

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE THRALDOM OF SUPERSTITION

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STUDENTS OF THEOSOPHY have a duty to themselves in regard to their superstitions. Many of these influence them unconsciously to themselves. Intellectual recognition of the bane of superstition is one thing; perception of it as manifested in others, another. But the perception and recognition of one's own superstitions is a very different matter. Most of the time most of the students are blissfully ignorant of their own limitations born of their own superstitions.

The next step is harder still. When one has seen the existence and activity of certain superstitions in oneself, the exercise necessary for eliminating them seems most arduous. Out of self-pity, or what not, we even make the practice appear to ourselves more arduous than it actually is.

The world, our particular world, glammers us in numerous ways. The glamour of our false beliefs, our misleading notions, our limited or misunderstood knowledge, prompts us to see grey (if not white) in place of black. The machinations of the Personal Man are subtle, a powerful one being—“Tomorrow I must make myself ready for the battle.” We postpone. An attitude born of lethargy, of *Tamas*, and “tomorrow” recedes. We fail to see that “procrastination is the thief of time.”

Because a person acquires some knowledge of the basic teach-

ings of Theosophy he does not become different from the mass of mankind. One aspect of the initial glamour of this early stage is substituting privilege for responsibility. Even an acquaintance with the great philosophy *does* make a difference between the student and the mass. But the perception of that difference is glamorous if it is coloured by the sense of superiority which counts it as a privilege. If it is valued by the student as a serious responsibility to himself first and to others in the next place, he has taken a right turn on the Path of Progress. The sense of responsibility born of a correct understanding, however partial, of the basic ideas of Brotherhood, Reincarnation, Karma, compels a man to look at himself. Self-examination points to (among many other things) his own superstitions. No student has all the superstitions which are rampant in modern civilization, but he would do well to review himself in the light of the principal ones which flourish at the present hour.

Superstitions are generally attributed to religious beliefs and creedal credulities. But we have had a pitiful exhibition of superstition about race in Hitler's Germany. In him and in his followers that superstition became concentrated and even was foolishly considered a possession to be proud of; but others, individuals and nations, are not devoid of this superstition.

There are political superstitions and also social ones pertaining to customs, manners, etc. Class distinctions (of patricians and plebeians, nobles and common people, bourgeois and proletariat, Suvarnas and Harijans, etc.) represent such social superstitions.

Born in this age, we are naturally prone to suffer from its superstitions; and born in a particular geographical area, we also suffer from its superstitions. Superstitions are *skandhaic* and belong to the personal man. The Inner Manasic Ego, being a pure Thinker, is not fettered by superstitions and the dogmatism and fanaticism born of them.

One of the principal superstitions which overtakes a new student-practitioner is related to this spiritual freedom of the real Man. He fancies that he has freed himself from all fetters of the personality and arrogates to himself the position of a free man

who need not concern himself with the outer and lower distinctions of life. He is deluded into the notion that he has freed himself from religious superstitions, social customs, scientific shibboleths, and political *parti pris*.

The neophyte, to begin with, should not assume that he has freed himself from superstitions. Philosophic reflection would very soon point out that such an assumption is sheer presumption, for his personality will reveal unmistakable signs of transmutation of *skandhas* when such has been achieved. Better humbly to look for one's own pet superstitions, which have a way of hiding themselves from one's perception.

Impartial self-examination will not only uncover our superstitions but often point to the truth that we have but exchanged one set of superstitions for another. Thus, for example, the creedal and communal bias of our pre-Theosophical days manifests under cover of magnetic purity, and, instead of saying of another that he is a heathen or an infidel, or a *durvand*, we say of one of a different temperament or of one whom we do not like—"His magnetism is not pure." To an orthodox *brahmana* the *bhangi* is an untouchable. When the former comes to Theosophy he substitutes some brother in place of the *bhangi*—"He is so impure in magnetism." Just as the orthodox *brahmana* is blissfully ignorant that in some of his habits he is as dirty and impure as the *bhangi*, so the new student is blissfully ignorant that his own personal magnetism is impure, in spite of all the hot water and soap which he may use. We can multiply examples. Superstitions die hard. We need gallons of the waters of knowledge and tons of the soap of exercise before our *skandhas* become transmuted, and the personality stands free from the incubus of superstitions.

Theosophy convicts blind belief of so many sins that the student is on his guard against it and tries to rationalize his own beliefs, seeking justification in the philosophy. Between the ever-flowing River of the Wisdom-Religion and the colouring it takes on, branching off in side courses, there is a fundamental difference. Our bias in favour of the religion into which we were born is given up—not always for the True but for a substitute. Thus,

love for religious ceremonialism transfers itself to so-called mystical rites.

Instead of proceeding from type to archetype, the student often goes from one to another type. This is akin to a politician's changing of his party. Again, the history of the Movement knows characters whose innate love for creedalism died hard: coming out of orthodox churchianity, some passed on into creedal Buddhism; others, coming out of dogmatic "free-thought," passed on into caste-ridden sectarianism; and so on. Again, many inoculated with Spiritism, contacting Theosophy, continued—of course themselves unaware—with spook-ism, astralism and even necromancy.

Socially, the truth of the teaching of Reincarnation that in the evolutionary stream differences do exist was twisted by some to classify members in the Theosophical Brotherhood into aristocratic souls and others. Or, suiting their prejudices to the teaching about different classes of *pitris* now struggling in the human kingdom, they spoke of themselves as first-class and of others as second-class *pitris*. On the other hand, others of the same Theosophical Brotherhood, impressed by political slogans about what H.P.B. called "the insane dreams of socialism and of communism," twisted the teaching of all men being brothers into that of all men being equal, as if the process of Reincarnation were absent! All men *are* brothers, but they are different in bodily sensitivity and strength, in moral character and refinement, in mental stamina and depth of insight.

Again, there are superstitions of the men of science, especially those of the medical and borderland sciences, to which people fall prey.

We have superstitions about our bodily health, so intimately related to our bodily habits. Our psychological attitude reacts physiologically. To be nervous about bodily well-being is a superstition and is as wrong as carelessness and non-attention to it. It is our duty to be well, and fear is corrosive to health.

To have a defiant or a nonchalant attitude to health is "tempting Karma." To run to the doctor for every casual ache, especially

when we have not thoughtfully planned our menus, our hours of labour and refreshment, is to be superstitious. Equally wrong are neglect to take note of pain—Nature's warning—and trying to do without medical assistance when one does not possess adequate knowledge to deal with that pain. Superstition once again!

Besides these two superstitions about the body, there are those about medical science. Every new nostrum or fad suggested by experimenters and exploiters is accepted by many as possessing healing power. How many of us fall prey to the doctors who are themselves infected with superstitions! Another instance of exchanging the object of our superstition. Once we believed blindly in the priest, now we believe in the doctor.

We can go on writing in this vein, but what is said above ought to serve our purpose. That purpose is, to encourage each neophyte to face his own superstitions—not troubling himself with those of others. And if he starts with an examination of the contents of his own mind and its inclinations, soon will he see their ramifications in his sensorium. A sincere attempt to remedy mind-superstitions will remake our whole personality.

Blind belief in one's own self is a superstition when it is mistaken for confidence in the Inner Ruler. The archetypal superstition (if such a designation may be applied to so gross an imponderable) is one's own superstition about the nature and qualities of one's own personality. To know one's lower self is very difficult; the only knowledge more difficult is that about the Divinity which we are—the Star whose ray we are.

It is said that "Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child." Our unselfish deeds refine our lower nature and make possible the acquiring of the Wisdom about the Higher Self. But our loving deeds themselves have to be done in the name of, and for, that Higher Self, whose Light is described in our Theosophical philosophy. To begin with, we must learn to perform loving deeds, each time eliminating the personal element therefrom. If we are heedful, soon will we learn the art of loving deeds done for and as the Self. This is the Death of Superstition.

THE HOPES OF THE LIVING

Yet, if the "Doctrine of the Heart" is too high-winged for thee, if thou needest help thyself and fearest to offer help to others—then, thou of timid heart, be warned in time: remain content with the "Eye Doctrine" of the Law. Hope still. For if the "Secret Path" is unattainable this "day," it is within thy reach "tomorrow." . . .

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

THUS is set forth in Theosophy the doctrine of Hope—a hope that spans the ups and downs of life; a hope that survives death and returns with the burgeoning soul to egg it on to greater efforts and nobler causes. Yet, it is always well to pause after any great crisis in life, when in the calm that follows the storm the soul stands for an instant amazed and relieved and wonders what the future will be. It asks itself whether its own survival through the last crisis has brought to it the indication that the very virulence of the great turbulence it went through had proved beyond doubt that there are inner reservoirs of strength which it can dimly sense only now and which probably it would never have recognized but for the last nightmare during which it thought that all was lost.

Anyone who has cared to study life as it is being lived will have observed that man acts through any one or a combination of three centres that propel him to action. These are: the mind dominated by earthly passions and desires; the mind that dwells in its own world of fancy or intellect; and lastly, the mind that through diverse disciplines is fixed on the high ideal of a charity that reflects immortal love and which seeks its own felicity in the good of others. Each of these three centres has its own distinct motivations, its powers and hopes which are different and oft-times antagonistic to the aims, purposes and basic principles that motivate the other two centres. The tyrant and the despot; the fanatic and the egotist; the scoundrel and the vilest among men

belong to the first class. Their centre of motivation produces in them an insatiable thirst for material things, both tangible and intangible. So is built up over the years, in the personal man as in the body politic, a craving for power and supremacy and the miser's hunger to hoard more and yet more of the world's wealth of the necessities of life to the exclusion of all others.

This particular centre of thought and action which dominates the life of the man caught up in it creates in him a false self by the illegitimate union of the mind with the passions and desires of his animal nature. It is this false self that turns the mind away from its higher possibilities and makes of it a willing partner in initiating and furthering amoral activities. This false self has its hopes and ambitions which it carries from life to life through the activity of the *skandhas*; and since these are for the acquisition and enjoyment of the material aspects of life, they have in them the germs of decay, dissipation and death. Such desires when fulfilled frustrate themselves; such hopes wither away in the moments that follow upon realization; and the soul frustrated and chastened by the wreckage strewn over numerous lives realizes that in choosing desire as its beacon light it chose the darker and not the brighter side of life. For such an one perhaps the next life will witness a new orientation when pain and sorrow and crippling limitations will teach the soul that straying from the true path leads sooner or later to mirages that raise false hopes which lure the man near and ever nearer to extinction.

False hopes have their origins in the most fallacious assumptions based on the initial successes that are secured by a mind steeped in lower, worldly desires. The ordinary man with his limited vision of life is too prone to assume that he can, with the exercise of very little ingenuity, "get away with it." Saint Paul drew attention to this weakness among men which made them believe that gratifying results can be obtained by not too great an adherence to ethical standards. Writing to the Galatians he said: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The hope of getting benefits by a deliberate side-stepping of the law and yet not inviting retribution is an abomination that man creates by suppress-

ing the voice of his higher mind and by permitting his lower desires to generate such a clamour that it drowns the saner advice.

Next to this type of mind is the one that lives in an ideal world of its own. Great poets, sculptors and mathematicians can be grouped in this class. The mind moves in and inhabits airy regions and uncharted territories not accessible to the ordinary waking man. The senses of men of this class are tuned to a higher pitch and their intellect touches upon the abstract. In the words of Shakespeare, they give to airy nothings a local habitation and a name. In moments of abstract visions, they envisage some great truth which unwisely they may give out to a world not yet prepared to receive it, and so unwittingly they become the cause not of human joy but of human misery. But even this class has not remained immune to the prevailing taint of materialism and materiality. The poet, the artist and the philosopher of today have earthly ambitions, with the consequence that the flights of their fancies can soar no higher than what their clipped wings can permit. For the visionaries who seek their delight in the abstract, the danger is greater, for their discoveries may, if revealed at the wrong time and to the wrong persons, become dangerous torches in the hands of ignorant children who delight in playing with explosive materials. From being the interpreters of idyllic visions, the representatives of this class become the purveyors of merchandise—some pleasing, instructive and purposive, others degrading, detrimental and even dangerous. Have they hopes? Each category and sub-category in this class has its hopes. The true visionary hopes to sing in line, form, colour and verse of the exquisite beauty which he senses, to instruct those who are not gifted as he is with the higher and deeper sense of the good, the true and the beautiful. Others of the class see sermons in stones and translate them for ordinary mortals, hoping to disclose the ethic in the parable and the moral in the fiction. All honour to them for leaving footprints on the sands of time. They dream bolder dreams and their visions point to vistas that men coming perhaps centuries later can explore, and exploring leave their own signposts to others who in times yet to come will pave the way a little nearer towards the great goal. As for the mercenaries

who fall from their high estate and seek to barter the gifts received from higher regions for earthly rewards, they hope only for the gains that this earth can give or lend, and so hoping they get caught by any of the numerous epidemics that germinate in the desires of man. Their hope duly analysed is to give unto Caesar the things that belong to the Gods.

The last category of mind is that which is unwaveringly fixed upon the True. To arrive at this stage, the mind has to pass through the experiences of sense-life and, seeing their hollowness, to flee from them; and not only from these but from the more subtle aspects that they assume to allure and beguile the more advanced to their ultimate fall from grace. This detachment from all mortal aspects is not achieved overnight. The memory of the act of assuming a complete indifference to the lures of sense has to be garnered not only because it can then be drawn upon as occasion arises, but because it can be profitably employed to lift another soul struggling perhaps unsuccessfully against the same or similar experience. A wise one has said that the disciple must have learnt how to pass through all places, foul and clean alike. The attaining of an unshakable equilibrium under any and all circumstances has to be striven after. For this, the detachment of the mind from the attractions and repulsions exercised by both external and internal sights and sounds has to be total. There can be no compromise and no moment of regret. The mind has to eschew the personal and live in the impersonal. But even this is not the end of the discipline. Fixed in the impersonal, the mind has to seek out and find its abode in the Divine. This calls for not only a brotherhood *in actu* but an active participation in the work that Nature undertakes for any particular cycle of effort. Hope? Of course, at each perilous stage of the ascent—a hope that is carried beyond life and through *Devachan* and brought back again and yet again in one incarnation after another. It is the Ariadne's thread, slender yet unbreakable, that links the mind's sojourn on earth to its divine possibilities. Hope to attain this state is eternal and wells up spontaneously in the human heart in the progress of time.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

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WHILE a wave of spiritual enlightenment is passing over the world, calling forth various reforms in the political and social relations of humanity, there is one extremely dark spot in the mind of mankind, into which this light does not seem to be able to penetrate, namely, the idea of killing criminals for the purpose of punishing them. This idea is a superstition, arising from an entire ignorance of the true nature of man; a relic of the Dark Ages, a blot on the character of humanity. It was to be expected that in consequence of the rapid spreading of progressive ideas, disseminated by Theosophical literature, this remnant of a barbaric custom would gradually disappear. Instead of that, the Austrian lawmakers have just revised the penal code, retaining capital punishment, and, the faculty of medicine having memorialized the Minister of Justice recommending the cutting off of the heads of criminals in the place of hanging them. In the most progressive country of the world—the United States of America—legal killing by means of electricity is about to be introduced, while in other so-called civilized countries the carelessness of allowing oneself to be caught for committing a crime is punished by hanging, garroting, shooting, or by the guillotine.

The first question which arises in the consideration of this subject is, "What is the object of killing a criminal?" The second question is, "Is that object attained?" The only imaginable objects in killing a criminal are: (1) To inflict punishment on him for having acted against the law; (2) To render him incapable to do further mischief, and thereby to protect society.

The age in which criminals were tortured has passed away; the authorities are content upon finding a way by which the death penalty can be inflicted with the least possible suffering to the delinquent; and even inflicting mental suffering upon the candidate for death is avoided, because, instead of causing him to get frightened by imagining the horrors of hell, everything is done to make him believe that his sins are forgiven, and that

he will be received with open arms in the celestial kingdom. The "punishment" is, therefore, evidently not intended to produce physical or mental suffering, and if the criminal is a man of courage, and does not fear death, there will be no horror of dying, there will be no suffering, and the only possible punishment for him is the loss of his life. Now the medical fraternity inform us that as soon as the heart and the brain of a person are paralysed, there is an end to his consciousness. If this is true, then the criminal, as soon as he is killed, is unconscious of ever having lived; he is unconscious of ever having lost his life, and where, then, is the punishment in causing a man a loss of which he is not aware, and in taking away from him something that he will never miss? It is like taking away from a person something that never belonged to him, and which he does not even know exists.

Seen from this point of view, capital punishment is a total failure, because, besides frightening a timid criminal for a few hours or days before his death, there is no pain inflicted upon him; and even this mental torture, if any, is not inflicted by the law, but merely by the criminal's own imagination, and by his belief regarding the state after death. The capital punishment being, therefore merely an imaginary punishment, does not fulfil its object as a punishment, and the only remaining question is whether society can protect itself better by killing a criminal than by shutting him up in a prison and seeking to educate him and to improve his character. At the present state of civilization, where the country abounds with prisons, there is, to say the least, no necessity for killing an offender against the law; nor is there any financial profit arising from killing him, because, besides the cost of the execution, the Government loses his labour.

There is still another reason given by the advocates of capital punishment for its continuation, namely, the "wholesome effect which it will have of frightening other criminally-inclined people into remaining virtuous"; but it is very doubtful whether the defenders of such an argument believe it themselves, or whether they have ever seriously considered it; because it is well known that the law does actually never punish a crime unless the crimi-

nal is caught, and, therefore, the punishment is rather for having committed the crime in a bungling manner, which involved discovery, than for committing it; and the only thing which the captured criminal regrets is that he was not cunning enough to avoid being caught, and the only sincere resolve which he forms in his own mind is to be more careful the next time, so as not to be caught again. Moreover, the morality of a people which is based only upon cowardice arising from fear of punishment is worth very little, and the passions, merely restrained and pent up by fear, accumulate and grow in strength. The pent-up passions of a nation restrained by fear resemble a mine loaded with dynamite, waiting for a favourable moment to explode, when the result will be such as has been witnessed during the horrors of the French Revolution.

Thus, seen from a merely external and "materialistic" point of view, capital punishment is useless and unnecessary; but a correct conception of its true nature and consequences can only be formed if we look below the surface appearances and study the true nature of "life" and of the constitution of man.

There is nothing more irrational than the attempts which have been made by our modern "rationalists" of separating science from philosophy. In doing so, science, so-called, condemned itself of being merely a science of external appearances and phenomena, relegating the causes of such external appearances to the region of the "unknowable." It is admitted by all modern and ancient philosophers that a tree is the result of something capable of producing a tree; *i.e.*, of the action of some invisible principle, or "potentiality," residing in a kernel and capable of developing into a tree; and likewise that the organism of man is the result of something invisible in connection with a power whose manifestation is called "life"; but material science, in disregarding and denying the existence of causes which she cannot see with material eyes, makes of every man and of every tree a miracle whose existence cannot be explained. Occult science says that the principle which causes the appearance of a tree, or which manifests itself in the human form as a man, is the real thing of importance which is to be taken into consideration; and that

the external form, be it that of a man or of a tree, is nothing else but an external form whose importance does not transcend the plane whereon it exists. She says that while the form or appearance perishes, the power which caused that form to exist remains, and will be capable, under favourable conditions, of producing another similar form, be it a man or a tree, exhibiting the same qualities as the former. There is only this difference, that while the seed of a tree may be destroyed, the spiritual "seed" which produces the soul of a man cannot be destroyed by capital punishment, but will, under favourable conditions, produce such a man again as sure as the seed of a thistle will produce nothing else but a thistle.

All this is taught by the doctrine of Reincarnation, a doctrine with which our scientists ought to make themselves familiar, if they do not prefer to remain in ignorance regarding that which is of supreme importance in studying the nature of man. This doctrine, then, teaches us that, in depriving the spirit of a criminal of his physical body, we do not kill the cause that produced the criminal, and that this cause will in due time produce another criminal of the same kind, if not of a still worse character, as the unjust act of robbing him of his life will have caused a sense and desire of revenge and an embitterment of the spirit. By capital punishment we, therefore, at best, defer the manifestation of an evil cause for some future time, and give to a future generation an evil inheritance, with which we ourselves ought to have contended, and which we ought to have sought to ameliorate. This is, however, not all. It might be said that we do not care about the troubles that will affect future generations, and that it is all we can do to protect and take care of ourselves; but a deeper investigation in the invisible nature of man will show us that in killing the body of a criminal we do not get rid of the powers that constituted him a criminal, and that these powers, after having been deprived of one instrument for their manifestation, will continue to manifest themselves in other still less convenient ways. To understand this it will be necessary to throw a glance at the constitution of man, as it is taught by those who have the capacity to know it; and for the sake of those who are

not familiar with the doctrines of Occultism, we will attempt to outline that constitution in comprehensible terms. According to the doctrines of the sages, Man is a fourfold manifestation of consciousness, or, in other words, a trinity of spirit and body, with the intermediary link called the "soul," the latter being divisible into the purely animal and the divinely human soul. To the former belong the animal emotions and passions, to the latter the higher powers of the mind. We may, therefore, classify these four states of consciousness as four principles, giving them the following familiar names:

(1) GOD, the *Atma*, the "divine Self," *i.e.*, the Divinity in man, a universal power, existing in the majority of the criminals, only, so to say, in a dormant or latent state, and not having arrived at a state of self-consciousness in them. This means that the criminal is not a saint, and does not know the god that is hidden in him, and whom to awaken to consciousness is the object of human life, an object frustrated by the execution of the criminal. This principle, whether awakened or not, cannot be executed and killed; it is the real and true Self, and returns to its divine source after the death of the body, as is also taught by the Church, which, at the funeral service, relegates "the body to Earth, and the spirit to God."

(2) The MIND. This we understand not to be the thinking faculty of the brain, but that principle which manifests itself as thought and will in the material brain, *i.e.*, that which enables the brain to think by the aid of the physiological processes taking place in the living subject. Even if the head is cut off and the brain with which man used to think is destroyed, the thought-producing principle cannot be killed; but, after being deprived of its instrument for manifestation, it enters into its own state of being, which in criminals of the ordinary kind is presumably that which is called *Devachan*, where it rests in its subjective condition until the time arrives when it will be reincarnated upon the earth, and evolve a new physical body with the same tendencies which it possessed in its former life.

(3) The ASTRAL SOUL. It is well known that the physical body or "corpse" of a man is not the man himself, but merely an in-

strument formed by nature, in and through which the consciousness of man may manifest its mental and physical powers; in other words, man is not himself his own nature, but he has an everchanging organism, in which his (temporary) nature is manifesting itself. The same is the case with his astral soul, the seat of his passions and emotions. The astral soul is not the man himself, but merely a principle wherein the good and evil powers existing on the astral plane are manifesting themselves, in the same sense as cold manifests itself in an icicle; to destroy the icicle does not destroy the cold, even if that piece of ice were broken into a thousand pieces; and if the icicle is molten and evaporated, the same cold will be able to cause the vapour to condense and to freeze into ice again. This means to say that in the astral plane of the world there exist certain influences of a good and an evil kind, comparable to miasmas in the physical atmosphere of our planet; and as those miasmas will be attracted to those who are especially susceptible to them, and cause epidemic diseases, likewise these astral influences are attracted to those animal souls in men and women where they find a congenial soil to grow and develop, just as the life principle in a cherry tree attracts from the soil and the atmosphere all that is necessary to build up a cherry tree and nothing else. The animal soul of a hardened criminal is a fruitful soil where evil astral influences are readily attracted to and developed. These evil tendencies are not the man himself; they merely belong to his nature and are acting in and through him. They cannot be killed by killing the body, but if the physical form wherein they are active is destroyed, these powers for evil are liberated and free to be attracted to and to manifest themselves in other human souls where they find points of attraction, in the same sense as the cold liberated by evaporation will cause water with which it comes into contact to freeze and crystallize. If we kill a malefactor, we liberate his own essential ego of the evil influences which had possession of him, and we enable these influences to fasten upon the souls of innocent but sensitive persons, in which they create evil inclinations and thoughts, and which may then repeat the same crime for which the criminal was executed. The world is full of such sensitive and mediumistic

persons, and it is a known fact that crimes sometimes become epidemic, and that if a criminal has been executed for some especially atrocious crime, crimes of a similar nature are often heard of soon afterwards. The execution of a criminal in this respect has the same effect as pouring out a stinking fluid upon the public thoroughfare with the good intention of getting rid of the evil odour, and thereby poisoning the whole community by the (psychic) stench that was at first confined to only one place.

(4) The PHYSICAL BODY. The "corpse"—the external form with its inherent life principle and "magnetic body," or "perisprit." This is merely an external instrument for the inner man, and incapable *per se* to do anything good or evil, unless made to act by the astral soul or the mind. It is merely an innocent victim of the natural forces acting therein, and to punish it for sins which the inner man committed through its instrumentality is like hanging a stick with which a murder has been committed, or tearing to pieces the overcoat of a thief.

If the above is taken into due consideration, it will be seen that in executing a criminal nobody is actually punished except those sensitive and innocent people who are deficient of the power of self-control, and who may become infested with the evil influences arising from the liberated animal soul of the criminal, and which may cause them to become criminals themselves. The other persons that are punished by the performance of such an official act are the judge, the jurors, and the executioner, together with those that sanctioned the infliction of "capital punishment," and the degree in which they punish themselves will depend on whether they are thus sinning consciously or unconsciously, and whether or not they are aware of the true nature of capital punishment and its consequences. This is explained by the action of the law of *Karma*, a law which every lawyer and judge ought to know above all, as it is the supreme law for administering justice in the universe. It teaches that the universe is a whole, and that no individual can inflict the slightest injury upon any other individual without experiencing himself the full effect of his acts; or, as Edwin Arnold expresses it in his *Light of*

Asia, which, even if it is a poem, nevertheless embodies the most undeniable truths:

By this [law] the slayer's knife did stab himself;
 The unjust judge hath lost his own defender;
 The false tongue dooms its lie; the creeping thief
 And spoiler rob, to render.

Such is the law which moves to righteousness,
 Which none at last can turn aside or stay;
 The heart of it is Love, the end of it
 Is Peace and Consummation sweet. Obey!

The law of Karma is the law of justice and retribution, by which the harmony in the universe, which has been broken, is restored. It is a law which is administered by nobody—neither by a God nor by a man—and its action is therefore not to be avoided or thwarted, neither by bribes nor by prayers or arguments. It is the Law itself, and administers itself without partiality, its effects being in exact accord with the causes that produced them. There is, therefore, an adequate punishment for every sin, and there is no necessity that any man should presume to put himself in the place of the law and judge over the destiny of the soul of another human being. All that a man has a right and a duty in regard to criminals is to teach and instruct them, to educate and aid them to get rid of their own evil inclinations; for it ought to be kept in mind that as long as a man has no perfect self-knowledge, his will cannot be perfectly free. The ignorant man does nothing good or evil himself; he follows the thoughts that lead him. The man who has no mastery over himself is mastered by the influences which are controlling him. It is not our object at present to investigate the various methods which are employed to enforce prison discipline. They may be good or they may be bad; they may or may not be adapted to teach criminals; but surely the killing of a criminal can teach him nothing; it can only arouse in his soul a spirit of fear, embitterment and revenge, because he instinctively knows that no man has a right to rob him of his life.

The law of Karma is the law of impartial justice, which claims

an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and which says that he who kills with the sword shall perish by the sword. Being a universal law, it applies itself alike to a criminal as to a judge on the bench; it is no respecter of persons; it pays no reverence to judicial wigs and gowns, and even Royalty is not exempt from premature deaths produced by the action of the Karma of former lives. He who condemns a fellow-being to death will necessarily suffer for it, either in this or some future life upon the earth. He may condemn a man, having, at the same time, the best of intentions, and he may have his own life cut short while he still has the best intentions.

Some poet asks the question about man in the following words:

Out of Earth's elements, mingled with flame,
Out of Life's compound of glory and shame,
Fashioned and shaped by no will of our own,
Helplessly into life's history thrown,
Born to conditions we could not foresee,
Born by a law which compels us to be,
Born by one law, through all Nature the same,
What makes us differ and who is to blame?

Our answer to this query is that humanity, being a unit, the condition of the whole is responsible for the condition of each single individual, and that unit being made up of individuals, each individual is responsible for the conditions which affect the whole, and the responsibility of either is in exact proportion to its capacity to teach and enlighten the other. Therefore, instead of killing one another, we ought to aid each other in coming to life, for no one can be said to be truly alive as long as he does not know his own divine Self, and that true Self embraces and includes the whole of creation, because God is in, and through, and above All.

—F. HARTMANN

THEOSOPHY AND ITS PROMULGATION

MEN'S HEARTS today have become like parched soil waiting for the rains to come to give them sustenance. Material comforts, technological gains, etc., have not given them the satisfaction that endures, and they seek for something that brings peace, something solid to stand on—a perennial philosophy that gives life a meaning. Their intellect has rejected the childish rituals and hollow faith of organized religions, and wants that which gives nourishment to the soul and assuages its thirst. Theosophy, as the eternal Wisdom-Religion that unlocks the door of hidden knowledge, provides a base and a rock on which the soul can build its fortress. Its light penetrates the dark nooks and corners of all religions and brings out that which is true and everlasting, cleansing the rust of ages that has covered them. It is universal in its application, and its esoteric nature has been revealed and interpreted by H. P. Blavatsky, so that humanity of today may be united together in a bond of love and brotherliness.

Theosophy needs promulgation. How should its students and learners promulgate it? The parched soil should be watered, the hunger of the soul appeased. Those who seek the Truth are more numerous than we imagine. They are not interested to know what theosophists *ought to do* or what theosophists *should work for*, but as seekers and novices they want to know *what Theosophy is*, what its tenets are, and how to live the higher life in conformity with their aspirations. H. P. Blavatsky has unveiled to us the grand panorama of the march of evolution against the backdrop of Eternity; how in man, as the microcosm, is mirrored the splendour of the light of Atman, and how as a pilgrim-soul he experiences progressive awakenings while he treads the path. She has opened the door to the *inner life* where alone is peace. Promulgation of Theosophy means promulgation of the grandeur of her ideals, her teachings concerning Man as a spiritual being and his ultimate goal, which is realization of his own higher Self.

One has to go to the core of her teaching and expound it in order to reach the hearts of those waiting to listen and to learn. For this, a continuity of thought should be maintained without

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moving from the central point by those who talk from the theosophical platform. The word "I" has no place in the exposition, as speakers are the mouthpiece of Theosophy and Theosophy alone. As promulgators they have no existence as persons, for they are the instruments, or the window through which passes the light of Theosophy to enter the hearts of others. Other platforms provide us with religious sermons and moral precepts, and discourses on world conditions, but the theosophical platform must be able to touch the soul, inspire and awaken its energies, in however small a way, with the grand sweep of universal Wisdom and Truth, and the divine possibilities of the hidden powers in Man, his connection with Nature, and above all his goal on earth, which is the realization of the Atman residing within the fleshly garment that he has woven around him under Karma. These fundamental ideas have to be brought out again and again so that the inquirer can grasp them, leaving aside the more or less mundane side of everyday living. It is only after these ideas are perfectly understood that one can apply the same in daily life. The responsibility is great, for words are more than messengers and have a power of their own. It has been stated that the Theosophical Movement is an esoteric movement, and in H.P.B.'s words:

The Theosophical Society does indeed desire to promote the spiritual growth of every individual who comes within its influence, but its methods are those of the ancient rishis, its tenets those of the oldest Esotericism. It is no dispenser of patent nostrums, composed of violent remedies which no honest healer would dare to use.

A TEACHER who is attempting to teach without inspiring the pupil with a desire to learn is hammering on cold iron.

—HORACE MANN

IS DEATH THE END?

WE ARE BORN, we live, and we shall die. Is death the end? It must be if birth is the beginning. Most of us never even attempt to think outside the confines of our physical memory. We never try to think back to the first year of our life, or to our antenatal existence, but we were there. We have no memory of it, but we know that is the fact, and, till lately, in Western lands few ever attempted to think back to possible former lives on earth, let alone lives in other states and conditions than life on this earth. We all are curious about death, more or less fearful about death, but how many think of after-death existence as a possibility or as a reality? What is thinking, anyway?

All day long we are busily thinking, but there are few who know what it is to think. We never stop to think what thinking itself is. Thinking is like knitting—the continuous looping of something that just has been with something that is now to be looped to something that is to be. In other words, thinking is a continuous knitting of a skein of cause and effect. If a man sees no relation between life after death and life here, or between life here and life before birth, he has never thought about death or birth or life. By that simple test we can determine for ourselves why it is that death is a mystery to us, and has been a mystery for ordinary mankind as far back as history and tradition go. If we take any other subject that constantly intervenes and intersects the current of our daily life, and we do not think about it, we can hardly expect to know anything of it. It is by thought that we have made that vast material progression that is typified by the phrase “modern science.” Men have seen things happen physically. They knew they did not see *all* there was—that what happened was invisibly looped to something that went before and would in its turn be the cause of something to follow; and it was by thinking, observing, relating one physical fact to another that the vast net of knowledge called modern science has been knitted, patiently woven by the observation, research and thought of myriads of minds unhampered by any Ten Commandments, or by any “Believe or be damned!” They were after the facts.

Any man who wants facts can find them. But these seekers were not only after facts, they were after the meaning of the facts. There is no meaning in anything unless it is related to other things. Meaning means relation. We are accustomed to think of our life without any relation to the past beyond the mere knitting of this body, or to the future after this skein has been unraveled by death. No wonder we know nothing of the meaning of death, that it still remains a mystery to us!

Yet there are, and always have been, men to whom death is no more a mystery. They are the awakened souls who have asked the right questions—and found the answers. Their knowledge is in the world, but only a few avail of it. Despite our science and our religion, since we do not try to find out the meaning of the most all-inclusive facts of our life—birth, existence, death, good and evil—since for us there is no rhyme or reason in them, no justice, no purpose, no motive, there must be something in us that has not yet awakened. There is no progress unless we ask questions; and if we do that we shall know that everything has a reason. There is a reason for misfortune, bad luck—even death.

If there is a divine power in man, it enables him to see the relation between one thing and another, and the more we see things connected, the nearer we are to the reason for every one of those things. Then, as we begin to connect, we find that nothing is separate, no matter what it is. This atom is connected with another atom; this force which strikes us, reaches out into all infinity; this thought which comes to us has passed through myriads of minds; and so on. The very matter of our body has been through countless forms, through countless aeons of time. It is not until we see the interconnection between all things that we can ever hope to understand anything. There is a mathematics to existence. Our religion has stupefied our minds, refused to encourage us to think. It has constantly acted on one portion of our nature—the psychic portion, our feelings and emotions.

The aim of our scientists is to study physical nature. The aim of Theosophy, the aim of the Knowers of the mysteries of life and death, is the arousal of initiative in mankind, the waking

up of the real Soul of man—his Will—his Will to know, his Will to question all things; not question them in a fault-finding sense, but question them to find out their meaning—why it happened as it did, why it happened to this one and not to that one; its relation to what went before that and before that; its relation to what will come after that and after that. Will pertains to the spiritual nature of man. To arouse the moral or ethical nature in us is to make the right use of what we know. Our religion pays no attention to that.

Theosophy is an attempt to arouse minds to the possibilities that are open to them if they will set their own Will in motion; if they will use their own mind and intelligence; if they will conduct themselves in accordance with what they learn, resolute that there is no mystery anywhere that is unsolvable.

An individual can manifest his Will, his thoughts, his feelings, his memory, his imagination, his senses, his body; he cannot manifest himself. *Himself* is the forever invisible Witness behind all manifestation, and there is where our Godhead, our Divinity, lies. Our bodies are matter. Did that matter begin with our body? Has it ever been in any other bodies before? Will it cease with the dissolution of our body? Will it ever be in bodies again? If these various particles of matter could combine in a form once, they can combine again and again. Our body is, first, a unit. But looking closer we find that it is a unity of units, that is, in this one body there are countless finer forms of matter. There are many organs; in each one of the organs there are many cells; in every one of the cells are many molecules; in each of the molecules are many atoms, and so on. We are familiar with the fact that there can be a coarser or compound form which contains within itself infinitudes of finer forms, and that in fact the coarser forms are composed of the finer forms without in any way disturbing them. The atoms that are at every instant entering our body from the water, the air, the light, the food we eat, are not affected a particle by coming out of some other form into ours, nor when they leave the latter. They just pass through our forms as we pass through the streets of a town, or the rooms of a building.

If we can see that every *organized* body is composed of an infinitude of finer forms down to the least complex, we have made a step in understanding something of the mystery of death. In solid matter there is an infinitude of finer states of matter. All solid matter is in large part composed of water—water in another state and in another combination, but water. All solids, we may say, are interpenetrated by liquids; all liquids are interpenetrated by gases; solids, liquids, gases are all interpenetrated by energy, and so on. So, although this body, being a compound, is perishable, the matter of which it is composed is relatively speaking imperishable, and every particle of that matter has been constantly travelling through form after form. But matter itself as a whole is in many states, and these states interpenetrate each other. Just as we may speak of ourselves as molecular aggregates, or atomic aggregates, so we can say that matter is an aggregate of states of substance. We are working in four states—really only three, the highest state being Spirit. People seldom think of Spirit as a state of substance. Just as they think matter is unspiritual, so they think spirit is immaterial. It is as if we thought of a solid as matter, but of a liquid or a gas as not matter, yet we can take gas and make a liquid out of it, and turn a liquid into a solid state.

Below the finest state, Spirit, is the state we may call Mind. Below that is the state we may call Sentience. Below that is the state which includes all three of them, and we may call that Energy. When we die, we leave this coherent body, and the moment we leave it, its particles have not enough will of their own to remain in combination. Every atom in it begins to fly off on its own account. What is left is the man with his spiritual substance, intellectual substance and psychic substance. In a little while after he has left the body, he has no more use for the sentient or psychic substance than he has for the physical, so he drops that too. That is the “second death.” What is then left is the man clothed in spiritual substance and intellectual substance; in other words, the finest states of substance, those that are energized by his will, by his knowledge, by his motive, stick together. So man is never without a form.

The way we use our senses, our feelings, our mind, we can hardly expect to bring our divine or immortal form into direct contact with the physical and psychic nature. To take an example, although we make use of electricity to have a light, we have to do it at secondhand. First, we have to interpose a resistant to the wire carrying the current so that the resisting wire is overloaded. The force of the current cannot get through fast enough; there is friction; that friction produces heat; the heat produces light. Yet, if we were to take hold of the wire itself it would destroy our body. We can only make use of electricity in its highest potency at second-, third-, or fourth-hand, otherwise our bodies would be fused. They cannot stand it. Powerful as electricity is, the power of the spiritual man is infinitely greater. So a very large portion of our own nature as man, cannot directly contact this body; it cannot even directly contact our nervous system and brain; it can only contact us through a series of transformers, just as a hundred thousand volt current is stepped down into a transformer until we get a 110 or 220 volt current for our light. The same thing goes on in man as a complete being. The spiritual portion of our being cannot act directly in our mind, in our body, in our nervous system.

The missing link of science, the missing link of religion and the missing link in man is our abuse and misuse of the combination of what may be called the psychic, or moral, and the intellectual nature. Every time a man receives a touch of light from his own higher nature, which is outside the body and which illuminates the latter, he interprets it in terms of some religion and he thinks he has seen Almighty God; he thinks he has seen an Angel; he thinks he has seen Christ or Kṛishna; he thinks he has seen anything and everything but the fact—a glimpse of a portion of his own divine nature. Then that power of Spirit in the body wakes up the whole nature from top to bottom. The individual is at once on the plane of good and evil with the temptation to misuse the new knowledge, the new energy, the new force that is in him. If he is a victim of religion he will think he is the appointed agent of Almighty God, and set out, as he thinks, to tell other people about God. If he is not a religious man, then

he interprets these experiences in terms of daily, physical existence. Getting glimpses of the psychic nature independent of the physical, he thinks it is the spirit—the spirit of those he loves, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of God, of angels, what not.

H. P. Blavatsky says that the whole issue between Theosophy, or Occultism, and modern science, lies in the fact of the existence here in the physical body of a molecular organism. That organism was formed long before our physical body and stands in relation to our body and its genesis as the blue-prints of a building stand in relation to the physical structure; that the molecular organism, or astral body, is in us right now and is the cause of the phenomena of sleep and dreams, birth and death.

As it is possible for a man so to educate the fingers of his hand that they will become automatic reproducers of the dreams of an artist or the brain visions of a pianist who can play the most intricate and complicated score in which hundreds of lightning-like changes occur and himself never give it a thought, so it is possible for a man who understands the fundamental principles of his own being and of nature to begin to use the physical body for physical purposes only. When he begins doing that, and studies the nature of his inner molecular structure, the astral organism, he will find that he can use the latter independently of the physical. We do it unconsciously and ignorantly every time we dream, as we say; but just as it is possible to educate the physical fingers so that there is all the difference in the world between a Paderewski and a farm-hand, so there is all the difference in the world between the nature and power of the inner, living, sentient body and the physical organism. That inner body ought to be used, studied, educated, employed only for its own purposes; but just as we devote our minds to physical things, so in a still worse sense we devote our feelings to passing physical sensations, and that is the ruin of this inner organism. Its purpose is to be the instantaneous diagnostician of the whole of nature, because that portion of our nature in contact with the living organism of any other being instantly knows the nature of that being. Our physical and nervous disorders in most cases spring from an abuse of this psychic or astral organism, but in any event

it can be separated from the physical, as happens when we dream and when we die. We have so corrupted it by using it for other than its proper purpose—by abusing it just as we do our physical bodies—that now it dies soon after death. That is the second death.

To go to the third constituent of our being: what we call our mind is a state of substance that responds to thought, just as sentient, or psychic, or astral matter is a state of substance that responds to feelings. The struggle for all of us lies in the intermixture of the mental and psychic or moral nature. We have abused both of them. They are almost inextricably woven and entangled with our physical existence. As long as that is the case, we are born and will live as the animals live—only we are rationalized animals. We can be far more beastly than any animal, just as we can be far more divine than any angel. “Angels,” so-called, are divine beings who have never been in matter. How could they know good and evil? They are like Adam and Eve in the Garden.

We have to recognize that everything in nature, no matter what it is—an atom, a plant, an animal, a man, a solar system, presents two aspects, the one mortal (that is, the form side), the other immortal (that is, the substance side). Matter is not born nor does it die; bodies are born and die. Astral matter is not born and does not die; astral bodies are born and die. Mental matter is not born and does not die; minds are born and die. Our purpose in life is to individualize immortal Life. We can do that, first, by recognizing Life as One. There never was a time when Life was not, nor will Life ever cease to be. We are immortal throughout our whole nature, but there is all the difference in the world between conscious immortality and unconscious immortality. As a fact, every atom in our body is immortal; everything in us and in all nature is immortal, but we are not conscious of it. Our purpose in life is just that—to learn our own immortality. We cannot learn it except as we construct an undying form. It is enveloping us, overshadowing us all the time, but we are not conscious of it. The divine portion of our nature is that very immortal form. Our Self-Consciousness never had a beginning, can never have an end. The body, astral body and mind perish;

our Self-Consciousness—the true divine form—can never die. But we so abuse our mind with false ideas and with centring it upon earth, upon our feelings, desires, loves and hates, that it is not possible for our Self-Consciousness to operate directly in our mind. So our intelligence here bears the same relation to our true nature as moonlight bears to sunlight. Moonlight is sunlight once removed. Our human consciousness is the reflected light of our divine Self. It is possible for a man by thought, by study, by effort, to reach that condition where he knows his own Life, his own immortality, and then to him entering a body is not going into the dark.

So we do not need to fear death; we do not need to fear anything whatever except going on as we have done. Until we learn what our own nature is, we will act in accordance with the light by which we see. The light by which we see is physical, sentient, psychic, and so we act merely like refined animals and go through the same experiences over and over again. Man stands at the crossroads of eternity. If he questions, studies, thinks, he takes the road of individual immortality; if he does not, he takes the road of unconscious immortality. We will die and will be born in another body; we will suffer the good and evil consequences of our behaviour in this life, and we will not know then any more than we do now, *why* we were born, or *why* things happen to us.

The purpose of Theosophy is a spiritual purpose, a Soul purpose, an immortal purpose; but the greatest beings in the world can do no more than call these things to our attention. Ours is not a Will body; that is why it dies. Will and knowledge, motive and conduct, these are the two forces whose cohesive power lasts from eternity to eternity, and only a form so constructed can endure.

ONLY with cutting is jade shaped to use.

—OLD CHINESE SAYING

DIVINE HEARTACHE

I

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Those who through heart and mind know Him thus abiding in the heart, become immortal.

—*Svetasvatara Upanishad*, IV. 20

THERE HAS sprung up of late a certain class of theosophists—whose number we hope is not large—who complain that though they have been Fellows of the Theosophical Society for several years, leading a moral life, studying the theosophical literature, and, moreover, strict vegetarians, yet they see in themselves hardly any perceptible signs of spiritual progress, nor have they been able to attract the attention of the Masters, much as they wished it. To such we say: All that you have been doing is well and good and is sure to form a firm groundwork for future advancement; but we only regret you could not see for yourself the impossibility of negative virtues and mere intellectual culture, even when rightly directed, forming the direct instrument of the soul's elevation. An intellectual grasp of the broad truths of occult science is indeed indispensable as a first step, in so far as they acquaint you, however vaguely it may be, with what should be the aim of your precious life, and how you are to work in order to attain the end. But no one in the Theosophical Society, so far as we know, postulated the absurdity that a life of vegetarianism, coupled with the study of a few books, would, like the magical slippers, transport you to the desired goal. If then you have been disappointed in the realization of hopes which you never cared to work for, you have nobody to blame but yourself; and unless you choose now to go beyond the vain acquisition of a surface acquaintance with uncommon technical names and metaphysical ideas—so “to look big and talk away”—the approach to the land of Mystic Rest must for ever remain barred against your advance.

Much of the difficulty seems to have arisen from the misunderstanding of the term *Gyan*—which in Sanskrit works on

occultism has been called the sole instrument of *Mukti*—as signifying knowledge acquired on the intellectual plane and that only. From a similar misconception has also originated the deplorable ill-feeling that may be observed even to this day between the respective followers of *Gyan-marga* and *Bhakti-marga*. The *Gyan*, referred to as forming the means of *Moksha*, is *not* the mere intellectual understanding of scientific and philosophical truths, but signifies the intuitive perception of the real as distinguished from the unreal world of phenomena. Now it is difficult to see how one can attain this perception without having a *quantum sufficit* of what is called *Bhakti*, without being permeated, as it were, with a rapt devotion towards the God within—without paying “the profound obeisance of the soul to the dim star that burns within.” It is known to all how powerful are the attractions of sense-objects, and any amount of simple will-power will not be enough of itself to counteract the inherent tendencies of a myriadfold existence, unless the will itself is strengthened and vivified by some higher impulse from the soul. No one has urged the necessity of *Gyan* more forcibly than the sage Sankara, and yet his enumeration of the means of liberation are *Shraddha*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyan* and *Yoga*. On the other hand *Bhakti*, unless properly directed and controlled by right discrimination, cannot acquire the momentum necessary to push one beyond the attraction of the world of sense, and to carry one to the Supreme goal; as it will be evident on a little consideration that such a refined and spiritual force cannot flow with the same vigour when applied to material conceptions, as when directed to the pure Spirit alone. To us, therefore, *Bhakti* and *Gyan* in their true sense appear to be, if not two names for the identical subjective elevation that becomes the lot of spiritual persons, at any rate, the two aspects of the same state, one being the inseparable complement of the other.

It will thus be seen that spiritual development requires for its basis the cultivation of the heart rather than that of the head, although the latter *cannot*, as we have said, be dispensed with altogether. In the dreary journey of every man's life there come moments when, withdrawing from the lurid glare of the outside

world, he sinks into the inmost depths of his soul. During moments of exaltation we do indeed feel how delusive is the world in which we live, and how shadowy are our highest aspirations, our deepest sorrows and joys, but how are we to awake from our dream? The flow of the spirit descends upon us even as the "dew of heaven," unsolicited and unnoticed; how then, finite as we are, can we command it and, transforming its fitful gushes into a steady constant current, cause it to break down the barriers of illusion and bear us to the reality beyond? Is there then no end to this dream, no means of obtaining more frequent draughts of this Soma-juice? Surely there must be, since so many have safely crossed this ocean of delusion. Shall we try to suggest a means? Thought, meditation, *Vichara*—herein lies the secret of success. Does not the thrice-great Hermes say, "without philosophy there is no lofty religion," and does not the Holy Shankara entreat you thus: "O brother! meditate upon the truth as to who you are and whence you come." Here is the path for you to follow. Develop thought—ponder day and night over the unreality of all your surroundings and of yourself, and try with unceasing effort to realize that underneath this array of phantoms there is an essence, unknown and unheeded in the tumult of everyday life, but nevertheless, the only Reality from whence has sprung all that has the appearance of beauty, of love and of joy.

Begin then by checking all thoughts that relate to the illusory life. Depend no more on the mercy of such noble and elevating thoughts as may chance at intervals to sweep over your heart. No appreciable change will be observed if you leave yourself to the help of such fortuitous advents of spiritual impulse. Look around and see how untiringly men have to work to obtain such trifles as have aroused their fancy. Think you, then, that such a glorious result as freedom from the clutches of Death and Misery—supposed to be the inevitable companions of human life—can be attained without hard labour? Ah no! All your energies, active and dormant—will have to put forth their utmost strength before you can reach the end of your journey. Strive then by concentrating the whole force of your soul to shut the door of your mind to all stray thoughts, allowing none to enter but those

calculated to reveal to you the unreality of sense-life and the Peace of the Inner World. You have to address your own soul in the words of the Prince of Denmark :

Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment *all alone* shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter.

We have often felt that to a person turning towards the life of occultism, the springing up of evil thoughts is less injurious than that of idle and indifferent ones. Because as to evil thoughts he is always on his guard, and having determined to fight and conquer them, they help in developing his will-power. Indifferent thoughts, however, serve merely to distract his attention and waste his energy without imparting the slightest benefit. Avoid therefore carefully all "fruitless thinking, thinking of possibilities and contradictory thinking."

The first great basic delusion you have to get over is the identification of yourself with the physical body. The form of language in vogue in this material age of ours has much to answer for in this egregious error that has taken root in us. Even in childhood our susceptible nature is broken upon the wheel of this crushing blunder when we hear all around us sounds of "I go," "I come," and so on, when it is merely the physical envelope that is seen to perform the act. The ascetics of India speak of "*Sarira*" as distinct from themselves and thus take care not to mislead people into an erroneous belief. Consider within yourself, without being deluded by the false notions floating around you, and begin to think of this body as nothing better than the house you have to dwell in for a time, and then you will never yield to its temptations. Wherein, dear friend, does the mass of flesh you are not ashamed to call yourself, differ from the tree in your garden? Does not the axe cut it, the fire burn it? Does it not wither and die even more rapidly? What better than the

air and water that supply nourishment to the tree is the food you eat with so much relish? Ah! sad fate! amazing fall! you who are a God, yet revelling in the delight of flesh and blood! And lo! you are enamoured of this fantastically shaped puppet, and spending your invaluable life in decorating and clothing it in strange garbs, so that other puppets may bend before it. Answer candidly if this mere puppet-show is worth your life's devotion. Serve the body only if it helps you in serving your God; otherwise it were far better for you that it should perish and be scattered in pieces than serve the purpose of creating a host of delusions to enslave you. Work for it never so faithfully, it will inevitably betray you some day; so take warning while yet there is time. Sink into nothingness all concerns about its comforts, and awakening to the true object for which you are born, devote every moment of your time in advancing towards the centre of Light that is beckoning you from afar.

When you have in some degree realized the insignificance of the gross body, you will begin to doubt if the idea of self, which springs up almost entirely from the sensations derived from the body, is really your true self. How can the world, in relation to which alone the false self exists, have any more reality and permanency than a dream, when there is absolutely no proof of the objective existence of matter, apart from the cognizing mind? Analyse thus constantly the phantom to which you have given the name of self and reflect upon its illusory character. Try also with consistent attempts to conquer the prominent weaknesses of your nature by developing thought in the direction that will kill each particular passion. Are you homesick? Be homesick as passionately as you can, but let it be the true home that you long for and not a pile of bricks. Are you, again, sensitive to the injustice and vile slanders of people around you? Then, ask yourself why you suffer. Is it not wholly due to your own actions, and would you not have suffered as certainly and as bitterly if the person against whom you are irritated had never existed? Why then indulge angry feeling against the unfortunate person who has merely formed the instrument of the Law? Thus on serious

thought all weakness will be found to arise in some error; use head and heart to drive it out.

Your first efforts, however, in this direction are likely to prove discouraging. Not only will you be unable to observe any signs of development or to feel any nearer the spiritual Light, but on the other hand you will find yourself sinking under such a dead weight as will make you stagger and doubt if it will ever be in your power to lift it up. Your incipient efforts have now detached you from objects of sense only in so far that you cannot take anything like your original delight in friends, relatives and amusements; but they have not yet supplied you with the true ambrosia that can not only fill their place, but absorb your whole being into itself; you begin to feel a sort of *indescribable* vacuum in your heart—we say indescribable, because nothing akin to that painful blankness is felt even in the saddest moments of worldly life. Particularly will this terrible monster of hollowness oppress you when you wake up from sleep; because on the dream-plane you will find yourself attracted to and made happy in your former delights, but as soon as you open your eyes, you find yourself, with a suddenness that takes your breath away, transplanted into a land of nameless horror, where there is nothing that can give you a moment's pleasure. The very fountain from which you now and then received refreshing draughts of the elixir seems to be dried up for ever, and for some time you walk upon the earth a disconsolate being under a grim shade, without one ray of hope or joy to cheer you. Here it is that the poor souls that are not firm-footed, stumble. But you, noble aspirant—who would fain enter the sanctuary of Truth, despair not! Doubt not! Falter not! beloved of the sages—for here it is that glorious saints are waiting with cups of infinite bliss for you, will you but take one more step undismayed.

There would be greater reason to doubt the law of expansion by heat, because certain organic substances contract by heat owing to the moisture they contain, than for you to doubt the final expansion of your soul because of the apparent contraction you may be experiencing. Know you not it is but the driving out of the rheum and the filthy moisture of your heart? Regard

this shade then as the soft twilight heralding the rise of the sun of Ananda (spiritual bliss). Pursue your determined course with undaunted courage and the clouds will break. The weight under whose pressure you had all but succumbed will then be lifted up and your heart will spring back into the free air with an elasticity unknown before. Once more the life-imparting stream of your soul begins to flow, but it is more continuous and its waters more tranquil and pellucid. Once more you are blessed with "angelic visits," but not "few and far between" as before. Remember that sadness is by no means the unmitigated evil it is supposed to be, and that there is a limit to the pain caused by it. When that limit is passed you enter quite unexpectedly into a region of unthought-of beauty, as a ray of light is refracted or broken until the critical angle is reached after which refraction gives place to the perfect reflection called "*total reflection.*"

—GYANBHIKSHACHARI

(To be concluded)

WHITHER GOES TIME?

Whither goes Time, and why?

In what vast sphere
Do its lost moments lie
When no more here?
Is not it strange today
Only to brood
On all they bore away
Of ill and good?

Whither goes Time, and when

Comes its surcease,
Bringing to mortal men
Timelessness — peace?
Shall we on some far day,
Loosed from its power,
Find that for which we pray —
One timeless hour?

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The battle going on in India at the moment over the issue of capital punishment has a long history. It is only recently, however, that some eminent lawyers of the Supreme Court have been questioning the constitutional validity of the death sentence. Like the former Supreme Court judge, Justice Krishna Iyer, they believe that the death penalty "militates" against human values and is "repulsive." And now the controversy has spilled over into the instrument of execution, and hanging is being challenged on the ground that it is both unconstitutional and inhuman. Whether the debate all this has generated will lead to a fundamental change in the law regarding the death sentence remains to be seen.

Recent studies by Amnesty International have shown that capital punishment does not in any significant way reduce the incidence of crime. Moreover, as Robert Badinter, the French Minister of Justice, recently pointed out at an Amnesty seminar in Washington, D.C., "For a system of justice by death to meet the most basic moral standards, it must satisfy two fundamental conditions, that it be infallible and that the men it condemns be fully responsible for their acts. However, in practice, neither condition can be fulfilled with certainty." He concluded by saying that "When the life of a man is at stake... judicial lottery is morally intolerable."

In *The Sunday Observer* for July 31, Kajal Basu examines the debate between the Abolitionists and the Retentionists of capital punishment in India. The Retentionists' argument is open to assault, says the author:

Who is the state trying to correct? The Retentionists argue that capital punishment has two major qualifications: deterrence and retribution.... This goes against the grain of a lot of social scientists who have argued that society has no right to display a final-solution kind of "distaste" for some "heinous and malevolent piece of conduct" which is its own creation, in the first place. They say that the aberration which forces a person to turn homicidal is a reaction to the environment, often a

“heinous” and “malevolent” environment. Society’s responsibility, on the other hand, is to examine the aberration and cure itself of the causes of it, and to re-tailor the convict into the fabric of society. Execution leaves the original ills as secure as they were before. The madness goes on.

Studies in Canada, England and other European countries show conclusively that there is no connection between a furious discharging of the death obligation and a reduced crime rate. Another study by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences in 1978 came to the same conclusion. In fact, there have been indications that, in a homicidally-inclined society, a ferociously administered death penalty often leads to the snuffing out of eyewitnesses who would not have been harmed otherwise

This is a time for changing consciences, and even those who do not know of the weightier Theosophical reasons for doing away with capital punishment yet do support the abolitionist cause. Two wrongs do not make a right and legally killing a criminal is as great an evil as the crime for which he is convicted. Theosophy goes further and says that the individual murdered by the State in retaliation for his crime is a very real menace to the living. Shut out of life only half-dead—because the destruction of the physical body does not affect the cohesive force of the other constituents—brooding resentfully over his crime, his punishment and the revenge that he would like to wreak upon his persecutors, he injects evil thoughts and impulses into the minds of sensitives. Readers’ attention is invited to the article on “Capital Punishment” in this issue.

It is recognized today that human rights inhere in every human being everywhere and are an international responsibility. But it was not so a few decades ago, before World War II. Soli J. Sorabjee traces the evolution of the concept of human rights in modern times, in his article in *Express Magazine (The Indian Express, Sunday Edition)* for July 31:

There has certainly been progress in the field of human rights though the pace has been at times slow and halting. Today, for

the first time in the history of mankind, how a State treats its own subjects is the legitimate concern of international law. An individual is now a "subject" of international law, having rights in international law independently of his or her government. It is now possible for him to assert his human rights and, in certain cases, enforce them against his own government in international fora, if redress is not available from the national institutions of the State that has violated the citizen's rights. Incredible as it may seem, human rights are actually enforced by the European Commission and the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg at the instance of citizens against their governments who are signatories to the Convention and have recognized the right of independent petition.

The first international step in the onward march of human rights was marked by the Charter of the United Nations which in Articles 55 and 56 requires all members to take concerted action for the achievement and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The next landmark was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly on December 10, 1948. After a lapse of a good 18 years, came the two covenants—the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966. It can be said that today we have an International Bill of Rights, with the Universal Declaration of 1948 and the two covenants. In the meantime, considerable and impressive human rights jurisprudence was evolved . . . and is firmly established. We now have an International Law of Human Rights

International human rights law is still young and is bound to display a certain frailty. The real achievement, however, lies in the recognition that human rights are legal concepts capable of enforcement, not mere abstractions. No government rejects the ideology of human rights nor can any government dare claim the right to violate the human rights of its citizens. Governments may not obey the rules. But today we can point to certain minimum standards and put these delinquents in the dock and tell them that they have broken "the fetters against doing evil" which no decent government should ever do.

In the ultimate analysis, no government is totally immune to public pressure. That, in any case, should provide some consolation and hope of redress to the countless victims of human rights violations.

The human rights struggle, based as it is on the inherent dignity of man, irrespective of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth or other status, comes within the wider purview of the Theosophical Movement. Mankind is of one species and forms one indivisible whole. If the concept of human rights is not to remain a mere abstraction, it needs to be demonstrated on logical, philosophical, metaphysical, and even scientific grounds that all men have spiritually and physically the same origin, that mankind is essentially of one and the same essence and that essence is one. Nothing, therefore, can affect one nation or one man without affecting all other nations and all other men.

Instances of the vegetable world having a consciousness or intelligence of its own were given in "In the Light of Theosophy" only last month. The August *Span* gives one more instance. Trees can warn one another of danger, according to the tentative findings of experiments conducted independently by groups of American biologists in Washington and New Hampshire states. In the course of their tests, they found that when trees were attacked by insects, other trees, as far away as six metres, initiated the same defensive mechanism as the trees actually infested. The defense involved changing the leaves' chemistry to make them less palatable and nutritious to the invading insects. What triggers this defensive action? The scientists reason that the attacked trees send warning signals by emitting chemical substances called pheromones in the air that are picked up by neighbouring trees which, in turn, start defensive action by altering the quantities of certain chemicals in their leaves. Complex experiments are under way to isolate and identify the carriers of warning messages.

As pointed out in "In the Light of Theosophy" for August 1983, there is more to intelligence in the lower kingdoms than a mere physical explanation.

The *Bulletin of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture* for July contains the following editorial observations on what constitutes happiness:

Wherein lies happiness? Does it lie in external conditions or in something within ourselves? According to Hindu philosophy, happiness lies in self-mastery, in being able to detach oneself from objects outside. A man is a slave who lets his happiness depend upon what he possesses or does not possess. A truly independent man is content with what he has, so long as it satisfies his minimum needs. He is more concerned with himself, with what sort of a person he is. Is he an honest man, a man who will not deviate from truth under any circumstances? Is he a man who can forgive an enemy irrespective of the harm he may have done him in the past? Is he a man who feels concerned about his fellow men, who will not mind making any sacrifice necessary to do a good turn to others? It is not that he does not need money. He certainly will welcome money that he has honestly earned, but after spending what he must needs spend for his own comforts he will try to save some to help the needy. His priorities do not exclude cultivation of moral faculties, for he is conscious that a character well grounded in moral principles is far better an asset than anything that money can purchase. He is happy because of what he is in moral terms, because of his character, because of his moral superiority over material adversity. He may be poor, may be adjudged a total failure by worldly standards, may even be physically handicapped, but no hostile conditions or misfortune can disturb his peace of mind. It is not that he is an insensitive person, callous about what happens to him; he is highly sensitive but he knows there are situations over which no one has any hand and if despite one's best efforts to avert a disaster it does take place, the best and only sensible thing to do is to accept it. Life cannot be always smooth, there are bound to be bumps now and then. Whatever the circumstances, a man is happy if he is able to retain his calmness. He works hard but if the results are not commensurate with his efforts he does not lose heart but still keeps trying. He is happy if he has been able to try hard, success or no success. Success, as he sees it, is not a material achievement, but a moral one in the sense that it means less and less dependence on external factors, in other words, self-denial.

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The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissension or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has no Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that bond. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Union.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purpose and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Copies for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished to Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

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