

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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KRISHNA DAY—ITS MEANING AND ITS MESSAGE

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EDS.]

II

THERE are several classes of Fires referred to in Theosophical literature. There are the three, the seven, and the forty-nine Fires mentioned in *The Secret Doctrine*. Only Great Ones, however, can fully explain their mystery. All that can be done at our humble stage of evolution is to attempt to describe them in their most elementary aspects, and to try to apply these aspects to our own daily lives.

First of all, there is the Fire of SACRIFICE without which the Spiritual Life is not possible. Sacrifice, *Yajna*, is at the very basis of manifestation, and unless sacrifice begins, the Life of the Soul cannot manifest itself. Give up something, in fact give up a great deal; you must, if you want to turn your faces Godwards. But this sacrifice in the Spiritual Life should be first of all an inner energization; it should come from within as the result of a great resolve, a great determination. It should be first in the nature of a will-act, and not a mere impulse rooted in emotion or mere enthusiasm which will vanish almost as soon as it begins to burn up. The Spiritual Life is one long sacrifice made up of innumerable daily, nay hourly, sacrifices. So it is necessary for us to begin to understand that we ourselves, all of us,

as spiritual beings, are Lords of Fire, are divine, hence fiery, beings.

This is wonderfully brought out in the *Gita*. Turn to the sixth *Adhyaya*, the last discourse of the first third of the *Gita* which reviews the thoughts of human thinkers striving for perfection ultimate, and see how Sri Krishna opens with a most significant verse. In it are mentioned two classes of men, and the division is made in terms of this Fire of Sacrifice. He who performs actions which ought to be performed, for they are duties to be discharged, but performs them unattached to the fruits thereof, he is a Sannyasi, a Renouncer, he is a Yogi, a harmonized one; not he who is without Fire and without activity. So a Sannyasi and a Yogi is he who has both fire and activity. This is a most definite statement, and yet this verse has been not only misunderstood, but even exploited. Today, at best, it is merely the symbol of the *Agni-puja*, the Ceremony of Fire. To understand its true significance it becomes necessary to understand that the Spiritual Life, as we just saw, is that life which is lived by the Fire of the Soul, the Fire of the Agnishwatha Pitri, the Pitri who possesses Fire. In our Manasic aspect each one of us is a Fiery Being, a Lord of Fire. Parsi friends will do well to read in this light their prayer "Atash-Niyayish," the Prayer to Fire. Each one of us, then, should live with this Fire, and with activity, activity engaged in sacrificial actions; but most of us live without true Fire, and without true actions. *Agni-puja* was once a mighty ceremony, and is so even now in certain hidden places. But with our modern *Purohits* and *Agnihotris* it has become a farce.

How pathetic it is to see that these great ceremonies have become meaningless to present-day followers of the various religions! Why not ask ourselves the question: "Do I possess the Sacred Fire of true Sacrifice, or am I devoid of this Fire? Are my daily deeds fiery prayers which are fragrant and helpful to all men?" And let each answer for himself or herself. If we do this we will begin to understand how to become Fiery Beings, how to get some of the Fire of Manas into our daily lives, and will thus realize that practicality and practicability are of the very essence of the *Gita*.

It should be realized that the Soul is of the nature of Fire, is a Lord of Fire, in whom are burnt up all senses and world experiences. No experience is therefore worth going through unless it yields a fragrance for the Soul. That is why Sri Krishna says that all actions in daily life, without exception, should become sacrifices. Sacrifices are not only certain specific actions, certain particular offerings, but all actions which are pleasing to the Soul. Eschew evil, for that is not acceptable to the Soul, and begin to do good for the glory of the Soul! Let our daily deeds be offered as true sacrifices, let them be kindly acts, unselfish actions, offered in the spirit of true Sacrifice.

Then there is the Fire of DEVOTION. This Fire too is very much misunderstood. Devotion is not sentiment, much less sentimentality! Some *pujaris* shed a few tears after a little feeling, and it passes off as *Bhakti*! Not so! Emotion is watery, of the nature of the element of water, whereas devotion is fiery, of the nature of fire. Mud and water represent the emotional nature of man, and only after these pass through the fire of devotion do they become a brick. That is why we say, "This man is a brick," meaning he is of the right sort. He has passed through the fire of devotion and thus purified his emotional nature. So devotion is rare and difficult to get. It only comes after the ordeal of intense suffering has been gone through, and especially that root-suffering of soul-loneliness, of yearning for spiritual companionship; the acute homesickness for our spiritual Home! People today do not like to be alone; some are even terrified to be alone. Meditation and worship teach the first lesson—Be alone! But even this has been corrupted into congregations of *hoi polloi*. Do we long for Soul-companionship, do we feel a want of pleasure in congregations of men, do we sound forth in the solitude of the Heart some vibrating note which some Wise One, some true Guru, may hear and respond to? No, we do not! We are so much attached to speaking, to worldly companionship, to earthly and mundane things that we do not hearken to the Voice of the Soul, the inner Voice which speaketh only in the Silence and sanctified solitude of our own Divine Consciousness; nor

do we try to listen to the Voice of the Great Ones who can only speak Divinity.

Finally, there is the Fire of KNOWLEDGE. Not ordinary knowledge, not sense and brain knowledge, but Soul knowledge. Our worldly knowledge is like unto smoke which chokes our intelligence. The foolish aspirant tries to inhale the smoke of his incense-stick, taking that as its fragrance! And so it is with most men and women today. Their knowledge is not pure fire, but mostly smoke which chokes their own spiritual vision. They run after changing science, new books, new ideas, new things, and the old, old Fire, the Golden Flame of the Wisdom-Religion, remains unnoticed.

How shall we rediscover that Golden Flame? All of us can begin to live the Spiritual Life, to light up within our own hearts the Fire of Sacrifice, of Devotion, and of Knowledge. How can we begin? With action, everyday action. The *Gita* is essentially a book of action, it is the Ritual of true Action, of Dharma or Duty. All of us are actors, all of us perform daily deeds; that is where we can all begin. If it is true that the Soul cannot accept actions save and except such as are noble, unselfish, beneficent, then we must stop wrong action. As the Buddha said, "Cease to do evil, that is the first step." Do not speak unnecessary words, do not feel unkindness and hatred, do not think sensuous and selfish thoughts. This is the first requirement. How can we do it? By fixing our attention on the good. Therefore the Buddha said, "Do good, that is the second step." If we get busy with the good we will not have time or inclination for the evil. Idleness, *Tamas*, is the root-sin and leads to *moha* and *maya*, to delusion and illusion. Says Sri Krishna in the Fifth Discourse:

The truly devoted, for the purification of the heart, perform actions with their bodies, their minds, their understanding, and their senses, putting away all self-interest.

The last words give us the clue—to put away all self-interest. To forget our own selfish and personal interest. All through the day, in all you do and say, in all you feel and think, be not the small self. This is corrupted into inaction, idleness, passivity.

True, the *Gita* says, give up all impure actions, all *kamic* deeds. But it also says, perform actions for the purification of the heart. Do, speak, feel, think as the Great Self, as the Fiery Lord. Of course this is difficult, for we have identified ourselves with the small, the petty, the mean self in us. Only by one way can we slowly and gradually but surely begin to raise our own consciousness and to become cognizant of the Great Self in us, God in Nature, the Supreme Self, the Self of all creatures. And that is by taking the help and assistance of the practice of daily meditation; every morning when you wake, during the day, at night before you retire, think of yourself as a divine being surrounded by smoke, and resolve to disperse that smoke so that the divine Light may shine forth. And in this daily meditation the act of offering some humble gift becomes a symbol of the consecration of our whole lives. Therefore Krishna says in the Ninth Discourse:

I accept and enjoy the offerings of the humble soul who in his worship with a pure heart offereth a leaf, a flower, or fruit, or water unto me.

Water which makes the leaf grow, the leaf which helps the flower to come forth, the flower which yields the fruit. How simply the *Gita* conveys mighty truths! The water of our earthly life-experiences enables the growth of the Soul!

Thus sacrificial action leads to *Bhakti*, devotion to the Inner Ruler, one with all Souls, low and high. Through sacrifice, meditation and worship, we begin to get the spiritual vision, but we must begin with knowledge. For, unless we obtain a basis of knowledge, our acts of devotion become mechanical, farcical, and worse—hypocritical! We must begin with knowledge. We must try to understand the true meaning of sacrifice, *yajna*; of devotion, *bhakti*; of actual spiritual meditation and spiritual worship, *tapas*; and then we shall know how to become truly charitable, we shall know the true significance of charity, *dana*. All, all are dear to Krishna, but He says in the Seventh Discourse:

The best is the one possessed of spiritual knowledge, who is

always devoted to me. I am extremely dear to the wise man, and he is dear unto me. Excellent indeed are all these, but the spiritually wise is verily myself, because with heart at peace he is upon the road that leadeth to the highest path, which is even myself. After many births the spiritually wise findeth me as the Vasudeva who is all this, for such an one of great soul is difficult to meet.

The *Gita* gives instruction which can make of all ordinary men veritable Mahatmas, however difficult the task of unfolding divinity may be. From common life the *Gita* takes us to discipleship, and through discipleship to perfection itself.

The *Gita* is so profound a book that it is difficult to convey even in a general way its spiritual significance. But let us take what has been said as a humble and modest offering, as a symbol which should encourage all of us to learn to know the *Gita* for ourselves. May it help all of us to retire to the silence of Krishna's World, and there find not only solace but illumination, not only freedom but also the bondage of service; for the devotee is bound to his Guru, as the foetus to the mother, the seed to the fruit, the Soul to the body. Krishna's Flute plays and plays and plays. Let us hear the Song of the Lord, *Maheswara*, the Lord in the Heart!

CAPTIVE SOULS

Held captive within the prison cells
Of Flesh and Sense, and tortured by
Sorrow's tears poignant,
And the fleeting joys
Of an hour or two,
The weeping souls wait,
Perchance for the resounding echo
Of an opening door.

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

The instinct of self-defence and of self-preservation is part of the "power to wound."

WHAT is the self we feel the need to defend or preserve? The teachings tell us it is a passing illusion, yet it defends itself on the slightest provocation, lest it should lose itself.

The instinct to preserve and defend oneself is deep-seated and varied in expression; it ranges from the automatic raising of the hand to ward off danger, to the use of the cruel tongue and the warped mind, barbed like steel. Students of Theosophy are advised to watch this enemy in their nature and to eliminate it before it reaches the higher spiral of the heresy of separateness. For this reason H.P.B. warned us to start right by cultivating compassion, love and sympathy for others, while learning how to withstand or endure injustice to oneself. Just as personal affection may easily turn to lust; personal forbearance to wrath; and charity, which gives our personality a "good" feeling, to covetousness; so the sense of righteousness centred in the personality may turn to self-righteousness. "I, before the world, for I know," say the self-righteous, those whose pride separates them from those higher than themselves and also from those lower, leaving them stranded and separate like the haughty fool who sits upon the lofty tower unperceived by any but himself.

Do not be always in the mood ready to fight, and on guard ready to resist, the student is warned. Reflection on this throws light on our mental condition at most times of the day. Few of us can stand by placidly when we are accused of wrong-doing or wrong understanding, or can cease trying to impress on others what we think is the right and the true. Few of us can stand aside and let others state wrong things without trying to correct them, or can give wholeheartedly to others the same freedom of belief and action and feeling that we demand for ourselves.

The attitude of always being ready to defend oneself is seated in the idea we hold of our own importance. We think we are defending truth when correcting others in their misstatements, but rarely do we change their point of view, and if we search

deeply it is *our* sense of the fitness of things that has been disturbed and that gets satisfaction from the correction. Whether we are right or not does not matter. If the others are wrong, time will put them right at the right time, *i.e.*, at that time when they are ready to learn, and therefore are at the point where they will take the next step and correct themselves. When we correct their failings, their instinct of self-preservation grows and often the implements of war are used in defence. Far better to leave people with their wrong conceptions until we are able to illuminate their minds, *i.e.*, until we are much further on the Path of Evolution than we now are. We are fortunate to have Lodge meetings, for there the impersonal approach is made, and to that we can leave the correction of wrong thinking, feeling and action in others.

Naturally there are special cases where it is the duty of one to correct another, but these cases refer to parents, teachers and so on; or where help is asked for. No one has the right to withhold help and advice under such circumstances, but it is good to practise withholding it *until* it is asked for. The best method of advice and help is example. In all other cases it is good to keep in mind Mr. Judge's words:

Construe the words of the *Gita* about one's own duty to mean that you have nothing to do in the smallest particular with other people's fancies, tales, facts, or other matters.

An application of this will lead the student to become "as nothing in the eyes of men."

Let us turn the picture the other way round. None of us like to be corrected and we fight bitterly to prove we are right. Even if we are at last convinced we were wrong, what is the effect? Dislike of the one who corrected us, and a stronger feeling of self-preservation—for we seek a scapegoat to blame for having led us astray.

What is the self? More than we realize we live in our friends; the impression we have of their regard for us makes us what we are to ourselves. But when we awaken to what they really think of us, the bubble of self-respect often bursts and we either

profit by it and search our own character, or go within our chrysalis of self-esteem and build it stronger than ever, coarsening it with hatred and a desire to hit back. The result may show itself either in deep depression or more self-assertiveness than before. But between these two effects there is the centre point of humility, of the willingness to learn, and even gratitude that at last we see ourselves as we appear to others, *i.e.*, as we are reflected upon the world around.

If an injustice has been done to us, we must learn courageous endurance. And let us not be too quick to call it an injustice. As a witty saying puts it: "Never complain that people speak untruth of you; think what they could say if they knew the truth!" Bit by bit we must learn to welcome all injustice to ourselves, all occasions that disturb our pride, for they all lead us, if rightly experienced, to become more impersonal channels of service.

Light on the Path tells us that the disciple must become as nothing in the eyes of men, but it is hard for us to be as nothing to others. Indeed it is hard to understand the phrase in its deeper sense. Must we look like fools to men? If so, will they not look upon our philosophy as foolish? Must we be less than other men? Not so: the statement surely means that we have lost the mood of always being ready to "assert" this or that, to "defend" this idea or that. It does not mean that one can become careless of bodily appearance, action, thought or feeling; it does not mean the unworldliness of the tramp or the pretended fakir who pollutes the atmosphere with untidiness, dirt, or sickly humility. The Great Ones go unnoticed in Their work. The works of Great Nature are mostly taken for granted, for they are done behind the scenes. To be as nothing in the eyes of men should mean that we are constantly doing the work of the Great Ones and of Nature so unobtrusively as to pass unnoticed by others.

There is a right way and a wrong way of using the personality. The personality of Prince Siddhartha shines as it focuses the Rays of the Mighty Buddha. The personalities of Jesus and of Lao-Tze shine as they focus the Rays of Spirit and send them forth for our benefit. Our personality, when it has lost the power to wound, *i.e.*, lost its instinct for self-preservation and defence,

will begin to radiate forth the beauty of the God within. We cannot be without a personality, for the Soul needs one to function through on earth; but only when the personality ceases to demand for itself and can say, "Thy will be done, not mine," will it be a true and faithful servant of the God within.

The good side of the personality shows itself in affection, forbearance and charity. But when the affection is kept personal it strengthens the personality even if it does not turn to lust. It is through the love we feel for one or more friends that we must reach the love of the nation, of the race, and finally of humanity itself. We cannot love humanity if we do not love our neighbour. But love of humanity means the power to give the deep love we feel for our dearest friend to any member of the great human family.

We are told that forbearance may turn to wrath if it is personal forbearance. If we practise it by holding ourselves in and putting up with someone or something, we can do this for a time, but in the end the strain often proves too much and we give vent to wrath. Real forbearance is the beginning of the process that will lead to the courageous endurance of injustice to oneself, and this becomes perfect when the snake of self is killed.

We are also told that personal charity may turn to covetousness. When we take personal gratification in rendering charity we harbour the memory of these acts; we collect the memory of such deeds as we collect other possessions and fill the mind with personal images of this nature. Impersonal charity is forgotten as soon as done and is done because it *needs* to be done and one happens to be there at the right time.

To cultivate non-aggressiveness in this way does not mean that we are never to defend or fight; it is only self-defence and self-preservation that we are warned against.

CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

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II

The "Lord's Prayer" of the enlightened

Our Father—Supreme creative principle; original source of every existence.

Who art in heaven—which is either active or latent within us as well as throughout the universe.

Hallowed be thy name—finding its expression in the highest attributes of man.

Thy Kingdom come—let us so desire and so work that it may manifest itself universally in its highest perfection.

Thy will be done—in us and through ourselves—

On earth as it is in heaven—in the visible as well as in the invisible universe.

Give us this day our daily bread—each day we drink from the fountain of life and have renewed opportunities to obtain more knowledge and perfection.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us—We are using our efforts to free ourselves from imperfections and to assist others to free themselves likewise, for in measure as we assist others, we elevate ourselves.

Lead us not into temptation—lower states of existence have lost attraction for those who have attained the highest—

But deliver us from evil—and they desire only that which is of use in the attainment of that state of perfection.

Regeneration

The good and the true, the evil and the false, are attributes belonging either to the incorruptible, perfect substance or to corruptible, imperfect matter, and moral therapeutics consist in developing the former at the expense of the latter.

The corruptible principle manifests its action in various ways: (1) In a state of expansion it produces pride. (2) In the form of attraction—avarice. (3) As repulsion—anger. (4) As cir-

cular motion—unchastity; as eccentric motion—intemperance.
 (5) In concentric motion—envy; in a state of rest—indolence.

This principle produces excitement in the blood, it obstructs the action of the brain, it creates emotions and passions, and prevents the physical elements from knowing the pure spiritual ones, the Christ-principle in man. This corruptible element is continually renewed by the food we eat, and its action must be continually kept within its proper limits by the force of the will. It must be continually transformed and purified, and the agent by which this is effected is the incorruptible and perfect substance, the universal principle of light, called the "Body of God." This principle of supreme wisdom is the Word (the Logos) through the power of which every thing has been created by a natural process.

The elements which constitute a form are the elements of the nutriment it has assimilated. The spiritual body is evolved from the material form, and the material form from bread, the symbol of life. This was the meaning of the philosopher of Nazareth, when he took up the bread and said: "This is my flesh." This saying is literally true: because the highest is contained in the lowest. The material body of Christ was an evolution of life resulting from its nourishment by "bread," and as his spiritual form drew its nourishment from the material form, so "bread" in its ultimate transformation is identical with the divine body of Christ. The physical body is gradually built up by material food, and the spiritual body by the spiritualized food, and the secret of regeneration consists in the knowledge of this spiritualized substance and the manner of its adaptation as our spiritual necessities may require.

The divine principle, in order to manifest itself, must do so in a form, and as long as it continues to flow, forms will continue to come into existence. Pure spirit (The Absolute) must associate itself with (metaphysical) matter, before it can create, or, in other words—*Christ* (the Logos) must take his seat at the right hand of *God*, before he can send his *spirit* (the illumination of wisdom).

This secret of regeneration is the last and highest mystery of

Christian religion; it is the process of initiation, which reunites *Man with God*; its science constituted the Wisdom-Religion of the priests of Melchisedec, and a priest of that order is a person who understands how to separate the pure from the impure, the sacrifice of the lower for the benefit of the higher, the only true sacrifice, which effects regeneration and reconciles "God."

Christ says: "I stand at your door and knock, and to him who hears my voice will I enter." This means that the divine Logos is active in every man, and the door which may prevent us from perceiving it, is the corruptible material substance of man, in which the roaring of the emotions may drown the still small voice of the conscience. If we would hear this voice we must suppress the turmoil of the passions and listen. The body of man is the temple of Christ. When the animal man dies, the Christ-principle becomes free, and the veil of the temple is rent, disclosing the eternal truths to the eye of the spirit; the light of the sun (of the material world) becomes eclipsed by the spiritual light; the rocks of material desires are torn asunder, men that have been (spiritually) dead (during their life) come forth from their graves (the physical bodies). The animal man is crucified and dies; but the spiritual man, united to the universal Christ-principle, rises in glory from the tomb.

God

God¹ unmanifested, is incomprehensible. God manifested as nature may be comprehended. God (*The Absolute*) is the interior, Nature is His exterior appearance. God created nature by—so to say—stepping out of his interior being, evolving it out of Himself and thereby laying a foundation for further evolutions. This first product of the Will of God has been called the *Word* (Logos)². God being life itself, it is living and united with God in the same sense as force is united with motion. It is a spiritual substance, the *sensorium* of God so to speak, and has been called wisdom. "Through wisdom was the world created."³ *God* is the source of all power, the active principle of creation;

¹ Parabrahm.

² Manifested Purush and Prakriti.

³ *Bible*: "In the beginning through wisdom—was the Word."

the *Word* becomes the passive or feminine principle, and serves him, as it were, as a mirror in which he may behold himself reflected as the forms of all beings.

The principles of evolution are potentially contained in the Logos just as the seven colours of the solar-spectrum are contained in one pure ray of white light. *They are the seven spirits around the throne of God*, and through these seven spirits—seven modes of activity or seven powers—God produces out of himself everything that exists, and therefore everything that exists is God, and nothing can exist, which is not God.

To “create” means to produce by the power of one’s will, and God did not create the universe out of nothing (in the usual acceptation of this term), but he created it out of Himself, who is not a “thing,” but *The Absolute*. If Man can unite himself with God, he becomes God and is able to create.

BEAUTY is merely the Spiritual making itself known sensuously.

—HEGEL

VIRTUE consists, not in abstaining from vice, but in not desiring it.

—BERNARD SHAW

POVERTY is naught to have, and nothing to desire; but all things to possess in the spirit of liberty.

—JACOPONE DA TODI

SAVIOURS OF THE RACE

ods, Heroes and men would appear to represent, in all sacred literature as in religious myths, the three great classes of self-conscious beings to be found in earthly bodies. Other forms of life, other degrees of consciousness, exist in infinite numbers, embodied and disembodied. Transmigration, metempsychosis and similar terms in all languages and in all traditions may be uniformly taken to signify transit from one world or state to another, in forms appropriate to the one into forms adapted to the other. All this necessarily implies some kind of an intermediate equipment, both of body and of consciousness, by means of which such transfers may be effected. A far greater degree of complacent credulity is required to believe all the immense testimony to be the product of ignorance than to lend it provisional acceptance. Only during the decline of a civilization does materialism tend to replace spirituality.

Nothing is more worthy of consideration, but nothing is less to be pondered on, than the conception of self implicit as well as expressed in every utterance of every divine Incarnation. If Krishna, Zoroaster, or Buddha, or Christ, or any of the other Saviours meant by the term for the Ego what mankind means generally, then what were all these great Beings but megalomaniacs to the nth degree? To take this position is to pit one's own nature and perceptions against the noblest men of all time. None but a hopeless materialist could deliberately reject *a priori* the possibility, nay, the probability of continuity with or without memory of antecedent existence, with or without those "intimations of immortality" supplied by religious faith or refined imagination. It is either to reject or to accept definitively the melanism of the skeptic or the rainbow visions of the ecstatic is alike unwise. Each unquestioning finality of conviction assumes that we have already explored the length and breadth and depth of self and nature—is, in actuality, to take a position of infallibility that every experience controverts.

What, then, is to be thought of one who, like Christ, affirmed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"? Or who, as Krish-

na, asserted, "I am the origin of all; all things proceed from *me*; I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings; it is even a portion of *myself* which, having assumed life in this world of conditioned existence, draweth together the five senses and the mind in order that it may obtain a body and may leave it again; and those are carried by the sovereign Lord, *myself*, to and from whatever body he enters or quits"? Are such asseverations as these to be dismissed as childish conceit, as the boasting of senility, as evidence conclusive of egomania? Or do they in themselves throw mankind back upon a reconsideration of the nature of *self*-consciousness, its possible expansion to infinity, or equally, its contraction to the pin-point of identification with body, mind and circumstance? When these questions are fairly faced, one can see for oneself that they leave no middle-ground of indecision, no room for mental reservation, no neutral line of indifference. Brought to polarization-point, one becomes perforce spiritualist or materialist in his fundamental basis for thought and conduct.

It is unmistakable that the disembodied "Gods" as well as the divine Incarnations, the "Demi-gods" or Heroes are, quite as much as men, *self*-conscious beings. Is *their* self-consciousness less or greater than ours? Are they nearer to, or farther from, the Infinite consciousness of the Omnipresent Spirit than ourselves?

Two considerations arise spontaneously from such a presentment: What is the true nature of the Self? What is the real nature of metempsychosis? Taking the latter first, and setting aside the speculations of the theologians along with those of the philosophers, anyone can perceive that the continuity of Nature is not affected by any conceivable number or variety of changes in form. Whatever Self may be, it is a force, an energy, a substantiality, an intelligence. As such, it no more has beginning nor end in itself, despite all changes and transformations, than the Reality with which it must be identical—as its mutations are identical with those of nature at large.

Practically all the notions of immortality, of transmigration, reincarnation, and so on, are based upon the human conception

of self. Neither the one nor the other can endure the cold clear light of reason, of conscience, of judgment flowing from them, any more than they can stand the factual light of mortal birth and mortal death. The language employed, quite as much as the ideas expressed by the great Teachers of the race, precludes alike the human conception of self, the human belief whether in its pre-existence or its survival. The spiritualist breathes the air of faith, but he does not eat the bread of wisdom. Equally with the materialist at the opposite pole. All that he knows tells him that self is personal, transitory, evanescent, perishable, but he does not inquire of the earth, the air, and the water, their secret of survival. The one goes by what he does not know against all that he knows. The other goes by what he knows against all that he does not know. One is as far removed as the other from the Wisdom of the great Teachers. Neither can, in fact, stand still in such an untenable position. One is drawn by his faith toward the Saviour, the other is pushed by his own experience ever farther away. In the one case, the rise of a religion, a civilization. In the other, its decline and fall. We but stand today with the ghosts of Nineveh and Tyre, contemplating "the glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome," seeking a Sibyl or an oracle to foretell our own dissolution or regeneration.

The other and enlightening presentment is that afforded by a reconsideration of the divine Incarnations themselves. The great Saviours of the race live in all senses at a far remove from the life led by mankind. In point of human time the nearest to us is Jesus the Christ, or Anointed One. Five centuries earlier than he is Gautama, the Buddha or Illuminated. Five thousand years separate Krishna from the Hindu of today. Other Avatars and Messiahs live on in myth and tradition at still more remote intervals. Of these various "Buddhas of Confession," as they are called in some quarters, eleven are said to belong to an earlier continent and a precedent humanity. Twenty-four are identified with our own cycle of human evolution and the renovated earth which it inhabits. Real knowledge of them may form part of the muniments of the Mystery Schools whose outer courts, even, have never been approached but by some method of initiation impenetrable by

the unqualified. Hence, all these many Saviours remain purely legendary and speculative characters to human consciousness. Historical evidence is lacking or withheld in regard to all save Gautama Siddhartha, the Buddha.

Yet it is, or it should be, self-evident that such Beings cannot be wholly fictions. They could not be the vital element in age-old racial memories without some substantial foundation of truth beneath the jungle of sects, the dogmas of the religions represented or misrepresented by creeds. Something of these great Identities is preserved in incidents, in deeds, in sayings, all more or less authentically attributed to their divine Original. Such records as exist show a close correspondence in the personal careers of all alike. Their teachings by precept and example, as preserved, show a similarity of nature, a fundamental accord, that could not have been invented, that cannot be denied, and that cannot be explained by either theological or scientific exegetes.

When the main features of all are seen to be communal, not individual, that which has always been maintained on behalf of the Mystery Schools as the real spiritual truth, becomes equally the logical deduction of the student of these great Mysteries. The only rational inference is that these great Beings all belong to a higher Order in nature than the humanity we are, and are acquainted with. It is not unreasonable, because not miraculous, to conceive that these divine Incarnations represent the descent to our own "sphere of expectations" by perfected men, the fruit of former cycles of evolution. Regarded as Elder Brothers of our Humanity, these great Beings appear in an altogether different light—that of being what They are, as returning to this arena of life, under Law, not as coming nor as being, immaculate in nature and birth through miracle or chance. This writing and signature can be discerned beneath all the overlays of theologies and popular superstitions. Just as with a palimpsest, the superscriptions can be disregarded as if they had not been written and rewritten on the original text—and something at least of the teacher's spirit and meaning regained.

Such, in any event, is the great fact whose presence in every world Scripture cannot be denied, however it may be ignored or

misapplied. One has but to search and he will without fail be able to see so much of the original intent and message. All that we know of organic and intellectual evolution, divorced from their obscuring clouds of speculation, corresponds in phylogeny and mutation to the like process going on concurrently in the world spiritual as in the world physical and the world metaphysical. Fundamental to any attempt at approaching the unknown as the known is the conception of the Unity of all in Nature in its ultimate essence. Analysis only leads to further efforts at probing the secret of life by dissection or vivisection. All materialism issues from the infinite divisibility of matter, all spiritualism from its opposite, the indivisible nature of the Self or Soul. Both are but half-truths, two numerators each mistaken for the common denominator.

The laws of optics as known to physical science have their correspondence on both lower and higher planes of perception and action than those common to mankind. In that Ultimate Essence "spirit" and "matter" must be one. In its exhibits during manifested life, they can but represent opposite poles, or aspects, of one and the same reality. Outside of miracle, it is impossible to imagine one-way action of any kind. What if Ego, or Spirit, or Soul, should mean the pre-existent Entity, and Matter, or Body, or Form, the pre-existent *Substance*?—the two together being the duality which perplexes the spiritualist quite as much as the materialist. The unity of the unmanifested Reality, the duality of the manifested, like denominator and numerator, then become understandable. The sum-total of the infinite fractionations do but *represent* that Unity which is their substantial basis. It would be a miracle if mind could be the product of matter, another if spirit could be the product of either or both. Taken the other way about, that is, from the basis of the ever-enduring Perceiver—mind and matter become the Image and the Shadow of the One Reality.

We do indeed, as Saint Paul wrote, see as "through a glass, darkly" with the eye of sense, but through the mind we see as in a mirror—all things reflected in reverse. But to "the eye of the Lord," the perceiver, the thing perceived, and the percep-

tions are the same, as Space, Duration, and Being are one. Thus the spiritualist conception of "creation," equally with the materialistic conception of "evolution" is foreshortened vision. The ever-becoming, the pre-existent, and the phenomenal presentments of Life are not things-in-themselves, and so to be regarded as external or internal to Life, but merely as subjects and objects of perception—visions, mere pictures of Self, whether faithful reflections or caricatures of the Perceiver. Materialism takes the shadow for the Reality, spiritualism the reflection. Only *Self-knowledge* realizes what truth is embodied in the phrase of Browning—

God is the perfect poet,
Who in his person acts his own creations.

A person has but to reflect that every power attributed by any religion to its "god" is inherent and implicit in the worshippers themselves, and he will sense the divine Presence in himself and in all Nature. No credo of any religion, no scholasticism of any theologian, no amassment of scientific facts, no human possessions of any kind, can serve as substitute for *Self-knowledge*. Who senses this, who perceives this, who feels this, is in the pronaos of the temple of divine Wisdom, and the Saviours of the race speak to him in that Language of the Soul so vividly pictured in the second chapter of the "Acts of the Apostles" of the Christian *New Testament*. He draws as near to Christ as the Aryans of a hundred and fifty generations ago might have drawn near to Krishna when his Disciple Arjuna came into the "vision of the Divine Form as including all forms." Over against these two pictures is that presented by the confusion of tongues" in the *Old Testament* parable of the tower of Babel. Which of these symbols applies to our existing race-mind, is hardly made a subject for referendum in any of the schools which that mind attends for instruction and enlightenment.

Self is the subject and object in the life and discourse of every divine Teacher—Self as it eternally *is*, not as remembered or forgotten, not as believed or imagined, not as something to be seen or to be reasoned about. We must assume, if we assume

divine Incarnations at all, a higher world from which they descend, a vaster plane of perception, a greater sphere of knowledge—one that includes our own, as the world of the mind includes that of the senses. We must assume, then, that their conception of Self is no more ours than the objects of sense are the ideas of the mind, or the mental contents the Mind itself. Perhaps in all this lies the Ariadne thread of true analogy which alone can lead us through the otherwise inextricable mazes of great Nature and our own, through that no-man's-land which envelops human consciousness, toward the primal and final Mysteries. Of these Mysteries all the great Saviours speak and it is they who may be assumed to know whereof they speak better than we to whom their mission and their message is addressed. Unless there is in us the inherent capacity to profit by their instruction, unless we can grow to their stature, there is neither justice, nor reason, nor mercy in their Appearance. If they are inherently immaculate and we inherently maculate, they do but flout or overwhelm us by their Presence. But if their Wisdom is that of a Higher Self than we know, or remember, or imagine, they are as adults amongst little children. Who considers the spiritual instruction in the simple truth that he who would approach the "Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven" must become as a little child?

Human nature in the adult of whatsoever class or degree is itself an enormous physical and metaphysical palimpsest, which only a supreme act of the will can make once more fit to receive the inscription of the divine Teacher. What act of the will is that implied in the injunction to become as a little child! Many are willing to "stop, look, and listen" to the Sign of the Cross which the heedless do not even see, but how few there are who do all three—and so become able to learn!

The divine Appearances are at long removes in time, but their remove in consciousness is greater still—not by their will, but by ours. The mineral, the plant, the animal, not to speak of "the forces of nature," all dwell in the same world with ourselves. All these Kingdoms are in coadunation but not in consubstantiality, albeit they are inextricably interwoven and inter-

blended at every point—one in substance, many in states of progression. Man alone among them is *Self*-conscious. What if our self-consciousness is but as a child's compared with that of the Gods and Demi-gods who clothe Themselves in our similitude and so, "become in all things like one of us"—only to teach us the way, the truth, and the life whereby we may become like unto Them? What if They descend periodically among us only because we are presently unable to ascend to Their world of Self?

That not one of these great Beings was fully understood even by His own disciples must be as apparent to the student as that They were misunderstood by the "multitude," and worse than misunderstood by the spiritual and material authorities of the day. This is the rational and just explanation of the differing religions, the dissenting theologies, the succession of sects which follow in the wake of the voyage through human life of one of these Great Souls. A rational and just explanation covers still more than this troubled water, for it shows the necessity in spiritual evolution for the serial appearances of Saviours, to restate the original doctrines imparted in varying degrees by the Predecessors. This can clearly be seen, also, in all great Scriptures. Take for a sufficient example the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, attributed to Krishna, the Avatar at the beginning of the present Dark Age:

This exhaustless doctrine of Yoga I formerly taught unto Vivaswat; Vivaswat communicated it to Manu and Manu made it known unto Ikshwaku; and being thus transmitted from one unto another it was studied by the Rajarshces, until at length in the course of time the mighty art was lost, O harasser of thy foes! . . .

I produce myself among creatures whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world; and thus I incarnate from age to age. . . .

The names mentioned bring to light the great fact of Demi-gods or Heroes, second in importance only to that of the divine Appearances themselves. What has History to say of them?

ORDER IN NATURE

IN *The Secret Doctrine*, to make understandable the great universal Law of Periodicity, H.P.B. turns to such everyday facts as the alternation of Day and Night, Life and Death, Sleeping and Waking. And straightway the common everyday things glow with a new and potent meaning, and we realize we have lived in this world like a child or an animal, taking its wonders for granted, looking at the things of life without *seeing* them, using them without thought.

One of the aspects of life that has become thus familiar to people is that of Law. Think for a moment what the world would be were there no "laws of nature." There could be no dependence on any single thing. The inconsequential topsy-turvydom of *Alice in Wonderland* would be sanity itself in comparison. Fire might burn or it might not. Air might by chance occasionally support life, but who could say when? Liquids might melt into gas irrespective of any mere boiling point, and as for the solids, there could be no guarantee that their gravitational mass or resistance to atmospheric pressure would remain the same for two consecutive seconds. Man could neither plan nor carry out his plans, he could only be swept along with the shifting events as in a chaotic dream. Yet this is the nightmare conception most people have of the world in its moral and psychological aspects, as in what one might call the historical, *i.e.*, in the succession of experiences that come to each one as effects of the inner causes. Ninety-nine out of a hundred people think that things happen by chance, by providence, by luck, or by the inscrutable will of god, irrespective of law. They have not yet awakened to the fact that they are in a chaotic dream, for they have not questioned life, within or without.

Since there is law and order at every point of physical nature, surely it is sane to examine the other aspects of life, to trace out there also the working of law. If here on the physical plane we sow corn in our fields, we *know* it will grow as corn, not as strawberries or seaweed. It will sprout on the spot of its sowing and not in our neighbour's field. Conversely, if we see corn in

our neighbour's domain we can know that it did not spring there by luck or some miracle, but was sown by the owner. It will be said that these facts are too obvious for mention, for everyone knows them well. Yet, applied to the inner nature, are they so easy to know? When we look at the harvest of our neighbour's environment, his circumstances and character, all that goes to make up the field of the soul's activities, is it so easy to be free from the idea of "lucky man"? When we find the weeds of sorrows and woes, of faults and infirmities spread out over our own "land," is it so easy to blame only ourselves?

Yet all the great teachers, the wise ones, have taught that in the understanding of this law of sowing and reaping lies peace and freedom. We can trust life and its justice, we can work on with steady confidence, relying on Law as implicitly as the scientist who works with physical nature. We need no longer waste our energy in wishes and regrets, we can begin to learn the spiritual laws of life to become in time Knowers not merely of the outer shell of matter, but of the inmost core of Life itself.

THINK often of how swiftly all things pass away and are no more—the works of Nature and the works of man. The substance of the Universe, matter, is like unto a river that flows on forever. All things are not only in a constant state of change, but they are the cause of constant and infinite change in other things. Upon a narrow ledge thou standest! Behind thee, the bottomless abyss of the Past! In front of thee, the Future that will swallow up all things that are now. Over what things, then, in this present life wilt thou, O foolish man, be disquieted or exalted—making thyself wretched; seeing that they can vex thee only for a time—a brief, brief time!

—MARCUS AURELIUS

THE TEN ITEMS OF "ISIS UNVEILED"

10th. The corner-stone of MAGIC is an intimate practical knowledge of magnetism and electricity, their qualities, correlations, and potencies. Especially necessary is a familiarity with their effects in and upon the animal kingdom and man. (II, 589)

There are occult properties in many other minerals, equally strange with that in the lodestone, which all practitioners of magic *must* know, and of which so-called exact science is wholly ignorant. Plants also have like mystical properties in a most wonderful degree, and the secrets of the herbs of dreams and enchantments are only lost to European science, and useless to say, too, are unknown to it, except in a few marked instances, such as opium and hashish. (II, 589)

Magnetism . . . is the alphabet of magic. It is idle for anyone to attempt to understand either the theory or the practice of the latter until the fundamental principle of magnetic attractions and repulsions throughout nature is recognized.

Many so-called superstitions are but evidence of an instinctive perception of this law. . . . In India, as well as in Russia and some other countries, there is an instinctive repugnance to stepping across a man's shadow, especially if he have red hair; and in the former country, natives are extremely reluctant to shake hands with persons of another race. These are not idle fancies. Every person emits a magnetic exhalation or aura, and a man may be in perfect physical health, but at the same time his exhalation may have a morbid character for others, sensitive to such subtle influences. Dr. Esdaile and other mesmerists long since taught us that Oriental people, especially Hindus, are more susceptible than the white-skinned races. Baron Reichenbach's experiments—and, in fact, the world's entire experience—prove that these magnetic exhalations are most intense from the extremities. Therapeutic manipulations show this; hand-shaking is, therefore, most calculated to communicate antipathetic magnetic conditions, and the Hindus do wisely in keeping their ancient "superstition"—derived from Manu—constantly in mind. . . .

When a man stands exposed to the sun, the magnetism of

that luminary causes his emanations to be projected toward the shadow, and the increased molecular action develops more electricity. Hence, an individual to whom he is antipathetic—though neither might be sensible of the fact—would act prudently in not passing through the shadow. Careful physicians wash their hands upon leaving each patient; why, then, should they not be charged with superstition, as well as the Hindus? The sporules of disease are invisible, but no less real, as European experience demonstrates. Well, *Oriental experience for a hundred centuries has shown that the germs of moral contagion linger about localities, and impure magnetism can be communicated by the touch.* (II, 610-11)

Apply a piece of iron to a magnet, and it becomes imbued with its subtile principle and capable of imparting it to other iron in its turn. It neither weighs more nor appears different from what it was before. And yet, one of the most subtile potencies of nature has entered into its substance. A talisman, in itself perhaps a worthless bit of metal, a scrap of paper, or a shred of any fabric, has nevertheless been imbued by the influence of that greatest of all magnets, the human will, with a potency for good or ill just as recognizable and as real in its effects as the subtile property which the iron acquired by contact with the physical magnet. Let the bloodhound snuff an article of clothing that has been worn by the fugitive, and he will track him through swamp and forest to his hiding-place. Give one of Professor Buchanan's "psychometers" a manuscript, no matter how old, and he will describe to you the character of the writer, and perhaps even his personal appearance. . . .

Breeders tell us that young animals should not be herded with old ones; and intelligent physicians forbid parents to have young children occupy their own beds. When David was old and feeble his vital forces were recruited by having a young person brought in close contact with him so that he could absorb her strength. The late Empress of Russia, the sister of the present German Emperor, was so feeble the last years of her life that she was seriously advised by her physicians to keep in her bed at night a robust and healthy young peasant-girl. . . .

With these familiar illustrations of the possibility of a subtle fluid communicated from one individual to another, or to substances which he touches, it becomes less difficult to understand that by a determined concentration of the will an otherwise inert object may become imbued with protective or destructive power according to the purpose directing. (I, 462-63)

The later researches of Schweigger, as given in his extensive works on Symbolism, have thoroughly demonstrated that all the ancient mythologies were based on the science of natural philosophy, and show that the most occult properties of electricity and magnetism were known to the theurgists of the earliest Mysteries recorded in history, those of Samothrace. . . . At a period far anterior to the siege of Troy, the learned priests of the sanctuaries were thoroughly acquainted with electricity and even lightning-conductors. . . . The theurgists so well understood the minutest properties of magnetism, that, without possessing the lost key to their arcana, but depending wholly upon what was known in their modern days of electro-magnetism, Schweigger and Ennemoser have been able to trace the identity of the "twin brothers," the Dioskuri, with the polarity of electricity and magnetism. Symbolical myths, previously supposed to be meaningless fictions, are now found to be "the cleverest and at the same time most profound expressions of a strictly scientifically defined truth of nature," according to Ennemoser. (I, 234-35)

The well-known Dr. Hufeland has written a work on magic in which he propounds the theory of the universal magnetic sympathy between men, animals, plants, and even minerals. . . . Such also was the doctrine of Tenzel Wirdig. . . . In his famous treatise, *The New Spiritual Medicine*, he demonstrates, on the ground of the later-accepted fact of universal attraction and repulsion—now called "gravitation"—that the whole nature is *ensouled*. Wirdig calls this magnetic sympathy "the accordance of spirits." Everything is drawn to its like, and converges with natures congenial to itself. Out of this sympathy and antipathy arises a constant movement in the whole world, and in all its parts, and uninterrupted communion between heaven and earth, which produces universal harmony. Everything lives and perishes

through magnetism; one thing affects another one, even at great distances, and its "congenitals" may be influenced to health and disease by the power of this sympathy, at any time, and notwithstanding the intervening space. (I, 207)

There is both religion and science in Scandinavian songs. . . . Take the conception of Thor, the son of Odin. Whenever this Hercules of the North would grasp the handle of his terrible weapon, the thunderbolt or electric hammer, he is obliged to put on his *iron* gauntlets. He also wears a magical belt known as the "*girdle of strength*," which, whenever girded about his person, greatly augments his celestial power. He rides upon a car drawn by two rams with silver bridles, and his awful brow is encircled by a wreath of stars. His chariot has a pointed iron pole, and the spark-scattering wheels continually roll over rumbling thunder-clouds. He hurls his hammer with resistless force against the rebellious frost-giants, whom he dissolves and annihilates. When he repairs to the Urdar fountain, where the gods meet in conclave to decide the destinies of humanity, he alone goes on foot, the rest of the deities being mounted. He walks, for fear that in crossing Bifrost (the rainbow), the many-hued Aesir-bridge, he might set it on fire with his thunder-car, at the same time causing the Urdar waters to boil.

Rendered into plain English, how can this myth be interpreted but as showing that the Norse legend-makers were thoroughly acquainted with electricity? Thor, the euhemerization of electricity, handles his peculiar element only when protected by gloves of *iron*, which is its natural conductor. His belt of strength is a closed circuit, around which the isolated current is compelled to run instead of diffusing itself through space. When he rushes with his car through the clouds, he is electricity in its *active* condition, as the sparks scattering from his wheels and the rumbling thunder of the clouds testify. The pointed iron pole of the chariot is suggestive of the lightning-rod; the two rams which serve as his coursers are the familiar ancient symbols of the male or generative power; their silver bridles typify the female principle, for silver is the metal of Luna, Astarte, Diana. Therefore in the ram and his bridle we see combined the active and passive prin-

ciples of nature in opposition, one rushing forward, and the other restraining, while both are in subordination to the world-permeating, electrical principle, which gives them their impulse. With the electricity supplying the impulse, and the male and female principles combining and recombining in endless correlation, the result is—evolution of visible nature, the crown-glory of which is the planetary system, which in the mythic Thor is allegorized by the circlet of glittering orbs which bedeck his brow. When in his active condition, his awful thunderbolts destroy everything, even the lesser Titanic forces. But he goes afoot over the rainbow bridge, Bifrost, because to mingle with other less powerful gods than himself, he is obliged to be in a *latent* state, which he could not be in his car; otherwise he would set on fire and annihilate all. The meaning of the Urdar-fountain, that Thor is afraid to make boil, and the cause of his reluctance, will only be comprehended by our physicists when the reciprocal electromagnetic relations of the innumerable members of the planetary system, now just suspected, shall be thoroughly determined. . . . The ancient philosophers believed that not only volcanoes, but boiling springs were caused by concentrations of underground electric currents, and that this same cause produced mineral deposits of various natures, which form curative springs. . . . The clear and cool waters of Urdar were required for the daily irrigation of the mystical mundane tree; and if they had been disturbed by Thor, or active electricity, they would have been converted into mineral springs unsuited for the purpose. Such examples as the above will support the ancient claim of the philosophers that *there is a logos in every mythos*, or a groundwork of truth in every fiction. (I, 160-62)

HE who gains a victory over other men is strong; but he who gains a victory over himself is all-powerful.

—LAO-TSE

MILLS OF KARMA

REFLECTION upon present conditions emphasizes the necessity for humanity to pay its debts patiently and meticulously. Trying to evade them in any way is both dishonest and futile.

If selfishness, self-indulgence and lower-mind cleverness have brought us to our present state, what will grosser transgressions produce? In the past they have destroyed civilizations.

Nature's fundamental law (an inherent part of our own spiritual Self) never fails to operate. Constantly being directed by our active minds, it is the perpetual motion of life itself that continually forms Karma. Karma knows no reprieves. It is mechanically positive; on the moral plane, as the law of cause and effect. Earning-efforts or self-sacrifice are its legal tender and absolute justice is its "Gold Standard." Whatever men force Nature to give them unearned, she will repossess herself of by enforced deprivations. It is a time for testing every system, old or proposed, by the fundamental principles of honesty.

What a time for emphasizing the importance of individuals adopting pure spiritual principles! The health of any world-recovery can be only in proportion to the number who do so.

Those who can see it have a tremendous responsibility, a glorious opportunity and a mission. Those desperately rushing about seeking relief are not prepared to accept the responsibility and make the sacrifices necessary to undo the mischief.

How far we have come from recognizing that the mills of Karma may grind slowly, "but they grind exceeding small"! Blinded by egotism, we ignore that almost self-evident fact. We prefer continuing to trust to the ingenuity of selfish human minds to produce a miraculous cure; to give us everything with little or no effort. And that is the basis of our civilization—dishonesty. What a toll we are paying, and will continue to pay, for the theologic myths of vicarious atonement, black-magic demonstrations, etc. And we cannot default in our ultimate payments, nor use debased money in making them.

THE NATURE OF THE LOWER SELF

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The three great qualities called Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—light or truth, passion or desire, and indifference or darkness—are born from nature, and bind the imperishable soul to the body.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, XIV, 5

IF the thirteenth discourse of the *Gita* unveils the facts about the nature of the Higher Self, the fourteenth chapter treats of the nature of the lower.

The lower self is born of Prakriti, Matter or Nature. Because matter has attributes or gunas the moment the soul contacts body, the latter binds the soul by and through those attributes. Matter is inert and dense; but it is mobile in spite of its inertia; it has rhythm of movement because it is vitalized and energized by the light of the spirit.

The Man of Matter is full of inertia, or is full of movements, or is full of harmony and rhythm, but, evil or good, he is under the sway of matter. As long as he is ensouled and aroused by any of these three he is mortal, subject to pain and decay.

The Man of Spirit is full of ideation, intuition and inspiration. The Self exists perpetually in a state of contemplation which is creative and therefore blissful.

We have to labour and free ourselves who are centred in the lower, so that we may experience in our consciousness, our brain-minds, the Presence of the higher.

In each one of us one of the three attributes predominates; the remaining two are not so active, though they operate. When Tamas-Inertia predominates we become deluded, indifferent to life and duty, lazy in body and indolent in mind. When Rajas-Mobility predominates our sense-desires flourish, love of gain increases and begets ambitions, and actions and more activities are initiated, and there is restlessness of body and mind. Large numbers of ailments and nervous disorders are due to the predominance of Rajas in our civilization. When Sattva-Rhythm pre-

dominates the man is happy, lucid and peaceful and engages himself in the study of Wisdom and in the service of his fellows. But all three imprison the soul in the body. Dhritarashtra is the symbol of Tamas, Duryodhana of Rajas, Arjuna of Sattva; Krishna is above and beyond them, having transcended them.

The spiritual life is the overcoming of the influence of the gunas or attributes of matter. This means overcoming not only of evil but also of good. When we surpass the three which are coexistent with the body, we are released from pain, old age and death, for thereby we drink of the Water of Immortality. It does not mean that the body does not have its aches or old age or death, but that the man who has freed himself from the tyranny of these three powers is not affected by aches, does not feel the burden of time and age, and is untouched by death itself.

In answer to his Chela's question, the Master Krishna describes the virtues and characteristics of the man who has overcome the gunas.

Most of us are inert and lazy and are goaded into action by the necessity of keeping body and soul together. In the competition of life we unfold ambitions, multiply desires, are entwined by activities in actions, and succeed in bringing upon ourselves afflictions; this stage leads to the next, for in anguish we begin the search, by knowledge we overcome pain and grow in contentment, and thus the happy stage is reached.

Just as the perfect realization of ourselves as the Higher Self begins in the intellectual recognition of the fact that a Higher Self exists, followed by an enquiry into its powers and modes of manifestation, so also the complete freedom which emancipates the personal man from the slavery of the material qualities starts with the intellectual recognition that all persons are continuously affected by gunas or attributes of prakriti or matter and nature. The second step lies in the determining by each of his own particular predominating quality. The legitimate use of each of these properties of nature is indicated in the *Gita*, the remedy for overcoming the disease pertaining to each is also referred to, and how to take the next step in front of each is clearly shown. The tamasic man is evil, though not consciously

active in it; the rajasic man is evil and then evil and good; the sattvic man is good; one stage leads to the other and transforms the evil into the good man. But evolution does not stop there—the good man has to grow into the spiritual man. Between goodness and spirituality is a gulf, the same as between wickedness and righteousness. The selfish man becomes unselfish and then flowers into selflessness.

Is it possible for us to grow in goodness? Can we in this day and age unfold spirituality? Yes, is the answer; it is more normal to be good than otherwise; and knowledge reproclaimed in our cycle gives aid more than ever before to the aspirant to spiritual life. In the words of a modern sage:

“That which propels towards, and forces evolution, *i.e.*, compels the growth and development of Man towards perfection, is (a) the MONAD, or that which acts in it unconsciously through a force inherent in itself; and (b) the lower astral body or the *personal SELF*. The former, whether imprisoned in a vegetable or an animal body, is endowed with, is indeed itself, that force. Owing to its identity with the ALL-FORCE, which, as said, is inherent in the Monad, it is all-potent on the *Arupa*, or formless plane. On our plane, its essence being too pure, it remains all-potential, but individually becomes inactive: *e.g.*, the rays of the Sun, which contribute to the growth of vegetation, do not select this or that plant to shine upon. Uproot the plant and transfer it to a piece of soil where the sunbeam cannot reach it, and the latter will not follow it. So with the Atman: unless the higher Self or EGO gravitates towards its Sun—the Monad—the lower *Ego*, or *personal Self*, will have the upper hand in every case. For it is this Ego, with its fierce Selfishness and animal desire to live a Senseless life (*Tanha*) which is ‘the maker of the tabernacle,’ as Buddha calls it in *Dhammapada* (153 and 154) It is equally true that the Atman alone *warms* the inner man; *i.e.*, it enlightens it with the ray of divine life and alone is able to impart to the inner man, or the reincarnating Ego, its immortality. . . . Spirituality is on its ascending arc, and the animal or physical impedes it from steadily progressing on the path of its evolution only when the selfishness of the *personality* has so

strongly infected the real *inner* man with its lethal *virus*, that the upward attraction has lost all its power on the thinking reasonable man. In sober truth, vice and wickedness are an *abnormal, unnatural* manifestation, at this period of our human evolution—at least they ought to be so. The fact that mankind was never more selfish and vicious than it is now, civilized nations having succeeded in making of the first an ethical characteristic, of the second an art, is an additional proof of the exceptional nature of the phenomenon.” (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 109-10)

—B.M.

ONE cannot live adequately in the present, nor effectively face the future, when one's thoughts are buried in the past.

Moaning over what cannot be helped is a confession of futility and of fear, of emotional stagnation—in fact, of selfishness and cowardice. The best way to break this vicious, morbid circle—“to snap out of it”—is to stop thinking about yourself, and start thinking about other people. You can lighten your own load by doing something for someone else. By the simple device of doing an outward, unselfish act today, you can make the past recede. The present and future will again take on their true challenge and perspective.

As a doctor I have seen it tried many, many times and nearly always it has been a far more successful prescription than anything I could have ordered from the drugstore.

—FREDERIC LOOMIS

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Controversy continues to rage in the scientific community over the origin of the Universe. The centre of the controversy is Sir Fred Hoyle, whose theories conflict with conventional cosmology. In the *New Scientist* (U.K.), Dr. Michael Shallis, staff tutor in physical science at the University of Oxford, writes in defence of Hoyle:

The ideas that worry the scientific community most are these: first, that life did not originate on Earth; secondly, that it did originate in space; and thirdly, that evolution in space requires "cosmic control." . . .

Hoyle does say that living organisms are too complex to have had time to evolve by chance. . . . Even if life did start on Earth independently, it does not mean that Hoyle is wrong and life did not also start in space as well. There is surely no heresy in saying that life is a cosmic phenomenon, unless the biologists want to claim that the Earth has a unique position in the Universe, the centre of all life. In that light, Hoyle's suggestion is more in keeping with the trends in mainstream scientific thought than is conventional biology.

Perhaps Hoyle's biggest heresy is that he has introduced the ideas that the Universe needs a cosmic intelligence to control it; that without a God the Universe does not make sense. Now, the grounds for attacking this idea can never be scientific and to suggest that Hoyle has subverted a scientific dogma is equally unscientific. The point is that the existence or non-existence of God or even purpose in the Universe is a metaphysical question and therefore one that science cannot deal with. It is no more heretical to say the Universe displays purpose, as Hoyle has done, than to say that it is pointless, as Steven Weinberg has done. Both statements are metaphysical and outside science. Yet it seems that scientists are permitted by their own colleagues to say metaphysical things about lack of purpose and not the reverse. This suggests to me that science, in allowing this metaphysical notion, sees itself as religion and presumably as an atheistic religion (if you can have such a thing).

The word God as ordinarily understood has connotations of a personal Creator which are as much unacceptable to Theosophists as to scientists. But there certainly is a purpose in the

Universe, and to understand how and why it came into existence, science needs must enter the domain of metaphysics.

Occultism does not deny the certainty of the mechanical origin of the Universe; it only claims the absolute necessity of mechanicians of some sort behind those Elements (or *within*)—a dogma with us. It is not the fortuitous assistance of the atoms of Lucretius, who himself knew better, that built the Kosmos and all in it. Nature herself contradicts such a theory. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 594)

The desire for a sentient life shows itself in everything, from an atom to a sun, and is a reflection of the Divine Thought propelled into objective existence, into a law that the Universe should exist. According to esoteric teaching, the real cause of that supposed desire, and of all existence, remains for ever hidden, and its first emanations are the most complete abstractions mind can conceive. These abstractions must of necessity be postulated as the cause of the material Universe which presents itself to the senses and intellect; and they underlie the secondary and subordinate powers of Nature, which, anthropomorphized, have been worshipped as God and gods by the common herd of every age. It is impossible to conceive anything without a cause; the attempt to do so makes the mind a blank. This is virtually the condition to which the mind must come at last when we try to trace back the chain of causes and effects, but both science and religion jump to this condition of blankness much more quickly than is necessary; for they ignore the metaphysical abstractions which are the only conceivable cause of physical concretions. These abstractions become more and more concrete as they approach our plane of existence, until finally they phenomenalize in the form of the material Universe, by a process of conversion of metaphysics into physics, analogous to that by which steam can be condensed into water, and the water frozen into ice. (*Ibid.*, I, 44-45)

At one time there was a worldwide belief that natural objects like trees, rivers, and even the soil were more than just objects put there for the enjoyment and exploitation of human beings, but contained spirits and godlike attributes that had to be revered and often propitiated. In *The Ecologist* (U.K.), Vol. 13, No. 6, Ken Penney, Lecturer in Environmental Economics

at the University of Exeter, recalls that these beliefs were not confined to so-called primitive people; even in the so-called civilized Western Society the incredible power of the soil to produce the growth of things that human beings and animals could eat was looked upon with great awe. The cultural revolution which we now call "the growth of science" brought about a change in our attitude to nature and caused us to lose respect for the environment around us.

Science has provided us with new forms of explanation. Gone now is the mysticism attached to springs, the trees, to soil, to stones, to rivers and to the power of the waves and tides. Nowadays we can explain springs in terms of geological strata, the noises of trees in terms of interaction between the wind and the cellular structure of living things, and the magical power of the soil disappears under a great welter of chemical equations that supposedly explain the mystery of growth. All too often we cast aside some of the earlier explanatory systems as being utterly valueless, but perhaps we might be making a mistake in doing so. . . .

The progress of materialism, communications, transportation, and scientific knowledge, has allowed humans to live in an urban society on a scale never really before known, and people born and bred within this form of society tend to lose contact and awareness of their dependence upon the soil and the nature that lies around them. . . . True there are vestigial remnants of the old-time nature worship in our own urban culture. . . . These anachronisms apart, our highly vulnerable and dependent urban society has in the space of almost one generation seemed to have not only lost contact with its roots but to have developed an outright contempt for nature, and the passage of materialist progress has caused most of us to treat natural objects not as things worthy of respect but as mere inanimate inputs in a production process that is judged and evaluated in terms of profit.

The lack of reverence for life that inevitably follows the modern divorce of man from nature is all too evident. Some of the karmic consequences are obvious, but the warnings go unheeded. The message of a living, unitary world is not peculiar to the twentieth century; it is as old as human thought itself. The classical "Atomists" were philosophical Pantheists. "How can a philosopher," asked H.P.B., "regard Deity as infinite, omni-

present, and eternal, unless Nature is an aspect of IT, and IT informs every atom in Nature?"

The unexplained mysteries of nature are many and of those presumably explained hardly one may be said to have become absolutely intelligible. There is not a plant or mineral which has disclosed the last of its properties to the scientists. What do the naturalists know of the intimate nature of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms? How can they feel confident that for every one of the discovered properties there may not be many powers concealed in the *inner* nature of the plant or stone? And that they are only waiting to be brought in relation with some other plant, mineral, or force of nature to manifest themselves in what is termed a "supernatural manner"? Wherever Pliny, the naturalist, Aelian, and even Diodorus, who sought with such a laudable perseverance to extricate historical truth from its medley of exaggerations and fables, have attributed to some plant or mineral an occult property unknown to our modern botanists and physicists, their assertions have been laid aside without further ceremony as absurd, and no more referred to.

It has been the speculation of men of science from time immemorial what this vital force or life-principle is. To our mind the "secret doctrine" alone is able to furnish the clue. Exact science recognizes only five powers in nature—one *molar*, and four *molecular*; kabalists, seven; and in these two additional ones is enwrapped the whole mystery of life. One of these is immortal spirit, whose reflection is connected by invisible links even with inorganic matter; the other, we leave to everyone to discover for himself. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 466)

Lewis Thomas's Elihu Root lecture, delivered last November at the Council on Foreign Relations, U.S.A., is published in the July 1984 issue of *Harper's* under the title "Are Altruism and Co-operation Natural?" Dr. Thomas, chancellor of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York and author of many well-thought-out essays and books, states:

Getting along in nature is an art, not a combat by brute force. It is more like a great, complicated game of skill.

Altruism is one of the strange biological facts of life, and it has puzzled the world of biology ever since Darwin. How can

one explain the survival of any species in which certain members must, as a matter of routine, sacrifice their own lives in the interests of the group? Altruism is seen in its most outlandish form among the social insects, where hives and nests depend for their survival on outright suicide. In the act of stinging, the bee is necessarily eviscerated. Among colonies of termites, wasps, and ants there are hordes of volunteers ready to rush out in defence of the group, only to be killed in the act. . . .

Altruism is perhaps not an everyday aspect of human behaviour, and there is no way of proving or disproving a genetic basis for it. Sociobiologists believe that human altruism is genetically governed and exists throughout our species, whether in latent or suppressed form. Others attribute altruistic behaviour to cultural influences.

Altruism remains a puzzle, but an even deeper scientific quandary is posed by the existence of co-operative behaviour throughout nature, since the beginning of life. The biosphere, for all its wild complexity, seems to rely more on symbiotic arrangements than we used to believe, and there is a generally amiable aspect to nature that needs more acknowledgment than we have given it in the past.

Now, thanks to some work with computers by Axelrod and Hamilton, we can be persuaded that co-operating is not only a nice thing to do; it is *the* thing to do if you are looking for ways to get through very long stretches of evolutionary time in the presence of numberless other creatures with whom you are obliged to interact. . . .

It is, at the least, a small comfort to learn that being nice in nature, most of the time, is a successful strategy. . . . The long-term winners in evolution seem to me to behave this way, with the conspicuous exception of ourselves. We have tended to exploit and to cheat whenever the occasion seemed to provide a short-term advantage from cheating, and—our worst mistake—to ignore the fact that it is bound to be a long, long game. For a computer to tell us this is not, in my view, artificial intelligence. It is the real thing.

Altruism is the keynote of Theosophy, and in the second of her Five Messages to the American Theosophists H.P.B. went to the extent of saying that it is "the cure for all ills":

The road is wide and broad which leads to destruction; and it is but too easy to find; and only too many go ignorantly along

it to their own destruction. But the practical cure for it lies in one thing. . . . It sounds very simple, but is eminently difficult; for that cure is "ALTRUISM." . . . This it is which the real Founders of the Theosophical Society promote as its first object—UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

Till recently, studies of the interior of the Earth were more or less speculative, but now a group of Harvard scientists, after years of painstaking effort, have compiled a geological map of the "underworld." Using measurements from a world-wide network of seismographs, the scientists inferred the density and the temperature of the Earth's interior at various depths, and then compiled the results into maps. (*Science Age*, August 1984)

An important revelation is that although Africa and South America are spreading apart, they are joined together deep underneath.

One of the liveliest arguments in science today has to do with the possibility of drifting continents. Recently uncovered evidence corroborates the old theory that the Earth's continents fitted together at one time and that what is now Europe and Africa were joined to the two American continents.

A striking article by H.P.B. on the antiquities of America, "A Land of Mystery," states:

That there must have been an intimate connection at some time between the old Aryans, the prehistoric inhabitants of America—whatever might have been their name—and the ancient Egyptians, is a matter more easily proved than contradicted. And probably, if there ever was such a connection, it must have taken place at a time when the Atlantic did not yet divide the two hemispheres as it does now. (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, June 1943)

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLICATIONS

By H. P. Blavatsky:

ISIS UNVEILED. A photographic facsimile of the original edition of 1877.
THE SECRET DOCTRINE. A facsimile of the original edition of 1888.
INDEX TO THE SECRET DOCTRINE
THE THEOSOPHICAL GLOSSARY
TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE
THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY
THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE
FIVE MESSAGES TO THE AMERICAN THEOSOPHISTS
RAJA-YOGA OR OCCULTISM
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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE STUDY OF "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"
U.L.T. PAMPHLET SERIES, NOS. 1-36
H. P. BLAVATSKY AND WILLIAM Q. JUDGE PAMPHLET SERIES

Magazines:

THE ARYAN PATH (BOMBAY)
THEOSOPHY (LOS ANGELES)

The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

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

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

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however constituted, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitutions nor Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

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 purposes and 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. Cards for such enrollment will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their efforts 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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