the Adepts foresee that at a particular period humanity will be incapable of producing Occultists for work on particular planes, for such occasions they do provide by either giving up voluntarily their further progress and waiting until humanity reaches that period, or by refusing to enter into *Nirvana* and submitting to reincarnation so as to be ready for work when the time comes. And although the world may not be aware of the fact, yet there are even now certain Adepts who have preferred to remain *in statu quo* and refuse to take the higher degrees, for the benefit of the future generations of humanity. In short, as the Adepts work harmoniously, since unity is the fundamental law of their being, they have, as it were, made a division of labour, according to which each works on the plane appropriate to himself, for the spiritual elevation of us all — and the process of longevity mentioned in “The Elixir of Life” is only the means to the end which, far from being selfish, is the most unselfish purpose for which a human being can labour.

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## VALUES

The values in the world are fast changing. Some people are speaking of a "new pattern of behaviour" which ought to replace the present pattern which is causing chaos; some speak of the moral code as being changeable, and say that if the great Teachers of humanity were to come again today they would give a different set of morals for us to follow. All this bewilders men.

Much of this confusion of thought results from the decadence of orthodox religions and the growth of science. Old concepts are yielding place to new ones. No thinking person can any longer believe, for instance, that the Earth is just a few thousand years old, or that it is the most important of the planets in the Universe. Knowledge of the vast Universe, as also of the tiny atom, is constantly expanding. And archæology is taking us further and further back into time and revealing the glories of the past, so that it is no longer possible to believe that our own civilization and achievements have reached a height of glory never reached before.

Though our concepts change, is there not a body of Knowledge which is unchanging and a moral code which alters not with the passage of time? Towards the close of *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 794), Madame Blavatsky wrote:

It is only by bringing before the reader an abundance of proofs all tending to show that in every age, under every condition of civilization and knowledge, the educated classes of every nation made themselves the more or less faithful echoes of one identical system and its fundamental traditions — that he can be made to see that so many streams of the same water must have had a common source from which they started.

Thus today, by a study of this book or of the writings of old philosophers, everyone has an opportunity to see for himself that the moral code or ethics of all religions are fundamentally the same; it is their interpretation that differs. This must be so, as true moral law is the law of Life, irrespective of time and civilization.

Mankind is, therefore, in a maze. "Is God dead?" is the question people are asking today. But few ask the question, "Did God as ordinarily understood ever exist at all?"

Even students of Theosophy sometimes find it difficult to get used to the idea that an anthropomorphic, extracosmic God, under whatever form or name — Jehovah, Father in Heaven, Allah, Ahura Mazda,

Krishna, Shiva, Vishnu — never existed at all and does not exist today! Therefore prayers and gifts to such a “God” are in vain. As the Buddha said, the gods are helpless to give man what he asks of them. Rituals and ceremonies cannot help, though man is psychologized into believing that they do. The true nature and value of rituals is unknown today, for their inner significance is forgotten and the crude outer form remains.

Man has been and is deluded and hoodwinked. The truth of this can be seen even among students of Theosophy, for how many of them refrain from attending religious ceremonies performed on occasions such as births, marriages and deaths? Is this because old beliefs die hard, or because students are afraid of what their relatives will say, or because they wish not to displease their friends? A little heart-searching on the part of all of us is necessary.

As students of Theosophy, should we not take to heart these words: “No human-born doctrine, no creed, however sanctified by custom and antiquity, can compare in sacredness with the religion of Nature”? And a good deal of practical guidance is contained in the statement that Theosophy is in the world “to fell and uproot the deadly upas trees of superstitions, prejudices, and conceited ignorance.” Our duty consists in helping on with this task.

Our difficulty lies in differentiating man-made rules and customs from Nature’s rules and customs. The cry down the ages has always been, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” A study of Theosophical teachings will give us the reasons why certain things are right and certain things are wrong, for all times and in all places, and it is these *reasons* that we must seek to base our thinking and actions on.

The “new” pattern of behaviour must be one which recognizes the lawful character of the whole world, physical, mental and moral. Man feeds himself on the produce of the earth; so do the animals, birds and insects. But each has to give back to Nature in proportion as it takes. Bees help the pollination of blossoms; worms improve the soil — and so we can go on and on, for in Nature’s economy there is nothing useless, there is no “waste” matter. All parts of her empire work together for the common good. Even weeds, poisonous “pests,” etc., have their own role.

The “new” pattern of behaviour must be one which accepts the fundamental rights of man and of all creatures — to *live*, to act for the common good, to be responsible to oneself and to one’s community

or nation for what one does. This sense of responsibility towards all is the only practical basis for a successful brotherhood of all men and of all creatures. But we fear this sense of responsibility and take the easy path of following science or what others tell us. We have lost fear of God, which is said to be the beginning of wisdom, and adopted faith in science. If we use the term "Law" for "God," then we can see that there is good sense in fearing Law, until we realize that obedience to it makes it our servant and ally.

An article in the April 1966 issue of *Mother Earth*, the Journal of the Soil Association, published in England, states:

Our survival depends upon balancing science with the philosophical, artistic and religious reflections and activities that belong inherently to the nature of human consciousness and are intended as part of the human ecology.

Speaking of science and technology, another article states:

Science, being pure *thought*, harms no one; therefore it need not be humanistic. But technology is *action*, and often potentially dangerous. . . . Never before, in all his long life on earth, has man possessed such enormous power to injure his human fellows and his society as has been put into his hands by modern technology. That is why it is important to maintain a humanistic attitude towards technology; to recognize clearly that since it is a product of human effort, technology can have no *legitimate* purpose but to serve man — man in general. . . . man in the totality of his humanity, encompassing all his manifold interests and needs, not merely some one particular concern of his.

Is it not in this light that we should look upon all methods of medical science which are supposed to give us "immunity" from this and that disease, or to enable us to escape the due effects of our actions? Also, what should be the right attitude to the body, alive or dead, and to the use of animals for research work? Is it "humanistic" to draw the blood from a corpse within a few hours after death, in order to use it for living human beings? Is it even "decent" to so desecrate a corpse? Remembering all that Theosophy has to say about blood, is this not yet another step downward instead of upward? Artificial hearts, someone else's liver or kidneys — perhaps of an executed criminal — another person's cornea, a collection of "spare parts" ready for use — where are our changing values leading us?

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## BHAKTI-MARGA—THE PATH OF DEVOTION

“Devotion” is a much misunderstood term. Sentimentality, emotionalism and religious fanaticism often go under the name of “devotion,” and have led many, including aspirants to the higher life, astray. They have taken the false for the real, without understanding. A definition of true devotion is given by the great Shankara:

Among all means of liberation, devotion verily is the most potent. The fixing of the attention on the true Master, the Divine Self, is declared to be devotion.

So true devotion is union with the Divine Self, the Supreme Spirit. In the Eleventh Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Sri Krishna states: “I am to be approached and seen and known in truth by means of that devotion which has me alone as the object.” It was because of his devotion to Krishna that Arjuna was able to see the Universal Form of the Supreme Master of Devotion. All the discourses of the *Bhagavad-Gita* deal with devotion — devotion by means of action, devotion by means of knowledge, devotion by means of renunciation, and so on. Devotion is the keynote of all the 18 discourses.

The various systems of philosophy and religion in India lay great stress on the treading of the path of devotion, *Bhakti-Marga*. The whole country abounds with various classes of sadhus and fakirs, who wander the length and breadth of the land, exploiting innocent people who submit to them passively and look upon them as their gurus and guardians. Also, throughout the world, wherever people, following custom and convention, throng churches and temples, mosques and synagogues, where ceremonies are performed and true knowledge is not given, there we have exploitation of the rich and the poor alike, from the mental, moral and spiritual points of view. When religious people consider their particular religion the best and their own prophet the greatest, one chosen of God, they manifest fanaticism, not true devotion. A politician is not truly devoted when he considers only the good of his own country and nation, forgetting the good of the rest of the world. Thus, we can multiply examples of false devotion, exhibited in various walks of life.

*Bhakti-Marga*, the path of devotion, is but one of the many paths indicated in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and all of them bring about a harmonious development, together leading to the goal of perfection. When one practises knowledge-*jnana*, action-*karma*, renunciation-*sannyasa*, meditation-*dhyana*, devotion-*bhakti*, on the correct basis of God-Law-

Evolution, then one is on the path of *Raja-Yoga*, the Kingly Science and the Kingly Mystery, the science of life and the art of living. *Hatha Yogis* are false pietists of bewildered soul because they have false concepts of God and Man and Nature, and torture their bodies, thinking that is the way to liberation.

What is true devotion? It is the holiest, purest feeling of the human soul. It includes heart-prayer, love, reverence, duty, steadfastness, gratitude and other virtues. It is the result of union with the highest in us.

When, moved by the law of Evolution, the Lords of Wisdom infused into him [primitive man] the spark of consciousness, the first feeling it awoke to life and activity was a sense of solidarity, of one-ness with his spiritual creators. As the child's first feeling is for its mother and nurse, so the first aspirations of the awakening consciousness in primitive man were for those whose element he felt within himself, and who yet were outside, and independent of him. DEVOTION arose out of that feeling, and became the first and foremost motor in his nature; for it is the only one which is natural in our heart, which is innate in us, and which we find alike in human babe and the young of the animal. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 210)

Devotion is not something that belongs to our lower, personal nature; it is the highest trait of the self-conscious thinker that each of us is, and has to be developed and acquired at this stage of our evolution. Therefore *The Voice of the Silence* instructs us to "make of pride and self-regard bond-maidens to devotion." As long as these lower tendencies exist, they act as barriers on the path of true devotion, just as the light of the sun is obstructed by the clouds. Therefore it is necessary to clean and clear our own lower, personal nature of sense-inclinations, passions and attachment to material existence. "Restrain by thy Divine thy lower Self. Restrain by the Eternal the Divine," says *The Voice of the Silence*.

Sri Krishna is the Supreme Master of Devotion, and it is because of his devotion to the welfare of humanity that he comes age after age "for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness," as stated in the Fourth Discourse of the *Gita*. He constantly calls Arjuna his devotee and friend. Arjuna was devoted to Krishna and wanted to tread the Path according to the instructions of his Master. Right at the close of the Eighteenth Discourse of the *Gita* it is stated: "Wherever Krishna, the

supreme Master of devotion, and wherever the son of Pritha, the mighty archer, may be, there with certainty are fortune, victory, wealth, and wise action; this is my belief." Each one of us is Arjuna in his human aspect; each one of us is Krishna in his spiritual and divine aspect — *Nara* and *Narayana*. In our human aspect we have to be skilful archers, keeping our aim as high as possible.

Having taken the bow, the great weapon, let him place on it the arrow, sharpened by devotion. Then, having drawn it with a thought directed to that which is, hit the mark, O friend — the Indestructible. OM is the bow, the Self is the arrow, Brahman is called its aim. It is to be hit by a man who is not thoughtless; and then as the arrow becomes one with the target, he will become one with Brahman. Know him alone as the Self, and leave off other words. He is the bridge of the Immortal. Meditate on the self as OM. Hail to you that you may cross beyond the sea of darkness.  
(*Mundaka Upanishad*)

How different this true devotion is from the sentimental type that we see around us! It is necessary to raise our consciousness to the level of the heaven-aspiring Superior Mind — *Vohu Mano*. Then only will our daily life, with its various activities on different levels, become fruitful from the spiritual point of view.

It was devotion to the welfare of humanity that made Lord Buddha leave his home and family and kingdom and go in search of truth, of the cause and cure of all suffering and sorrow. And when he gained enlightenment, it was his devotion that made him renounce the peace and bliss of *Nirvana* and come back to the suffering world to point out the Way. In a single verse he indicated the remedy:

Evil swells the debts to pay,  
Good delivers and acquits;  
Shun evil, follow good; hold sway  
Over thyself. This is the Way.

This is the only way in which suffering on the physical, mental and moral planes can be relieved.

The ancient pledge of Kwan-Yin is also the expression of pure devotion:

Never will I seek nor receive private, individual salvation;  
never will I enter into final peace alone; but forever, and every-  
where, will I live and strive for the redemption of every creature  
throughout the world.

The great Masters of Wisdom and Compassion, out of their devotion to humanity, sent out Madame Blavatsky as Their Messenger to re-proclaim the teachings of the Wisdom-Religion to mankind, so that peace and harmony may be established on earth and men and women may be bound together into one family by the four links of the Golden Chain — Universal Unity and Causation, Human Solidarity, Karma, and Reincarnation.

On her part, H.P.B. has stated that her unswerving devotion to her Master was the only cause of her success. It was her devotion to the Cause of the Masters that has kept the Theosophical Movement going.

Mr. Judge's devotion to Theosophy, his loyalty to H.P.B. and the great Teachers, enabled him to carry on the work of the Movement alone in America after H.P.B. left for India. He was considered a bridge between the trans-Himalayan School and the Western world. It was his whole-hearted devotion that kept going his monthly journal, *The Path*, which H.P.B. called "pure Buddhi," and through which he poured out his soul-wisdom.

When students of Theosophy in various parts of the world distorted the original teachings and departed from the lines laid down by H.P.B., it was again the man of devotion, Robert Crosbie, who had the vision and the courage to start anew along the right lines and strengthen the Theosophical Movement which had fallen to pieces. So, out of his heart-devotion he started, in 1909, the United Lodge of Theosophists, the fruits of which succeeding generations have been fortunate to enjoy.

Devotion to the Divine Principle men call God can only be expressed through the selfless service of our fellow beings. This is well expressed by Leigh Hunt in his poem "Abou Ben Adhem and the Angel":

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)  
 Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,  
 And saw, within the moonlight of the room,  
 Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,  
 An angel writing in a book of gold;  
 Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,  
 And to the Presence in the room he said,  
 "What writest thou?" The vision rais'd his head,  
 And with a look made all of sweet accord,  
 Answer'd, "The names of those who love the Lord."

“And is mine one?” said Abou. “Nay, not so,”  
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,  
But cheerily still; and said, “I pray thee, then,  
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men.”

The angel wrote, and vanish'd. The next night  
He came again with a great wakening light,  
And show'd the names whom love of God had bless'd,  
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

This shows how important it is to act devotedly on the basis of knowledge and reflection and discipline, renouncing all the time the fruits of action. When that harmonious development takes place, the heart, the head and the hands work in unison, all conflicts cease and man becomes an integrated being. It can be said, then, that one is on the path of *Raja Yoga*, the Kingly Science and the Kingly Mystery. One works whole-heartedly with his senses, mind, heart and understanding, and performs consecrated acts.

The very first clause of the Declaration of the United Lodge of Theosophists proclaims its policy of “independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy.” That cause is the great ideal of Universal Brotherhood, which makes one act for and as the Self of all creatures. The human soul, the self-conscious thinker, has to be constantly devoted to its Divine Parent, Atma-Buddhi, so as to receive its light of Wisdom and power of Compassion. This is the way to immortality in this mortal world. The human soul, which has to be constantly vigilant of the working of the lower, personal self, is the link between the Divine Parent on the one hand and the lower self on the other. This lower self has to be so refined and elevated that it is able to carry out the orders of its master, the human soul, the self-conscious thinker.

The first step in spiritual life is to be devoted to the spiritual interests of others. This enables one to recognize other pilgrim-souls as the rays of the One Supreme Self, the source of all.

One has to be absolutely devoted to the Law, the action of the One Life, cheerfully and understandingly, realizing that this one Law is also the Law of our own being. “Karma-Nemesis is no more than the (spiritual) dynamical effect of causes produced and forces awakened into activity by our own actions” (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 644). It is necessary to generate causes for the benefit of others; to help the whole of Nature and to work on with her, so that Nature herself opens up her treasures, not to the physical eyes, but to the eye of Spirit.

In the Twelfth Discourse of the *Gita*, Sri Krishna points out different modes of devotion for people at different stages of evolution. Each one can find out for himself where he stands, and adopt the mode suited to him. Krishna also enumerates the qualities of a true devotee, which can be cultivated by all.

To them thus always devoted to me, who worship me with love, I give that mental devotion by which they come to me. For them do I out of my compassion, standing within their hearts, destroy the darkness which springs from ignorance by the brilliant lamp of spiritual discernment. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, X. 10-11)

Not only is the darkness of ignorance removed by the brilliant lamp of spiritual discernment but, as *The Voice of the Silence* states, true devotion may bring us back the knowledge which was ours in former births.

So life after life one has to practise devotion to regain the lost knowledge impressed upon the plastic mind of humanity in its infancy. Then only one may get the inner vision or the right perception of existing things, the knowledge of the non-existent. And the Voice of the Silence will begin to whisper to the inner ear the truth about the divine life and light, the justice of the divine law and the love and compassion of the divine beings who live and labour for the upliftment of human souls and of the whole universe.

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He who wants to enter the realm of light must make a bundle of all "shop-keeping" religion and cast it away before he can pass the gates. . . . The prayers for health and wealth and material prosperity are not *bhakti*. They are the lowest form of Karma. *Bhakti* is a higher thing. We are striving to come into the presence of the King of kings. We cannot get there in beggar's dress. If we wanted to enter the presence of an emperor, would we be admitted in beggar's rags? Certainly not. The lackey would drive us out of the gates. This is the Emperor of emperors, and never can we come before Him in beggar's garb. Shopkeepers never have admission there; buying and selling will not do there at all. You read in the Bible that Jesus drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple. The love of the *bhakta* must be absolutely pure and unselfish, seeking nothing for itself, either here or hereafter.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

## STRAY THOUGHTS ON DEATH

Inadequate understanding of the Theosophical teachings on the after-death states sometimes leads students to the hasty conclusion that, since death is a blissful state, we need not worry about it now, nor prepare ourselves for the great change, for are we not told that death is sleep and that we shall awake to objective consciousness only with our next birth?

A more careful study shakes us out of our easy acceptance of the teachings we have become accustomed to and makes us look again at what they really imply. To take one such teaching:

After death, before the spiritual eyes of the soul, begins a performance according to a programme learnt and very often unconsciously composed by ourselves: the practical carrying out of *correct* beliefs or of illusions which have been created by ourselves. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 163)

We may have accepted this as a statement of fact, but on looking at it more closely we see that both illusions and correct beliefs are held by us during life, and both are the result of conscious or unconscious thought. Since we should be at that stage of evolution where, as far as possible, we do not live in a world of illusions or lay up a store of either happiness or unhappiness through *unconscious* thinking and planning, we are faced with the need to have correct beliefs and to think *consciously* during life.

The questions arise: How shall we think correctly of the after-death conditions? What do we actually know of them? How shall we make real to us the teaching that the soul carries with it the efflorescence of what it has gathered during life? Is our consciousness wrapped in illusions, in an atmosphere of unreality, or in correct beliefs? And if the latter, what are they?

We are told that the Mohammedan and the Christian heavens, to take two examples, are based on a material conception of life. For the Hindu, the idea of heaven is absorption in the contemplation of Shiva or of Krishna. As for the Theosophical student, he often believes that if he has an ardent longing to work for humanity or to be with the objects of his devotion, the Great Mahatmas, that would shorten his stay in *Devachan* or the heaven world; but such a student is under as great an illusion as the others, and may stay there longest, "serving mankind," as he believes, saving generation after generation of sinners, lifting them up to high heaven!

If we have no conscious thought of the fact of an after-life, then we shall not be conscious of what happens in that after-life. We shall be like the traveller in a train; in daylight, *i.e.*, during waking life, he sees the landscape which the passing train reveals to his sight, but if he sleeps through the journey, then he cannot see anything of the country through which he is speeding.

What is the difference between the materialist who says there is no after-life and the student of Theosophy who adopts an indifferent attitude and gives no conscious thought to the subject? Sometimes even the student feels that *Devachan* will be a welcome rest from the cares of life, *after* which he will come back refreshed, to take up the threads once again.

Truly the states of consciousness are many and varied!

If, awakening from our blissful, wishful thinking, we begin to plan our after-life consciously, how shall we set about the task? What are the thoughts we should have about it? What causes must we generate to produce in the after-life conscious appreciation of the good absorbed by the Ego during earth-life? What bent shall we give to our imagination and our will?

A few ideas come to our aid: the teaching on unmerited Karma, and the underlying thread through our review at death and through the daily self-examination during life.

“Unmerited Karma” is that Karma we suffer, as we believe, through no guilt of the present personality; and, that being so, the personality feels it is suffering unjustly. This feeling, we learn, “is sufficient to entitle the human soul to the fullest consolation, rest and bliss in his *post-mortem* existence.” Theoretically, we know there is no such thing as unmerited Karma, for what we are now reaping is either the result of what we ourselves have sown in other lives, or is the concomitant of present resolutions, even if those resolutions are to work for humanity. This latter aspect of “unmerited Karma” is often not recognized. H.P.B.’s sufferings, for instance, were not the result of her own bad actions in the far past, but the natural outcome of her being the centre of the dynamic Theosophical Movement. Hence we must free our minds of the idea that there is any physical, psychological or mental unmerited Karma, especially when we remember that all our lives on earth are for the purpose of the Soul, and that it is the Soul that reincarnates.

Along this line, H.P.B. tells us not to seek for reward. So we must

learn to eliminate two causes of *Devachanic* life — the desire to be compensated for the “wrongs” we think we have suffered unjustly; and the desire to be rewarded for the good we have done.

We are taught that at death we have a panoramic review of the past life, and before birth we have a preview of the future life, and thus we are helped to realize that what has happened or will happen is just and merciful. Do we see the justice and mercy aspect of the Law in our nightly and morning self-examination? If we strive to do so, we shall have taken another step in the direction of doing away with the idea of unmerited Karma, and strengthened the thread of Egoic consciousness in life. More, we shall have begun to link ourselves with that Egoic consciousness.

What is Egoic consciousness? What is our Ego doing here and now? Is it meditating, acting, dreaming? Is it aware of the personality's efforts through the day, and is the latter aware of the Ego's activities at night? Is the Ego trying to be aware of the personality, and *vice versa*? If we are told that the condition of our consciousness is something we cannot understand, we are not helped. So we need to plan, consciously, a real after-death condition by having an egoically illuminated personality now and here.

Obviously we must make ourselves of the same nature as the Ego. As the Ego is Atma-Buddhi-Manas, it thinks universally, feels universally, wills without bias. So it would seem that when we *consciously* think, feel and act universally, we are becoming in line with our Egoic life. We learn that the purpose of life is to enable the Ego to contact this plane of matter and gain control over it. If in our daily self-examination we try to see that it is the Ego that reviews through our brain-mind, we must be on the way to acting as Egos in life, and in time there will remain no unassimilated experiences of earth-life to absorb the Ego's awareness in *Devachan*.

H.P.B.'s hints as to the analogy between sleep and death have to be applied practically. When we go to bed every night we must remember that sleep is a time for union with the Ego — not an absorption, but a state which gives us the opportunity of learning.

What a task for us! Sleep is not just a rest but a period of learning, not a cessation of all activity but a journey “homeward” with our gifts of the day. And there has to be a return consciously to waking life with the gifts from “home.”

In this way we learn the meaning of “immortality,” *i.e.*, constant

and unremitting awareness and analysis and remembrance.

Death, then, like sleep, becomes merely a change in the state of our consciousness; we are still awake, aware, acting, feeling, thinking, though on a high plane of universality.

Is there not an analogy between the awareness resulting from the flooding of the personal consciousness with the light of the higher at the moment of death, and the flooding of the consciousness of the Ego by the Divine Consciousness at the moment of final Illumination? To prepare ourselves for that great event, we need to learn, now and here, that "to live to benefit mankind is the first step."

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*The Student:* O revered Sage, a shame falls on me for my private grief. Teach me more of immortal life for all men.

*The Sage:* One only Fact there is — Immortal Life. From Life we came, in Life we live and move, to Life we go — bearing with us ever to other planes or states or places the Life we are. Thou didst not miss communion with thy friend when after a long day of pleasant intercourse thou didst seek the night's repose? Thou hadst, in very truth, that communion still. So now, the love that bound you binds you still, is still the true communion — love, that ne'er was seen, nor touched, nor weighed, nor measured. Thy friend's bodily arc of existence here is broken, but not his love. Cement thy bond in other reaches of the soul. Day time here is that soul's night. So live in loving thought and purpose for others here that night time be thy day. And thou wilt bring back with thee into thy night what will illumine its dark spaces — knowledge thou hast communed with him you loved here in a body, who now is bodied only in eternal vesture.

—*From the Book of Confidences*

# “LUCIFER” CORRESPONDENCE

## WHAT IS GOD?

[All earnest students of Theosophy cautiously study the First Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* which deals with the subject of Deity. Yet, confusion, mostly rooted in acquired theological and creedal beliefs, exists, and the notion of a personal god shows itself as prevailing even among students of genuine Theosophy. Enquiry and questioning on the subject often elicited reiterated explanations from H.P.B. What one correspondent wrote in *Lucifer* for July 1888 is reprinted here on account of the valuable footnotes and Editorial Note appended by H.P.B.—EDS.]

I wish to thank you for the reply to my former communication.\* I find I agree to an extent with your thought, but not wholly. With your permission I will open out my thought on this great subject a little more, if useful.

I have no conception of Infinite and Boundless as positive existence. The Eternal or Absolute Void may be said to be Infinite and Boundless, but this Void is nothing, and of it nothing can be predicated; so that Infinite or Boundless and Absolute in this respect are non-existent.<sup>1</sup> You seem to identify Deity with the Original Nothing, the absolute Negation. But such Deity has nothing to do with what we call the Something or the Real, and existence is quite independent of it.<sup>2</sup> If Deity or God is the same as Absolute Nothing, and all things came from Him or It, then something has come from nothing, which, philosophy declares, cannot be.<sup>3</sup> The real, as opposed to the unreal, can alone produce that which is real, whatever kind of reality it be, divine, spiritual or natural. In plain words, nothing can produce nothing. Something only can produce itself in varied differentiations.<sup>4</sup> Nothing is

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\* Reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, June 1966, p. 343.—EDS., THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

<sup>1</sup> To some minds, very likely. In the opinion of a Vedantin or an Eastern Occultist this “Boundless” is the one Deity and the one Reality in this universe of Maya, and it is the one *everlasting and uncreated* Principle—everything else being illusionary, because finite, conditioned and transitory.—Ed. [*Lucifer*]

<sup>2</sup> It cannot be *independent*, since “existence” is precisely that Deity which we call “Absolute Existence,” of which nothing can be “independent.”—Ed. [*Lucifer*]

<sup>3</sup> Which philosophy? Not Eastern philosophy and metaphysics—the oldest of all. *Nothing* cannot come out of or from another nothing—if the latter word is accepted in our finite sense. All comes from Nothing, or No-thing, En-Soph, the Boundless (to us) *nothingness!* but on the plane of Spirit, the noumenon of ALL.—Ed. [*Lucifer*]

<sup>4</sup> Our correspondent is very little acquainted, we see, with occult Eastern ideas and true metaphysics. The deity he calls “Nothing,” and we “No-thing,” can produce nothing, for the simple reason that It is in itself ALL, the Infinite, Boundless and Absolute, and that even It *could never produce anything outside of itself*, since whatever manifests is ITSELF.—Ed. [*Lucifer*]

the Infinite. The Something (universal reality or the all) is the Finite; but (if you like) Infinite in this sense that, being all-inclusive, it is bounded by nothing beyond it. If Deity has originated form, size, number and motion as attributes of the concrete — spiritual or nature<sup>5</sup> — how could He (allow me to use this pronoun) so have done unless these in some way are in Himself? As He has originated *all* conditions, He surely possesses in Himself the original of these conditions; and though He is not conditioned by anything beyond or greater than himself, yet He is Himself the sum total of conditions. That is, He is the *all* of conditions.<sup>6</sup> As I take it, Deity is the All of the Universe in its first, original or originating form, and what we call the evolved universe is Deity in his last or ultimate form. It is as if Deity out-breathed Himself forth into vastitude, then in-breathed Himself back into minutude.<sup>7</sup> He is thus the all of substance as to Being, and the all of Form and of motions as to Truth. It is an alternation of states, the one the state of concentration, the other the state of diffusion or expansion. The Alpha and Omega, making true the saying, "the first shall be the last, and the last shall be the first." The Microcosm becomes the Macrocosm(?!) and this again resolves itself back into the Microcosmic form and state. The going forth of Deity from the self to the not-self and back again to the self constitutes in the motions the Age of ages or Eternity, and is the all of Truth, the all of cosmic and universal history.<sup>8</sup>

Of course the evolved, universal form, being a result, as to state, is not absolute or personal Deity, but only his image or reflection. . . .

I have said that the All as the *little* Universe evolves itself into the form and state of the vast Universe; but in the process it exhausts its potencies, and at this stage evolution begins to cease, and involution begins; and Deity the *little* is recuperated by re-absorbing the substances and forms of the Mayavic Universe, which thus in the process of ages ceases to be, returning to the Nirvanic state of Deific

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<sup>5</sup> Lightning is produced by electricity, and is an *aspect* of the concealed Cause. And because that Cause originates the phenomenon shall we call it "lightning" and a "He"?—Ed. [*Lucifer*]

<sup>6</sup> And why not "She," the ALL? Just as natural one as the other, and, in our opinion, quite as incongruous.—Ed. [*Lucifer*]

<sup>7</sup> Say, at once, "itself," instead of "Himself," and do not make it a personal (on our plane) *conscious* action and you will be nearer the mark of our occult teachings.—Ed. [*Lucifer*]

<sup>8</sup> This is Kabalistic and, on the whole, correct, but too indefinite for esoteric philosophy. Does our critic mean to say that it is the microcosm which becomes the Macrocosm, instead of the reverse? (See Editors' Note at the end).—Ed. [*Lucifer*]

concentrated. Now — a Vedantist would say — Brahm sleeps on the lotus, and will awake anew to create another Mayavic Universe.<sup>9</sup>

These imperfect attempts at statement are but general, and do exclude all that can be conceived and known of the manifold planes and ranks of intelligent beings that exist in the manifold universe. You seem to think I am very materialistic in thought. But mystical thought that denies form to Spirit and thus to Deity, is no proof of superiority or spirituality of intelligence.<sup>10</sup>

You will perceive the point toward which my line of thought strains. The beings on the highest ranges of the Universe are far more glorious in form than those on the lower ranges. Those on the terrestrial globes, such as ourselves, are the most shadowy, as to our outer forms. He who centres the myriad hosts of His children, must be the most and all-glorious.<sup>11</sup> But surely this is because He must be the most *concentrated* in substance and the most *complex* in His form, inconceivably so. The human forms of the Elohim are as floating shadows compared to Him. His form, as to organization and shape, is the Human, the dual human(!). The infinitesimal cells in His body are the germ points of Solar Systems, to be realized during the ages in the Mayavic expanses.<sup>12</sup>

Each plane of existence is organic, and the most refined is the most dense and vital and potential. All Spirits are human forms, all the Elohim (if you like) — male and female — or two in one — are human forms. In fact, existence is form, Life is form, Intelligence, Love and the human affections are based upon and held in the conti-

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<sup>9</sup> Aye, Brahmâ "sleeps" on the lotus during the "nights," and between the "days" of Brahma (neuter). But Brahmâ, the Creator, *dies* and *disappears* when his "age" is at an end, and the hour for the MAHA PRALAYA strikes. Then NO-THING reigns supreme and alone in Boundless Infinitude, and that No-thing is non-differentiated space which is no-space, and the ABSOLUTE. "The most excellent *male* is worshipped by men, but the soul of wisdom, THAT *in which there are no attributes of name or form*, is worshipped by Sages (*Yogins*)" (*Vishnu Purana*). This, then, is the point of difference with our correspondent.—Ed. [*Lucifer*]

<sup>10</sup> None whatever. It only denotes better knowledge of metaphysics. That which *has form cannot be absolute*. That which is conditioned or bounded by either space, time, or any limitation of human conception and growth—cannot be INFINITE, still less ETERNAL.—Ed. [*Lucifer*]

<sup>11</sup> Undeniably so. "He who centres the myriad hosts" is not ABSOLUTE DEITY, not even its LOGOS, *Aja* (the unborn), but at best Adam Kadmon, the *Tetragrammaton* of the Greeks, and the Brahmâ-Vishnu on the Lotus of Space, the HE which disappears with the "Age of Brahm."—Ed. [*Lucifer*]

<sup>12</sup> Just so, and this is Adam-Kadmon, the heavenly man, the "male-female" or the symbol of the material manifested Universe, whose 10 limbs (or 10 Sephiroth, the numbers) correspond to the zones of the universe, the 3 in 1 of the upper and the 7 of the lower planes.—Ed.] [*Lucifer*]

ment of the human organization, and all lesser or fragmentary formations of mineral, vegetable, animal or sphered world, are its production. It is the one Truth, the eternal, the uncreated and unimagined, the continent of universal particulars, the All-Father-Mother in whom we and all things live and move and have our being.

April 30th, 1888.

Respectfully yours,  
J. HUNTER

[EDITORS' NOTE.—The writer seems a little confused in his ideas. He launches in one place into verbal pantheism and then uses language embodying the most curious anthropomorphic conceptions. Deity, for instance, is regarded as "outbreathing himself into Vastitude," and as the "*all of substance as to being, the all of forms and motions.*" Later on "he" is described as an apparently gigantic organism: "His form is *the human, the dual human.*" The "*all of forms*" and conditions, merely an enormous hermaphrodite? Why not a monkey or elephant, or, still better, a mosaic pieced together out of all the different organic types? It is unphilosophical to regard such a *thing* as the "*All of forms,*" if it only reproduces the *human* organization, though it may be strictly *theological*.

In another place the writer speaks of this anomalous creature — the "All-Father-Mother" — as "unimaginable." After allusions to the function of its organic cells, its human organization, its substance and relation to the Universe, etc., this epithet appears sufficiently bewildering. We are also assured that "what we call the evolved universe is Deity in his last or ultimate form." Has Deity, then, several forms or states? Obviously so, if our critic is identifying him with plane after plane in this summary fashion. Such an interpretation would, however, result in the dethronement of the big Hermaphrodite, the only form Deity patronizes, according to his present biographer.

All argument based on the idea of reading such qualities as "form, size, number and motion," etc., into Deity is necessarily worthless. It utterly ignores the distinction between Substance and Attribute. Notice, also, such obvious objections as the following: (1) If Deity is a *form*, he cannot be Infinite because form implies a boundary line somewhere. (2) If Deity can be *numbered*, polytheism is a truth. (3) If it possesses *size*, it is no longer Absolute, size being a relative notion derived from phenomena. (4) *Motion* again involves limitation, inasmuch as it only means the passage *through space* of an object. Deity, if infinite, can have nothing to traverse, and like contradictions.

Our critic objects to being classed among materialistic thinkers; unfortunately for him it is his own writings that denounce him as such. For a Deity in form, obviously possesses *all the qualities which make up*

*matter, viz., extension in space, form, size, etc.* He must even possess that of colour, to be distinguishable from other objects of perception according to him! Where then are we to stop?

Mr. Hunter's conceptions are, in fact, so extremely unspiritual, that they far outvie in "materialism" the utterances of the most "advanced agnostics, who, at least, grasp one fact, *viz.*, that the realm of matter and the realm of mind cannot be jumbled up at random.]

### THE INITIATE JESUS

[The following Editorial Note was appended by H.P.B. to a letter from the Rev. T. G. Headley, who wrote, in *Lucifer* for August 1888, on the doctrine of Atonement, the false conception underlying the Mass, and the corruption of priests, and called for the rehabilitation of the name of Jesus.—Eds.]

Amen! It is quite true that there are not a few such illogical persons who seek to dethrone Romanism and Protestantism by destroying the innocent cause of these — Jesus. But no theosophist is among that class. Theosophists, even those who are no longer, as those who never were, Christians, regard, nevertheless, Jesus, or Jehoshua, as an Initiate. It is not, therefore, against the "bearer" of that name — in whom they see one of the *Masters of Wisdom* — that they protest, but against that name as travestied by pseudo-Christian fancy and clad in the pagan robes borrowed from heathen gods, that they have set their hearts. It is those "priests" whom our reverend correspondent denounces as "murderers" and "devils" — at the risk of finding himself confounded with them in the ungodly crowd he himself belongs to — that every true theosophist ought to be ever ready to rise against. Few of them refuse to see in Jesus a Son of God, as well as *Chrestos*, having reached that condition by suffering the *Christos* condition. All they reject is the modern travesty of the very, very old dogma of the Son becoming one with the Father; or that this "father" had ever anything to do with the Hebrew androgyne called Jehovah. It is not Jesus' "father," who "will have mercy, and not sacrifice," in whose nostrils the blood of even a small animal used as a burnt offering could have ever smelt sweet. How then could the human sacrifice offered by the allegorical Christ, described in the Epistle to the *Ephesians* as one that had "a sweet smelling savour," be regarded otherwise than with horror? Theosophists can discriminate — to say the least, as much as the reverend gentleman who signs himself T. G. Headley.

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## THREE BASIC TRUTHS

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All experiences, mental, moral and physical, from the commonest happenings of everyday life to the profoundest ideas on which philosophical minds have pondered — all are reducible to three great categories: God, the action of God, and the result of the action of God.

What is God? Put away for the time being holy names, great names, names to be revered — Vishnu, Shiva, Buddha, Christ, Allah — and go to philosophical concepts.

Theosophy teaches that God is Life, Impersonal, Eternal, Boundless. Therefore it is unthinkable and unspeakable, as the *Upanishad* puts it, but not unthinkable by the mind that has transcended its personal limitations. How shall we comprehend this great Ocean of Life without attributes, so difficult for religious minds to comprehend? Theosophy says, get away from the doctrines that the religions are confusing you with, and take great philosophical symbols to comprehend what It is. Madame Blavatsky has put forward three major symbols to give us a concept on which we can work.

First, Space. God is Impersonal, like Space, Boundless, like Space. Go to the minute. Break up a cell into molecules, into atoms, electrons, and so on. Immediately we come to a conception of boundlessness. It is important to see this, because the manifestation of Space means manifestation of God. If we look for It in the great alone, we will lose It out in the small, and we will not understand what Theosophy teaches. Is there any place where you say Space is not? Theosophy says, there are two aspects of Space, that which can be conceived of and that which transcends. The three dimensions of Space, length, breadth, depth — and something beyond.

Second, Time. Theosophists have two categories, timelessness or duration and time — past, present, future. That which transcends, is beyond past, present and future, is the Eternal Background, beginningless and endless, the Eternal Now.

Third, Motion. Eternal or perpetual motion, which it is the great desire of the scientist as of the mathematician to put his finger on. He will not till he transcends his mind. Similarly there are three aspects of motion that we can conceive of: horizontal motion, vertical motion, and the motion of the cross going around until you get, in

the language of symbols, the swastika. Three aspects of motion, but beyond is the Perpetual Motion.

Similarly man is threefold. He is Space, he is Time, he is Motion — and Something beyond. We all read in the *Upanishads*, “I am verily the Supreme Brahman.” And yet we are that triple being — will, thought, feeling. All of us are involved in the threefold aspect and we forget the fourth, the transcendent aspect. Krishna teaches at the end of the tenth discourse, “Having pervaded the whole universe with a single fragment of myself, I remain separate.” He remains separate from the whole universe. And yet, He is in it.

Go to the description of His mighty *Vibhuti*s. In the tenth discourse of the *Gita*, what does Krishna say? “Of the Pandavas I am Arjuna.” And He is speaking to Arjuna! Which is the true Arjuna? He, or the man he is speaking to? There are two aspects in each one of us. Krishna, under whatever name, is not someone outside. “I am the Ego seated in the heart of every being.”

The two concepts, the transcendent and the manifest, appear in God’s action or Law, the second great idea or Truth. Its underlying aspect is: That which manifests retires again out of manifestation, to come forth again. We wake to go to sleep. We go to sleep to wake. The rise and fall of all aspects of consciousness are the action of God — our action, because we are Gods. This dual aspect produces the Law of Periodicity or of Cycles, the second of the great ideas.

In the eighth discourse Krishna says, “Light and Darkness are the world’s eternal ways.” In our life, day and night are nothing but a reflection of the Day and Night of Brahma. That which in the ancient Hindu philosophy is spoken of as the Path of Forthgoing and the Path of Return, *Pravritti Marga* and *Nivritti Marga*, are the two aspects which show manifestation and the background of Transcendence into which all manifestation goes, to come out again. God manifesting as Law is the second great idea. This is Karma. There is no creation, but emanation. Therefore it is that Krishna does not stop with saying, “I am there and I have created you, Arjuna, and I am different from you.” No. He says, “I am you. I am in the heart of everyone.”

But, arises the question which brings us to the third great idea. Why is it that out of the five Pandavas Arjuna is Krishna? Why not Yudhishtira, the oldest of the five brothers? And you come to the great idea of the results of God’s action in a tremendous variety of

expressions — the invisible and the visible kingdoms of Nature.

It is said in many great philosophies that God is Light — not only a graphic symbol but a spiritual truth. But there are places of darkness in the manifested universe. We ourselves have experienced mental darkness, moral darkness, as well as physical darkness. Beings who live in a condition of complete black-out are described in the sixteenth discourse of the *Gita* — those of the demoniacal nature. But those lacking full illumination are not always evil. The kingdoms of Nature are manifestations of light. In some there is little light, in some, great light. In man there is a particular focusing of light.

That is the third great idea Theosophy puts forward. Krishna is everywhere, but in all kingdoms He does not shine forth in the same way. Krishna is present in every man, but He shines forth differently in Yudhishtira and in Arjuna. We are all in a condition of self-consciousness. We are trying to become self-conscious beings. Nature evolves in the lower kingdoms by what Madame Blavatsky calls in this third truth, natural impulse, but man evolves by self-induced and self-devised efforts. Man is a free-willed being, with the will free to limit himself. Therefore the third truth is the truth of the making of Karma. Karma is action as effect but also as cause. We are all involved in effects. Therefore we go from death to death until through affliction and sorrow we seek the cause.

So the results of God's actions here are the manifested aspects of the various kingdoms of Nature and, each one of us being God, we carry these kingdoms within ourselves. Is anybody unaware that he has an animal in him? Is anyone unaware that he has many an hour and day of consciousness in which he vegetates? We are transcending those kingdoms but doing something more which is implicit in the third Truth.

People often say, man is here to learn the lessons of life and get away from the round of rebirth. That is the path of spiritual selfishness. We have to raise the kingdoms of nature. The Hindu philosophy speaks of thirty-three crores of Gods. They make up our bodies, our minds and our feeling nature. We have a duty to them. To raise them all to the condition of self-consciousness is the task in which we must participate.

Study of metaphysics will compel us to come to the practice of ethics. Does anybody believe that to be kind, to be just, to be charitable, to be self-sacrificing, is bad? Is there anybody who would deny

that he would like to be compassionate and would be willing to sacrifice himself on the altar of human service? Then why do we not do it? Is it beyond us? No. Are we capable of achieving it? Yes. But not without knowledge. Nothing can come to us without understanding, but knowledge is not enough. Knowledge is necessary because through knowledge comes the awakening of the heart.

And so we have to study the great Truths and at the same time be devoted, but even these two alone will not do. Study and devotion, at one time even in the history of our great country, prevailed from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. A third feature was forgotten. The unity of the human kingdom was not recognized, with the result that the Path of Moksha or Liberation, the idea of going away from the world, into the jungle or to the mountain-top, came into prominence. Theosophy does not believe in it. It advocates remaining here so that we may raise the kingdoms within us, so that we may recognize our true nature and know that all are gods in the making and that the grand triple Truth of the manifesting God is in the heart of every single one.

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The best possession of the man of clay is health; the highest virtue of the man of spirit is truthfulness.

A thousand regrets will not pay thy debts.

Four things increase by use: Health, wealth, perseverance, and credulity.

An easy temper is a good counsellor, and a pleasant tongue is an excellent leader.

The subtle self is to be known by thought alone; for every thought of men is interwoven with the senses, and when thought is purified, then the self arises.

By perfection in study and meditation the Supreme Spirit becomes manifest; study is one eye to behold it, and meditation is the other.

Patience leads to power; but eagerness in greed leads to loss.

—*Gems from the East*

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

*The Hindu* of July 24th relates the story of a "child of exceeding talents," three-year-old Kim Ung-yong of Seoul. This remarkable boy, who can solve complicated problems in differential and integral calculus with ease, will be going to the United States this September to study under physics professor Allen D. Schneid at the University of Michigan. Kim has a fluent command of English and German in addition to his native Korean tongue, is a skilled calligrapher, and writes poetry. Psychologists say he has an IQ "over 200."

According to his parents — his father is a physics professor and his mother a teacher of hygienics at Seoul National University — Kim's growth has been extraordinary in many ways. On the 100th day of his life he cut 19 teeth, all at once. Soon afterwards, he began picking up words. By the time he was six months old, he was walking, and learning by ear the names of trees and animals. At the age of 13 months he could speak English, and a month later, German as well. He took to writing with Chinese brush and ink when 18 months old, and began drawing pictures with crayon. He started keeping a diary when he was two years and four months, and since then has filled literally thousands of pages with his writings, drawings and compositions. Except for his extraordinary intelligence, Kim is otherwise a relatively normal child.

When Kim, who reads the newspapers, was asked by a press interviewer how he thought the war in Viet Nam could be ended, he asked if there were enough arms and ammunition, and when told that there were, he replied: "Kill the war itself with the arms."

The appearance of egos capable of exhibiting remarkable intellectual powers at an extremely early age seems to be increasing. In such cases, physical heredity of the family, and the mental heredity of the reincarnating ego who takes on the new body, combine to make possible a precocious co-ordination of the soul and its instrument. This possibility is illustrated by Mr. Judge, who remarked that

if the inner man has been, say, a speller of English, and the mass of atoms composing the body has been also used by those who have been good spellers, then it will be possible for the person to pick up old knowledge. But this goes to show that it is in any case the remembering of what we once learned, and that always depending on the physical instrument we are using at the time.

(*The Path*, April 1893)

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"We have got to decide upon a new definition of death," writes Donald Gould in his article, "When Is Death?" (*New Statesman*, June 10). Until recently, death was thought to be "the final cessation of the vital functions," but we now have machines able to maintain the circulation of the blood, the ventilation of the lungs and the excretory functions of the kidneys, after the natural mechanisms responsible for these activities have failed. A man may lie in a coma, wholly insensible to the world, for weeks, or months, or even years, with his flickering life maintained by artificial means, until in the end all efforts fail. Medical circles are now debating as to when such a person may be said to have "died."

A few months ago, the French Academy of Medicine recommended that doctors should be empowered to certify the "death" of patients in whom cerebral function had failed, even though a state of artificial survival (a continued heart-beat and respiration) was being maintained by mechanical means. The Academy suggested that death should be assumed when the brain stopped functioning and the electroencephalograph (EEG) traced a straight line.

At what stage [asks Donald Gould] in the natural deterioration of the capacity of the individual for independent and unaided survival should we decide that death is a fact? How much money and effort should we spend upon the invention of new aids to artificial longevity? The pattern of advance of medical technology suggests that before too long we may have to decree that the various pumps, potions and prostheses which can keep a man alive beyond his natural span should be withdrawn when he reaches some statutory age.

Medical men are yet not able accurately to define death. According to Theosophy,

... the man is not dead when he is cold, stiff, pulseless, breathless, and even showing signs of decomposition; he is not dead when buried, nor afterward, until a certain point is reached. That point is, *when the vital organs have become so decomposed, that if reanimated, they could not perform their customary functions*; when the mainspring and cogs of the machine, so to speak, are so eaten away by rust, that they would snap upon the turning of the key. Until that point is reached, the astral body may be caused, without miracle, to re-enter its former tabernacle, either by an effort of its own will, or under the resistless impulse of the will of one who knows the potencies of nature and how

to direct them. The spark is not extinguished, but only latent — latent as the fire in the flint, or the heat in the cold iron. (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 483-84)

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A conference of anthropologists has indicated that many of the world's so-called "primitive" people are not relics of the stone age but the "wreckage" of more highly developed societies forced by various circumstances, such as changes in climate, to lead a much simpler, less developed way of life. (*Science Digest*, June 1966)

In *The Secret Doctrine* H.P.B. took pains to show that man's evolution on earth has ever proceeded in a series of rises and falls, and that savages and highly civilized people have always co-existed. The following utterance of Professor Max Müller, who attacked Darwinian Anthropology from the standpoint of language, is quoted from *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 721-22):

"What do we know of savage tribes beyond the *last chapter of their history?*" (Cf. this with the esoteric view of the Australians, Bushmen, as well as of Palæolithic European man, the Atlantean offshoots retaining a relic of a lost culture, which thrived when the parent Root-Race was in its prime.) "Do we ever get an insight into their antecedents?... *How have they come to be what they are?* ... Their language proves, indeed, that these so-called heathens, with their complicated systems of mythology, their artificial customs, their unintelligible whims and savageries, are not the creatures of today or yesterday. Unless we admit a special creation for these savages, they must be as old as the Hindus, the Greeks and Romans (far older)... They may have passed through ever so many vicissitudes, and *what we consider as primitive, may be, for all we know, a RELAPSE INTO SAVAGERY* or a corruption of something that was more rational and intelligible in former stages." ("India," 1883, F. Max Müller)

Quoting another authority, Professor Rawlinson, *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 722) states:

The primeval savage is a familiar term in modern literature, but there is no evidence that the primeval savage ever existed. Rather *all the evidence looks the other way...* *The mythical traditions of almost all nations place at the beginning of human history a time of happiness and perfection, a "golden age" which has no features of savagery or barbarism, but many of civili-*

zation and refinement.

How is the modern evolutionist to meet this consensus of evidence? We repeat the question asked in *Isis Unveiled*:

Does the finding of the remains in the cave of Devon prove that there were no contemporary races then who were highly civilized? When the present population of the earth have disappeared, and some archæologist belonging to the "coming race" of the distant future shall excavate the domestic implements of one of our Indian or Andaman Island tribes, will he be justified in concluding that mankind in the nineteenth century was "just emerging from the Stone Age"?

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*Newsweek* for May 9 carries the story of the uses and abuses of mind drugs such as LSD (d-lysergic acid diethylamide), and provides a close-up of the psychedelic cult.

The hallucinogenic drug LSD, which has recently become an obsession among American youth, has been variously described as "an intellectual tool to explore psychic 'inner space,' a new source of kicks for thrill seekers, the sacramental substance of a far-out mystical movement — or the latest and most frightening addition to the list of mind drugs now available in the pill society being fashioned by pharmacology." LSD users find their mental perceptions altered (one user thought he was a plant), and go on psychic "trips," in the course of which they sometimes indulge in insane, immoral behaviour. Instead of the term hallucinogenic drug, former Harvard psychologist Timothy Leary, leader of the new LSD culture, promotes the less invidious phrase "psychedelic (from the Greek: mind-manifesting) experience."

LSD first made its appearance in the laboratory and was used for studying mental illness. Its hazards soon became manifest. *Newsweek* remarks:

The real hazard of LSD lies in the personality of the person taking the drug, the dose, and the setting in which it is administered. Even the most normal "normal" may have a bad reaction. And the drug may push a latent psychotic over the borderline into a full-blown break. . . .

Many psychiatrists believe hallucinogenic drugs are far more dangerous than narcotics in their potential effect on overt behaviour. "Your ego or central control mechanism falls apart," says Nathan Kline. "It's not that the drugs themselves induce

anger or violent behaviour, but that they loosen the controls over impulsive behaviour." Violent reactions to LSD are rare — but when they happen they are memorable. One of the Bellevue LSD patients, responding to "voices," hurled himself in front of a subway. Others have jumped out of windows or hurtled down stairs, thinking they could fly.

LSD may have more subtle as well as violent effects on the psyche. Dr. Sidney Malitz of the New York State Psychiatric Institute is convinced that a number of people who have taken hallucinogens habitually have undergone distinct personality changes. "They become very self-centred, very grandiose and feel their own standards are the new standards of the world," Malitz says. Some psychiatrists have suggested biochemical changes may occur in the brains of habitual users of LSD.

The worthwhileness of society's growing dependence on mind drugs is at present being debated by psychiatrists. As critic Marya Mannes asked young people recently: "Why do you need drugs to give you excitement and revelation, when the real world, if you really bothered to examine it, is so full of both?"

It is expected that LSD and the current mind drugs will be followed by "learning drugs." Researchers are now working on drugs that improve concentration, that sharpen the memory, that increase sex drive. Referring to these laboratory experiments, *Newsweek* comments:

... for doctors, educators, parents — and for the young — they will raise basic questions. When "learning pills" become available, what value can be placed on artificial intelligence? What fulfilment for lovers in chemical sex? And what worth for anyone in synthetic human experience?

"There is such a thing as being intoxicated in the course of an unwise pursuit of what we erroneously imagine is spirituality," wrote Mr. Judge in his article, "Astral Intoxication" (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 69). There are those who are misguided enough to believe that hallucinogenic drugs make possible a spiritual experience; they but confuse the supersensuous perceptions and deceptive lights of the psychic realm with the true spiritual vision which those whose spiritual sight has been unfolded alone can have. "No untrained or merely curious seeker," says Mr. Judge, "is able to say just what effect will result to his outer senses from the attack or influence encountered by the psychical senses."

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In the interests of medical and social progress, and in view of the variability of results obtained from animal experiments, their replacement by more accurate and satisfactory alternatives is a matter of urgency.

According to a leaflet published by the promoters of Animal Welfare, Essex, England, there are strong indications that the laboratory animal may eventually be largely replaced by the more effective and safer alternatives which are in the process of being developed. Since the emphasis today is on prevention rather than cure, necessitating the increased study of health in humans rather than the study of diseases artificially induced in animals, a decrease in the number of animals required for research purposes should result.

The Report of the Littlewood Departmental Committee on Experiments on Animals stated that, where available, scientists prefer techniques which replace living animals for research. It would seem that the replacement of large numbers of animals in medical research by computers and other new techniques is only a matter of time. Scientists who use them say that these techniques are economically, scientifically and ethically superior to those involving animals.

According to the Rand Corporation of Santa Monica, California, complex biochemical experiments can be performed without using animals, patients or laboratory analyses. Additional advantages are the saving of time, the avoidance of laboratory error, and the possibility of exploring biochemical frontiers for which no satisfactory methods of laboratory analysis exist. Researchers believe that the application of modern, high-speed, digital-computer techniques to medicine "opens a whole new era of clinical research and treatment."

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