

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;
- (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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NECESSITY, THE RULE

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ONE of the clues to the right performance of duties, one which also resolves the conflict of duties, is enshrined in the word—Necessity. All duties should necessarily be performed; also, that which it is not necessary to do cannot be duty.

To feed the body is a duty—it is necessary; but it is not a duty to give it foods superfluous to its good health and upkeep. To give a certain quantity of water to the body is necessary, therefore a duty; to neglect that duty is to court bodily ailments.

What is true of the body is equally true of the mind: nourishment, exercise, recreation are necessary, duties which we owe to our minds as to our bodies. That which hinders the body or the mind in the proper discharge of its respective functions is unnecessary and therefore not a duty we owe to it.

To determine what is necessary, knowledge of Theosophy is required. The entire process of application rotates round the axis of Duty. What to do and how and when to do it are determinable. The term Necessity offers the answers. Theoretical knowledge gathered from books and at U.L.T. meetings calls for application by the very fact that some urge brought us to the books or took us to the meetings. It is self-evident that the grand truths of Theosophy should be applied in life if any real benefit is to be derived. Applied Theosophy means that the great teachings learnt from books or at meetings are used in the discharge of the small, plain duties of life—at home, at the office, everywhere. And the very first task for the earnest aspirant consists in determining if what he proposes to do is a duty—is *necessary*. By undertaking to do that which is not necessary, he is thickening and widening the web of Karma, prolonging his slave state in the world of the

flesh, which is full of sorrow and is darkened by ignorance.

The means of performing duties, *i.e.*, those actions which are necessary, are always at hand. The Law of Karma provides—and, being infallible, it never errs in making that provision—the means to every soul to do his duty by himself, by his fellow-men, and by the whole of Nature. By taking upon ourselves the performance of actions which are unnecessary, we slip into sins of commission, *i.e.*, into forging new fetters of Karma. By neglecting to do that which ought to be done, we commit sins of omission, which also are detrimental to the progress of the Soul, for they further darken our perception.

The student, recognizing that the fight is in the mind, that a man becomes as he thinks, has to acquire the habit of self-examination. This involves taking a clear view of our motives as well as of our methods in reviewing our actions, words, feelings, thoughts. In this self-examination, the yardstick of Necessity proves very serviceable. How many unnecessary acts have we performed? What waste of time was entailed in unnecessary talk? What strength have we given to mental laziness by unnecessary day-dreaming? How powerful the enemies within and without become because we weaken ourselves by indulgence in the unnecessary, which so often leads to the neglect of the necessary!

Let us observe, then, the Rule of Necessity. Each aspirant has to learn to husband his resources and his time, for thus he will develop his capacities. In doing this he will have to apply the rule of necessity; without it he will be lost in the processes of life and lose time. Whether in work to be executed or in making plans for fresh work, the rule of necessity should be observed. We should ask, Is it necessary to do this or to plan that? But if we neglect to observe that rule even in enjoying our recreation or in planning our vacation, we will frustrate ourselves in performing the labours of life in the right Theosophical way. We cannot successfully observe Theosophical principles in the serious affairs of life if we neglect the Rule of Necessity in planning our daily recreations or periodic vacations or occasional outings.

The Law of Periodicity itself implies Necessity. The very title of the Great Cycle is the Unavoidable Cycle, also called the Circle of Necessity. The Avatars and the Messengers observe the Rule of Necessity. The Great Ones do not do that which is not necessary; teach not unless necessity shows itself; give help whenever necessary and withhold it also out of necessity. To become fit and worthy followers of the Great Gurus we need to make use of the principles of thought and of conduct that They have laid down in

the philosophy of Theosophy. Let the aspirant ponder over the following sayings on the Rule of Necessity reprinted from *Theosophy* for December 1924, where they appeared under the caption—

WHAT THE SAGE KNOWS

That all the acts of Nature are *necessary* acts.

That the *need* for sentient existence called all beings into form.

That man's mistaken actions are his *needless* actions.

That it is *unnecessary* actions which "bind" the man; the wise man engages only in *necessary* action.

That tragedies are those cataclysmic events which had to be, but had no *need* of being.

That it is the Soul's *need* which forces on its evolution whether by tragedy or joy.

That the Soul's *need* of rest is maker of Devachan.

That the Soul's *need* of chastisement is maker of hell.

That the Soul's *need* calls him forth to birth again and again.

That what is not humanly desired manifests its *necessity* by the lesson learned.

That the *needs* of others may alone be known by the man who understands the whole purpose of Nature.

That the *need* of fulfilling one's whole duty by Nature and mankind is the highest incentive to Perfection.

That the *need* which calls it forth is the spiritual essence of Service.

WE need discipline, certainly, but I want to see it spontaneous rather than enforced, and motivated by a clearer vision than we now have of a life worth living. The road we have to find is the road of co-operation, the most difficult and beautiful art in the world. . . . The individual must cheerfully consent to some degree of discipline for the common good.

—J. P. JACKS

MOTIVES FOR WORK

“WORK” is the act of using or guiding energy towards the achievement of a desired object. Men often delude themselves into thinking that they work for a living. Few do. Most men work to get that which satisfies their cravings. They often sacrifice food and leave their dependants hungry so that they can satisfy their own urges for gambling, drinking, or worse. The thief and the forger work as do the cheat and the pervert to achieve their ends, and each for his wicked purpose uses up energy to do incalculable harm. Most men understand this and register their sense of revulsion at such debased actions. Yet, these same men will extol a politician for untold miseries visited upon innocent persons on some other country’s territory. The conquering hero is feted. The values which the modern world gives to work are so topsy-turvy that nobody cares to ask whether we are not worshipping at the feet of false gods, or worse still, whether we are not reverencing the devil and extolling his works.

As in all human considerations, the evaluation of any work lies not merely in the assessing of efficiency but in the analysing of the motives for the work. That work alone becomes meritorious which tries to fulfil the great purpose which brings any soul into incarnation. The selfish motive, the harmful intent, the non-altruistic purpose frustrate the divine aim and fritter away that incarnation’s store of spiritual energy. The altruistic motive and the sincere endeavour are indispensable in all works which are intended to prosper and multiply. Judged by this standard, the work so far done by the scientists fails to qualify except in some rare cases where the discovery was intended to and has helped large sections of mankind. How rigid and deep the scrutiny has to be can be judged from a letter written by a Theosophical Mahatma:

May I ask then . . . what have the laws of Faraday, Tyndall, or others to do with philanthropy in their abstract relations with humanity, viewed as an intelligent whole? . . . For us, poor unknown philanthropists, no fact of these sciences is interesting except in the degree of its potentiality of moral results, and in the ratio of its usefulness to mankind.

The potentiality of moral results, the ratio of the work’s usefulness to mankind, has to be injected into each stream of the student’s efforts, and unless he is united to the aim, purpose and teaching of Theosophy, he will not be able to achieve anything in the line of a universal effort.

Altruism in any work lifts it from out of the common run of human efforts. Of all human qualities, it is this which lays a claim to recognition by the diviner elements in nature. The altruistic motive leaves its indelible stamp and impress on the work motivated by it, though to our human blindness it may remain entirely hidden from view. It is for this reason that the true student approaches work from a completely different angle of vision. The performance of duties which formerly was mechanical and often monotonous ceases either to be drab or to be shorn of the lustre of splendid things. It now definitely ceases to be irksome; for the mind analyses it and on suitable occasions seeks to inject into it its concepts of altruism. The student's attention is now diverted from the results of his works to the quality of motive which impels those works. From the concrete and physical aspects of things, he has shifted the consciousness to the inner planes of being. He is at the threshold of magic and, with the help of newly awakened powers, is able deliberately to colour all action.

Work, be it ever so simple, implies the use of energy. We may by our actions scatter or conserve it, and in doing so, help or hinder Nature. Let us take an author at his work. He uses up vast amounts of energy to sort out his material. The process of acceptance of certain ideas and the rejection of others is itself "work" of a high order. As he writes, he uses the great force of concentration that shuts out all sights and sounds that pertain not to his work. His is indeed a great effort, and yet he may be writing that which would poison the human mind and lead it astray into the pleasure-grounds of senses. He may make out a case for an uninhibited expression of sense-life. He may defend invasion and genocide or the superiority of the white over the coloured races. He may bring "convincing" reasons to justify vivisection and even mass slaughters under the guise of "purges." And all the while he never has a thought of pity or tolerance or charity. He thinks he is doing good when all the while he is generating evil. The pity of it is that he gets a vast following. There is no doubt that he has "worked," but in so doing he has allied himself with the forces that throng the night-side of life.

Now let us take yet another example, that of an abstruse mathematician. He has hardly any motives of good or evil. He has, however, the keenest probing mentality. He wants to force Nature to give up her secrets. He prides himself on being a discoverer of hidden truths. Worse still, elated by success he gives out his discovery prematurely to a world not prepared to receive it. The secret which, if wrongly used, would visit misery,

horror and death on thousands is now in the hands of the ungodly. In him also was the altruistic motive absent. True, there was no active leaning towards evil; but his motives were diffused, and ambition and a suppressed love of fame were his undoing. He robbed Nature and enriched neither himself nor humanity. He gave out secrets indiscriminately, and his motives being alien to the spirit, his Karma cannot but impose a heavy burden.

Most students of Theosophy have not that eminence in politics or the sciences that would make them world-figures. Yet, just because they have imbibed the philosophy will their thoughts have a much enhanced potency for good or evil. Without knowing it, the young disciple wields energy which previously was not his to employ. He comes within the circumference of a Brotherhood which works ceaselessly under laws as rigid as any pertaining to the modern sciences. His new-found Brotherhood makes him do the same old work he was previously groaning under. His chores have not changed. His duties may have increased, but the old duties must still dog his footsteps. What he is taught is the new orientation. Before he acts, he has to try consciously to inject into his works and duty the great power of an all-embracing altruism. Does he attend office? Does he visit the sick? Does he promulgate his philosophy? In all spheres of action he borrows Nature's energy to do his work and must return it enriched by his contribution towards the general good.

Yet altruism comes not readily to the ordinary man. He becomes hesitant as his concept of charity turns out on mature reflection to be non-charity. Confusion results and too often the student tries to resolve the problem by rushing away from it. Does he but know it, he has the solution near at hand. The chief aim of any Lodge to which he may be affiliated is to spread broadcast the teachings of Theosophy. Now, Theosophy, if it be the ultimate end of knowledge, must contain within it the seeds of the true Altruism. By studying it, he plants the seeds in his mind. By applying it, he imports altruism in his own daily life. By promulgating Theosophy, he lives the altruistic life. As the disciple continues to follow the lines laid down, he draws nearer in consciousness to the Guru to whose bidding, sooner or later, he will surrender his whole life. This is altruism *in excelsis*. It is work which produces ambrosia. It is the act of giving which, instead of depleting wealth, enriches it.

The ordinary man labours at his work; the man of purpose transforms that same work; the disciple transmutes it.

THEOSOPHY AND EDUCATION—II

THE ideal of the traditional system of education was to impart wisdom, along with knowledge: *jnanam vijñana-sahitam* (*Gita*, IX, 1). We cannot be wise without some basis of knowledge; but the converse is not true, as we can be intellectual giants without an iota of wisdom. As the *Chadogya Upanishad* (VII, i, 3) puts it, we may be knowers of texts (*mantravit*) and not knowers of self (*atmavit*). Likewise does Plato make the distinction between factual information and understanding. It is the latter that is urged in all the Upanishads, which, as Dr. Radhakrishnan affirmed, "are the utterances of the sages who speak out of the fullness of their illumined experience." These sages do not speak only to a chosen few but to all those who are able to find that their utterances ring true to human experience. Their brief aphoristic generalizations provide keys to essential questions; pondering over them enriches the understanding (*nous*).

Acharya Vinoba Bhave has put this clearly in an article in *Resurgence* in its issue of January 1974. He begins by quoting the verse in *Kena Upanishad* (II, 3): "He knows who says: we do not know," reminiscent of the Delphic oracle: "Socrates is the wisest man, as he knows that he knows not." The idea behind the *Kena Upanishad* verse is that Brahman, the Supreme Spirit, the "All," cannot be conceptualized; and to suppose that one has contained the All in a concept, is a form of ignorance. Concepts are tools for understanding the realities of finite existence; but they lose their meaning when stretched toward infinite dimension. To the layman indulging only in the *vaikari* or verbal level, the Upanishadic meaning may be incomprehensible. And our modern values in education are confined to this level only. Do our New Education Policy (NEP) wizards in Delhi know anything about the *madhyama*, *pasyanti* and *para* levels in which our traditional values in education were based?

Let us dwell for a while on the distinction between knowledge and wisdom. What we know is knowledge measured out in terms of the three-dimensional space—length, breadth and thickness or height or depth, which is *all mensuration*—as also the measurable time, in terms of past, present and future, and the three-dimensional ideation in terms of perceiver, perceived and perception. All this is knowledge; but wisdom is a reality which can hardly be defined, measured, assessed or appraised. We recognize it by its evidences in action, but definitions make it only disappear from view. According to traditional values, the understanding of

this is the goal of education. The application of its implications is the art of life. It involves recognition of what can and what cannot be defined, which is the heart of the art of teaching. Education is too serious a subject to be left in the hands of those who can only think in terms of hierarchy, salary scales, pension benefits, etc. Our children are too precious a commodity to be cribbed, cabined and confined in this Procrustean bed of bureaucracy. Let us listen to the voice of Vinoba, although it is five years since he shed his mortal coil:

Teaching must take place in the context of real life. Set the children to work in the fields, and when a problem arises, give them whatever knowledge of cosmogony, or physics, or any other science, is needed to solve it. Set them to cook a meal, and as need arises, teach them chemistry. In one word, let them live. The children should have someone with them, but that someone should not belong to a special category called teacher (least of all, an IES officer); he or she should be living an ordinary life in the practical world. The person who is to guide children should conduct his or her life intelligently and be capable of explaining the processes of life and work to the children as opportunity arises.

It is not education to fill students' minds with information, but to arouse their thirst for knowledge. Teacher and pupil both learn by their contact with each other. Both are students. True education is that which is experienced, tasted, digested. What can be counted and recorded is not education; it cannot be doled out, weighed and measured.

There is an infinite sum of knowledge in the world, and each one needs some finite portion of it for the conduct of his affairs. But it is a mistake to think that this life-knowledge can be had in any school. Life-knowledge can only be had from life. The task of the school, therefore, must be to awaken in its pupils the power to learn from life. Life teaches that no man or woman can know all that he or she needs to know. Everyone lives his or her entire life as ignorant, uncertain and confused as any other. And what is more important, each has learned to live with this, and not to be worried about it. Is not this the natural capacity of childhood? Children improvise from moment to moment, without fear and without embarrassment, and do it eagerly and joyfully. John Holt writes in *The Understanding School* (1969):

The young child is continually building what I like to call a mental model of the world, the universe, and then checking it against reality as it presents itself to him, and then tearing it down

and rebuilding it and checking again. He goes through the process I have no idea how many times a year or even a day.

Heaven lies about us in our infancy; but soon shades of the prison-house begin to close upon us, and the visionary gleam is no more; where has it fled, the glory and the dream?

What happens to him later, to a very considerable extent as a result of his schooling, is that he begins to get such a vested interest in this mental model, whatever it may be, that he becomes increasingly unwilling to consider or look or hear about whatever doesn't fit into it. It becomes a bed of Procrustes.

The true function of education should be to give guidance in the great adventure which every child undertakes for the realization of its potentialities in the actual world of men and things. Education is not a discipline imposed from above on an apathetic, if acquiescent, nature. It is a process of leading the inward nature to its fulfilment. All true development is self-development. From complete dependence on others the child has to grow into relative independence. The function of the teacher should be only to assist the natural growth, by stimulation and guidance. The process of education, like growth, is continuous and lifelong. A Sanskrit sloka says that a pupil gets a fourth of his education from his teacher, another fourth by his own effort, still another fourth from his fellow students, and the rest in course of time through life-experience. Experience is the great teacher. We learn daily and hourly from our home, from our community, from the press, the radio and television, and the movies.

More than the study of the sciences is the importance of humanities, whose aim is to enable us to understand our inner aspirations and ideals. If literature quickens and enlarges the human spirit, the arts help to educate the emotions and impart a certain grace in living. Any course of education should include philosophical studies, too, as they deal with conduct and the ends of life. However well informed one may be in general knowledge, however technically efficient in the special vocations, if one is not acquainted with one's roots in the past, if one does not have the understanding of what is called the "wisdom of the ages," education falls short of its true ideals. It is unwise to neglect philosophy, art and literature in these days when the world is on the brink of a nuclear holocaust; civilization is in danger not from any poverty of material resources, or the power to use them, but from want of wisdom and the spirit to use them rightly. No wonder our present condition is in part the result of the failure

of our education to cope with moral and spiritual uncertainties. Not content with raping the earth of natural energy sources, coal and oil, we are experimenting with nuclear power plants, and now we are reeling under the tragic trauma of the disaster at the Chernobyl reactor in Russia, and a few years earlier, the tragedy in Three Mile Island. There is a race not only in the piling up of armaments for war, but also in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy among the super-Powers! Times were when man was praying to the gods for protection against snakes, scorpions and wild animals (cf. several hymns in the *Atharva Veda*), but today, what a sad commentary on his intelligence when he is seeking protection from his own mischief!

Human values are not a part of Nature in the sense in which stones and plants are, and yet they can be studied scientifically. The divisions of subjects into science, social studies and humanities are not exclusive. It will be wrong to assume that science is amoral or indifferent to values. Science is not to be taught as something external to man. It is one of the greatest creations of the spirit of man. Providing the material basis for the good life, science is not only utilitarian but helpful for the pursuit of truth, being purely objective, free from *raga-dvesha*. Its essence is careful observation of facts, rigid conscientiousness in inference, and elimination of personal prejudice and passion. As its method is to see things as they *are* and not as they should be, its ideal is the same as that of philosophy, the vision of reality. No wonder that in the 18th century, science was named "Natural Philosophy," and even now the Royal Society titles its scientific investigations as "Philosophical Transactions." If natural sciences deal with facts, social studies refer to events, and humanities are devoted to values. Anyone wishing to live intelligently in the modern world should have some selected knowledge of all the three divisions, namely, (i) science and technology, (ii) social studies, including history, and (iii) humanities, including language and literature, fine arts, ethics, philosophy and religion. The *Chandogya Upanishad* (VII, i) affirms that a full education must not be limited to any one of these three divisions but include all, and lists subjects such as literature, history, philosophy, mythology, religion, mathematics, astronomy, practical arts, etc. The magnificent contributions on these subjects by our ancient civilization are now a part of the common heritage of man. Subash Kak in a recent article in *The Hindu* refers to other facets of the contributions of Indian scholars, which are being revealed now:

Consider the field of artificial intelligence, the science of design-

ing computers that mimic human reasoning. It is being found that many of the recent techniques in this field were anticipated in India centuries ago. One can trace an unbroken link that survived to the most recent times. There existed patronage by governments, yet there also existed debate and controversy, facilitated by the existence of several autonomous centres of learning. Al Biruni (1030 A.D.) demonstrates this by writing how Ugrabhata, the grammarian, could not get his theories accepted by his peers.

Asking how the outstanding tradition of excellence in the sciences could be reclaimed, he refers to the problems that beset our colleges and universities, and deplores that their mode of functioning is directed to a static world. He adds:

Rather than prepare society for new challenges that beset us, they are fighting for mere survival. Burgeoning enrolment and a poor faculty have caused the standards of teaching to fall. A teaching job is administered like a civil service appointment and it is, to all purposes, a sinecure.

The process of education is an activity of thought and not mere stuffing of the mind with facts. The period of *Brahmacharya*, according to Indian tradition, is a time of learning and discipline. It is a way of life, and not merely a means to earning a living. Unfortunately, it is the latter aspect that is stressed in the modern values of education, as any paragraph in the New Education Policy will testify. True education must be a nursery of thought and a school for citizenship, and what is more, an initiation into the life of spirit, a training of human individuals in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue—in short, a second birth, *dvitiyam janma*.

This is the sentiment expressed by a modern philosopher, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan:

A human being lives in the world of nature, but apprehends a world of values. We can break him on the wheel, burn him at the stake, bury him alive in a concentration camp or crucify him, but we cannot make him lie or steal or betray the cause he believes in. Our education should encourage the development in its members of fearlessness of mind, strength of conscience and integrity of purpose. If human life is to remain human, it must deepen and live by a sense of moral obligation. Without moral freedom, there can be no true democracy. Freedom and justice in the world depend on there being enough men and women who say: "We will obey God rather than men." For the sake of the soul we may sometimes have to abandon the world. (*Atmarthe prthivim tyajet*)

There are moments in history when the human mind seems to swing free from the bonds of habitual assumptions and to seek new foundations. The present is one such moment, when some of the best minds are beginning to question earlier assumptions; and the challenge presented by the quantum theory is one example. The dichotomy between science and philosophy is closing. Recent scientific advances have been so extraordinary that contemporary man looks first to scientific knowledge, expertise and insight for the understanding of the universe and his place in it. To cite only three instances: (i) There is David Bohm, the theoretical physicist who has tried to penetrate into what IS. Conceiving matter and mind and the Big Bang as but tiny ripples on a vast sea of unmanifest energy beyond space and time, he has unequivocally equated the unknown source of this energy with what is mysterious, sacred and holy. He even speaks about compassion in the cosmos, equating the ultimate nature of the universe with the energy of love. What a great distance has been travelled by the scientists from Lucretius' *The Nature of Things*, which looked upon the world of nature, the cosmos, indeed the universe, as a vast happenstance, constructed by blind forces, the result of the fortuitous concourse of atoms! (ii) Another physicist, Fritjof Capra, also sees the universe as a unified whole of constantly changing energy patterns, and likens the new ideas about the unavoidable subject-object interaction to religious mysticism. The hard-bound cover of the book carries the picture of Nataraja's dance. (iii) Then there is the biologist Charles Birch, who likewise combines a holistic vision of evolving life with ecological issues. Stating that life is God, he treats from a Christian perspective the oppressive ideology of objective, materialistic science from which he rightly feels life must be liberated. There are a host of others, like Michael Talbot and Lewis Thomas, who hold that ultimate reality cannot be dissociated from the mysteries of spirit. Holistic insight of this kind, accepted by a few scientists of today, may well presage the emergence of a new scientific world view that will become increasingly compatible with religious and ethical consciousness.

These are the few seminal thinkers who are beginning to bring about a changed outlook whereby we may be rescued from the present ecological crisis, as we become more aware of the man-nature relationship. But this is only a small drop in the ocean. As Sir Isaac Newton remarked in his *Memoirs*:

I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a

prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

For the task before thinkers all over the world, not only scientists but philosophers as well, is to rescue this planet from the depredations of the Superpowers who are holding the Damocles' sword of nuclear holocaust and who have the management of the world in their hands. They seem to forget that they constitute only a small percentage of humanity, and what right have they to endanger the "uninvolved" too, forming the majority of humankind? It is not only that true peace is for the world as a whole, as is war. The risk of radiation threatens the whole world, even those not involved in nuclear warfare, and the genetic and other damage would be universal. How to make these statesmen see reason is the chief problem of the age. How did this misuse of the planet begin? Does this subject form part of the curriculum in our schools? Setting the time of historical beginnings is bound to be partly arbitrary; but as Lynn White observes in "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis": "... surely no creature other than man has ever managed to foul its nest in such short order."

If we are to save ourselves from disaster, science has to be informed by the spirit of philosophical culture. This would demand another look at the origin of science, and we have to turn to the myth of Prometheus for our answer. Prometheus taught mankind the arts and sciences (cf: *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 411 et seq.), for which he has been sorely criticized. But we should note that the uses of technology depended on his gift to mankind of the power to *think*. The fire he stole from Olympus was the fire of *mind*. It made humans capable of forethought as well as exploitation of Nature. Like the apple in the Garden of Eden, the fire with which man was endowed gave him the knowledge of good and evil, making him a moral agent, responsible for his actions. With mind, man has become a creative being, *i.e.*, a god in the making, with all the responsibility that belongs to this role. In *The Secret Doctrine*, Madame Blavatsky quotes from Creuzer:

We modern Europeans feel surprised when hearing talk of the Spirits of the Sun, Moon, etc. But we repeat again, the *natural good sense and the upright judgment* of the ancient peoples, quite foreign to our *entirely material* ideas upon celestial mechanics and physical sciences... could not see in the stars and planets only that which we see: namely, simple masses of light, or opaque bodies moving in circuits in sidereal space... but they saw in them

living bodies, animated by spirits as they saw the same in every kingdom of Nature. (II, 369-70)

Commenting on this passage, Madame Blavatsky observes that it is only such a conception "that can lead man to form a correct conclusion about his origin and the genesis of everything in the universe—of Heaven and Earth, between which he is a living link. Without such a psychological link, and the feeling of its presence, no science can ever progress, and the realm of knowledge must be limited to the analysis of physical matter only." Here one is reminded of Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhava* where the birth of Man (the Kumara) is the result of the marriage of the Heavenly Siva with the daughter of Himavat, symbolizing the Earth. Man's education too must have this binocular vision of the heavenly spiritual values united with the earthly scientific knowledge.

Our two eyes are symbolic of this binocular vision—*Jnana* and *Vijnana*, philosophy and science, traditional and modern—and any educational policy framed for the whole of India must combine these two features. That it is not so is evident from the debate in Parliament which proved that it is only old wine in a new bottle with a new label. From the days of Macaulay, we have strayed away from our ancient ideals. To reiterate what H. P. Blavatsky observed in the closing pages of her monumental work, *Isis Unveiled*:

We would that all who have a voice in the education of the masses should first know and then *teach* that the safest guides to human happiness and enlightenment are those writings which have descended to us from the remotest antiquity; and that nobler spiritual aspirations and a higher average morality prevail in the countries, where the people take their precepts as the rule of their lives. . . . There being but *one* Truth, man requires but one church—the Temple of God within us, walled in by matter but penetrable by any one who can find the way; *the pure in heart see God*.

The trinity of nature is the lock of magic, the trinity of man the key that fits it. (II, 635)

Would we listen to this prophetic voice, after witnessing the horrors of Bhopal, the Three Mile Island and Chernobyl?

LET US LEARN TO MEDITATE

IN Mr. Judge's "Universal Applications of Doctrine" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 3*), in speaking of the importance of thought he says: "How can it be possible that a few hours a week devoted to Theosophic thought and action can counteract—even in the gross material cells—the effect of nearly a whole week spent in indifference, frivolity, or selfishness? This mass of poor or bad thought will form a resistless tide that shall sweep away all your good resolves at the first opportunity."

Some may say that their duties leave them no time for study and meditation. As a matter of fact, no one is too busy to study and meditate. We may fool ourselves into thinking so—we do not fool those who know by experience. And if we are honest with ourselves we know it is not so. What else does the great business magnate do but study his business problems day and night? What else than meditate, even in his sleep, on greater business, greater wealth, greater power? We all meditate, we all study—the question is not one of time, but rather one of the subject of our meditation, the object of our study. We find time to sleep, to eat, to care for our body—because Nature compels us. If we refuse, we must suffer and we do not like that. We sacrifice for the object of our love, be that love another human being, business or wealth. We need a change of values. Let us once cease to identify ourselves with our body-vehicle and realize ourselves as the dweller in that body, the driver of that vehicle, and we shall see the truth that to concentrate our attention on our material life to the exclusion of the spiritual is as dangerous, if not more so, as forgetting to feed and care for our body because of our interest in our motorcar, which too needs care and food. The man who would so identify himself with his motor-vehicle we should call mad. The madness of him who identifies himself with his body-vehicle differs only in degree, not in kind.

Be it noted, however, that the quality of sentiency of the living body is a highly important factor. Similarly the focus of the Dweller in the body makes all the difference—is he looking towards the world of spirit or the world of matter? The fault does not lie in the skeleton, flesh, blood, nerves, muscles, but in the force that moves them. That force is *Tanha*—"the will to live"—that which in ordinary men and women produces the love of life and the fear of death. It is this "love of life" pursued by the "fear of death" encompassing whole incarnations that is responsible for human joys and sorrows. These alternate as birth

and death do; this force or energy causes rebirth. Study and meditation are servants of this force; business magnates and other ambitious folk make study and meditation slaves to this force—enhancing the “love of life,” fighting with all their resources their “fear of death”—of course in vain. When study and meditation are used to transcend *Tanha*, “which rageth like fire and is never to be appeased,” and give it a new direction, the human soul has turned its face Homewards.

Contrary to general belief, study and meditation necessitate no appreciable sacrifice in either time or energy. Study is the acquirement of ideas which through meditation and action we make our own.

Activity apart from right meditation, however, has brought the world to its present chaos. But meditation on the action to be performed in terms of real knowledge results in that devotion or sacrifice which alone permits the Self to guide us. A few minutes spent in quiet reading of some devotional book every morning, followed by a short reflection on what has been read, sounds the keynote for an entire day. Every feeling, every thought, every action which follows can be in harmony with that keynote. We must revert to the teachings in our spare moments; we must resound that keynote from time to time lest its sweetness fade away. That morning meditation must be re-energized as often as possible. This means no loss of time. On the contrary, since Yoga is skill in action, our business efficiency is enhanced. Meditation is not sitting in some peculiar posture, staring, breathing in special and unnatural ways. With such dangerous practices Raja Yoga has nothing to do. True meditation makes the Self the object of our meditation *while we engage in the performance of our duties*. The business of the day is more quickly attended to, activated by a motive which energizes rather than exhausts us. Thought processes which now take conscious effort and are exhausting, become smooth. As children learning to walk, we wilfully moved each muscle to obtain harmonious co-ordination. Today the muscles so trained in infancy carry out our will without any conscious effort. Will-action through meditation has become mechanical. Thought is self-reproductive. Thoughts planted in the morning sprout at noon, blossom and bear fruit in the evening, and at night produce seeds for the next day's planting. Therefore it is said, “Wait in the morning for inspiration, in the noon for guidance and in the night for Wisdom.” A wise gardener does not dig up his seeds from day to day to watch their growth. He plants them, waters them, weeds them, and leaves Nature time to do

her work. So we on waking plant our seed-thought, water it by remembering it, weed it by uprooting inharmonious thoughts, and leave the Self, like the sun, to fructify the plant.

To the Self, all this life is for the most part but an empty show. To It the obvious is never the real; the concrete is the least substantial; our mundane interests are of little importance. In the purgations of matter the Self is not involved. It and it alone, through Its ideation becomes a living power in our life, can resist that tide of "poor or bad thought" against which Mr. Judge warns us. Real Life is a conscious Spiritual existence, not material. Let us then direct our study and meditation toward that Life, not seek to encompass our spiritual ideation forever in some form of matter.

THE term "God"—unless referring to the Unknown Deity or *Absoluteness*, which can hardly be supposed *acting* in any way—has always meant in ancient philosophies the collectivity of the working and intelligent Forces in nature. The word "Forest" is singular, yet it is the term to express the idea of thousands or even millions of trees of different kinds. Materialists have the option of saying "Nature," or still better—"Law geometrizes" if they so prefer. But in the days of Plato, the average reader would hardly have understood the metaphysical distinction and real meaning. The truth, however, of Nature ever "geometrizing" is easily ascertained. Here is an instance: Heat is the modification of the motions of particles of matter. Now, it is a physical and mechanical law that particles or bodies in motion on themselves assume a spheroidal form—this, from a globular planet down to a drop of rain. Observe the snowflakes, which along with crystals exhibit to you all the geometrical forms existing in nature. As soon as motion ceases, the spheroidal shape alters; or, as Tyndall tells us, it becomes a flat drop, then the drop forms an equilateral triangle, a hexagon and so on. In observing the breaking up of ice-particles in a large mass, through which he passed heat rays, he observed that the first shape the particles assumed was triangular or pyramidal, then cubical and finally hexagonal, etc. Thus, even modern physical science corroborates Plato and justifies his proposition.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THEOSOPHICAL FUNDAMENTALS: A DIALOGUE

THE boy's scratched face was tense and puzzled... "Father, I fought a boy today, and I never had before. In Theosophy is it bad to fight? We were talking about the temple many people go to, and I said that Theosophy was the only truth. This made several boys angry, and one especially made me mad by saying that Theosophy wasn't as old as his religion and wasn't worth anything."

"Why do you think I can tell you if fighting is evil according to Theosophy?"

"People come to ask you questions about Theosophy, father, and sometimes you give lectures and you have all the Theosophical books."

"But one of the things I say to these people, son, is that Theosophy doesn't dictate to anyone what he or she should or shouldn't do. That in Theosophy which is passed on from the Wise Ones to ourselves is a set of Principles; if we find ways of understanding these Principles we may come to see for ourselves what is good and what is evil, but neither a book nor another person can tell us. Each one's Inner Self is the knower for him. But I wonder, son, why you felt you could say to the other boys that Theosophy was the only truth? How do you know this? Have you grasped all the principles of Theosophical philosophy, and have you applied them all for yourself?"

"No, father, I haven't, of course, but I believe, sometimes strongly, that everything in Theosophy is true!"

"And the boy you fought with, didn't he also believe strongly in his religion?"

"But Theosophy is not a religion, father! Everything about it is so different."

"Yes, son, but everything about people is much the same, whether they are studying Theosophy now or following the doctrines of their ancestors. There is always a good side and a less good side to belief, whatever is believed. Sometimes beliefs help us to respect each other, but sometimes they are used as excuses for fighting each other."

"You mean that Theosophy changes with people?"

"Son, Theosophy means different things to different people, and even the same person interprets it differently with the passage of time. Principles do not change, but no two applications of the same principle are the same. This helps explain why some people who have never heard of Theosophy yet hold views that are in

agreement with its main propositions and practise them better than some who say they are Theosophists. These principles which H.P.B. gave are not the property of any person, nor of any Master. They are the birthright of all mankind; they can be found expressed in different ways and in varying degrees in all religions in their pristine purity, and likewise in all philosophies and sciences."

"Is it a principle that fighting is always bad? I feel unhappy about my fight this morning and I think it was bad."

"Son, there is no principle in Theosophy which says: 'Thou shalt not fight.' But there are fights and fights. Fighting does not mean just coming to blows. We are all warrior-souls and there are many evils we have to fight, within us and without us, in society and in life in general. There is a principle which suggests that we should 'fight,' that is, speak out boldly, when it is really necessary, and when we are sure that more good will come of it than from remaining silent. We can never be sure of this when we are angry, can we? So it must be a Theosophical principle never to fight, even with words, when we are angry or feel we want to hurt anyone. If we feel compelled to fight and are angry at the same time, it must mean that the fighting is partly the outgrowth of mistakes we have made. We feel angry at the other person, whereas we'd be facing the truth more directly if we were angry with the fight *situation*, and at our stupidity in helping to bring it about.

"We can't avoid conflict, son, but we can avoid violent conflict. The three fundamental ideas of Theosophy show us ways to get the insight that we can overcome feelings of violence, and turn every situation towards the growth of soul. But to understand these fundamentals we need to train our minds, just as a warrior needs to train his body. This training can be helped on by asking ourselves a great many questions about each of the fundamentals. For instance, do you imagine there is one fundamental in particular which you can apply to this question of fighting? Would you like to think about this, and then tell me what you have thought?"

ERROR struggling on towards the living truth is more fruitful and more blessed than dead truth.

THE THEOSOPHIST'S TASK

ALL students, individually or in groups, have the solemn duty to study, apply and promulgate Theosophy. Straight Theosophy. But what is straight Theosophy? In *The Key to Theosophy* H.P.B. has clearly pointed out what students should learn and what they should teach.

ENQ. Then is all this metaphysics and mysticism with which you occupy yourself so much, of no importance?

THEO. To the masses, who need only practical guidance and support, they are not of much consequence; but for the educated, the natural leaders of the masses, those whose modes of thought and action will sooner or later be adopted by those masses, they are of the greatest importance. It is only by means of the philosophy that an intelligent and educated man can avoid the intellectual suicide of believing on blind faith; and it is only by assimilating the strict continuity and logical coherence of the Eastern, if not esoteric, doctrines, that he can realize their truth. Conviction breeds enthusiasm, and "Enthusiasm," says Bulwer-Lytton, "is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it"; while Emerson most truly remarks that "every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is the triumph of enthusiasm." And what is more calculated to produce such a feeling than a philosophy so grand, so consistent, so logical, and so all-embracing as our Eastern Doctrines?

While the student's first duty is to acquire knowledge of Theosophy, including "metaphysics and mysticism," he is asked to promulgate four important and fundamental teachings to all. What are they? (1) Universal Unity and Causation; (2) Human Solidarity; (3) the Law of Karma; (4) Reincarnation. And she adds: "These are the four links of the golden chain which should bind humanity into one family, one universal Brotherhood."

In this connection it is important to note that Theosophy has teachings both for the mind and for the heart. Our mind as well as our heart needs to be educated. Within our body is not only the Thinker who always thinks straight, not only the Lover who always loves straight, but also the mechanistic and machinating mind, the heart blinded by personal affections and aversions. The Human Soul has at its service the sight of the Spiritual Soul, but it is also coloured by the Animal Soul—red in tooth and claw—more subtle than the chameleon. Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

Mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects. It needs

the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions. Seek, O Beginner, to blend thy Mind and Soul.

Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions; mistrust thy senses; they are false. But within thy body—the shrine of thy sensations—seek in the Impersonal for the “Eternal Man”; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.

Shun praise, O Devotee. Praise leads to self-delusion. Thy body is not Self, thy SELF is in itself without a body, and either praise or blame affects it not. . . .

False learning is rejected by the Wise, and scattered to the Winds by the Good Law. Its wheel revolves for all, the humble and the proud. The “Doctrine of the Eye” is for the crowd; the “Doctrine of the Heart” for the elect. The first repeat in pride: “Behold, I know”; the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess: “Thus have I heard.”

Immediately following the above is the verse: “ ‘Great Sifter’ is the name of the ‘Heart Doctrine,’ O Disciple.”

The Esoteric Philosophy, constant and consistent, ever tests the devotee-altruist. It has done so in yugas gone by; it will do so in eras yet to come; it is actually accomplishing the task at the present hour.

The task of the Theosophist of this generation is:

(1) To study the recorded teachings of Theosophy wherein the true lines of scientific advance are to be found; wherein the errors and blunders of all organized religions are exposed and their truths revealed; wherein the problems of philosophy are solved and its propositions are laid down for daily practice.

(2) To apply the ethics of Theosophy which are talked about in the world but are regarded as impracticable in the daily struggles of life. Such application will result in the emergence of a real nucleus of Brotherhood formed by those who have come out from among the sects and the parties, religious, social or political, into the spiritual fraternity of Theosophy.

(3) To promulgate the tenets of Theosophy, the Wisdom-Religion, so that a change in the mind of the race may be effected, and individuals ready to respond may be attracted to the Path of Altruism—Soul-Service.

Unity, Study, Work. Unite in service of and with souls on the basis which Theosophy lays down, and then what might have been and is not, may yet be.

NIRVANA—II

(Collated from the writings of H. P. Blavatsky)

“WHAT is that which has no body, no *form*; which is imponderable, invisible and indivisible; that which exists and yet is *not*? ask the Buddhists. “It is Nirvana,” is the answer. It is NOTHING, not a region, but rather a state. When once Nirvana is reached, man is exempt from the effects of the “four truths”; for an effect can only be produced through a certain cause, and every cause is *annihilated* in this state.

These “four truths” are the foundation of the whole Buddhist doctrine of Nirvana. They are, says the book of *Pradjna Paramita*, (1) The existence of pain. (2) The production of pain. (3) The annihilation of pain. (4) The way to the annihilation of pain. What is the source of pain?—Existence. Birth existing, decrepitude and death ensue; for wherever there is a form, there is a *cause* for pain and suffering. *Spirit* alone has no form, and therefore *cannot be said to exist*. Whenever man (the ethereal, inner man) reaches that point when he becomes utterly spiritual, hence, formless, he has reached a state of perfect bliss. Man as an objective being becomes annihilated, but the spiritual entity with its subjective life, will live for ever, for spirit is incorruptible and immortal.

It is by the spirit of the teachings of both Buddha and Pythagoras, that we can so easily recognize the identity of their doctrines. The all-pervading, universal soul, the *Anima Mundi*, is Nirvana; and Buddha, as a generic name, is the anthropomorphized *monad* of Pythagoras. When resting in Nirvana, the final bliss, Buddha is the silent monad, dwelling in darkness and silence; he is also the formless Brahm, the sublime but *unknowable* Deity, which pervades invisibly the whole universe. Whenever it is manifested, desiring to impress itself upon humanity in a shape intelligible to our intellect, whether we call it an *avatar*, or a King Messiah, or a *permutation* of Divine Spirit, *Logos*, Christos, it is all one and the same thing. In each case it is “the Father,” who is in the *Son*, and the *Son* in “the Father.” The immortal spirit overshadows the mortal man. It enters into him, and pervading his whole being, makes of him a god, who descends into his earthly tabernacle. Every man may become a Buddha, says the doctrine. And so throughout the interminable series of ages we find now and then men who more or less succeed in *uniting* themselves “with God,” as the expression goes, with their

own spirit, as we ought to translate. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 290-91)

It is not true that Gautama never taught anything concerning a future life, or that he denied the immortality of the soul. Ask any intelligent Buddhist his ideas on Nirvana, and he will unquestionably express himself, as the well-known Wong-Chin-Fu, the Chinese orator, did in a recent conversation with us about *Niepan* (Nirvana). "This condition," he remarked, "we all understand to mean a final reunion with God, coincident with the perfection of the human spirit by its ultimate disembarrassment of matter. It is the very opposite of personal annihilation."

Nirvana means the certitude of personal immortality in *Spirit*, not in *Soul*, which, as a finite emanation, must certainly disintegrate its particles, a compound of human sensations, passions, and yearning for some objective kind of existence, before the immortal spirit of the *Ego* is quite freed, and henceforth secure against further transmigration in any form. And how can man ever reach this state so long as the *Upadana*, that state of longing for *life*, more life, does not disappear from the sentient being, from the *Ahankara* clothed, however, in a sublimated body? It is the "Upadana" or the intense desire which produces WILL, and it is *will* which develops *force*, and the latter generates *matter*, or an object having form. Thus the disembodied *Ego*, through this sole undying desire in him, unconsciously furnishes the conditions of his successive self-procreations in various forms, which depend on his mental state and *Karma*, the good or bad deeds of his preceding existence, commonly called "merit and demerit." This is why the "Master" recommended to his mendicants the cultivation of the four degrees of Dhyana, the noble "Path of the Four Truths," *i.e.*, that gradual acquirement of stoical indifference for either life or death; that state of spiritual self-contemplation during which man utterly loses sight of his physical and dual individuality, composed of soul and body; and uniting himself with his third and higher immortal self, the *real and heavenly man* merges, so to say, into the divine Essence, whence his own spirit proceeded like a spark from the common hearth. Thus the Arhat, the holy mendicant, can reach Nirvana while yet on earth; and his spirit, totally freed from the trammels of the "psychical, terrestrial, *devilish* wisdom," as James calls it, and being in its own nature omniscient and omnipotent, can on earth, through the sole power of his *thought*, produce the greatest of phenomena. (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 319-20)

Like the revolutions of a wheel, there is a regular succession of

death and birth, the moral cause of which is the cleaving to existing objects, while the instrumental cause is *karma* (the power which controls the universe, prompting it to activity), merit and demerit. "It is, therefore, the great desire of all beings who would be released *from the sorrows of successive birth*, to seek the destruction of the moral cause, the cleaving to existing objects, or evil desire." They, in whom evil desire is entirely destroyed, are called *Arhats*. Freedom from evil desire insures the possession of a *miraculous* power. At his death, the Arhat is never reincarnated; he invariably attains Nirvana—a word, by the bye, falsely interpreted by the Christian scholars and skeptical commentators. Nirvana is the world of *cause*, in which all deceptive effects or delusions of our senses disappear. Nirvana is the highest attainable sphere. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 346)

That our philosophers—positivists—even the most learned among them, never understood the spirit of the mystic doctrines taught by the old philosophers—Platonists—is evident from that most eminent modern work, *Conflict between Religion and Science*, by Professor Draper. . . . The Pythagorean number of harmony and Plato's esoteric doctrines on creation are inseparable from the Buddhistic doctrine of emanation; and the great aim of the Pythagorean philosophy, namely, to free the astral soul from the fetters of matter and sense, and make it thereby fit for an eternal contemplation of spiritual things, is a theory identical with the Buddhistic doctrine of final absorption. It is the Nirvana, interpreted in its right sense; a metaphysical tenet that just begins to be suspected now by our latest Sanscrit scholars. . . . Either the Buddhistic Nirvana is not the nihilistic doctrine, as it is now represented to be, or the Neo-platonists did not accept it in this sense. Surely Mr. Draper will not take upon himself to affirm that Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, or any other philosopher of their mystic school, did not believe in the soul's immortality? To say that any of them sought ecstasy as a "foretaste of absorption into the universal mundane soul," in the sense in which the Buddhist Nirvana is understood by every Sanscrit scholar, is to wrong these philosophers. Nirvana is *not*, as Mr. Draper has it, a "reabsorption in the *Universal Force*, eternal rest, and bliss"; but, when taken literally by the said scholars, means the blowing out, *the extinction*, complete *annihilation*, and not absorption. No one, so far as we know, has ever taken upon himself to ascertain the *true* metaphysical meaning of this word, which is not to be found, even in the *Lankavatara*, which gives the different interpretations of the Nirvana by the Brahmans—Tirthakas. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 429-31)

“Of all the duties, the principal one is to acquire the knowledge of the supreme soul (the spirit); it is the first of all sciences, *for it alone confers on man immortality.*” (*Manu*, Book xii, sloka 85)

And our scientists talk of the Nirvana of Buddha and the Moksha of Brahma as of a complete annihilation! It is thus that the following verse is interpreted by some materialists.

“The man who recognizes the *Supreme Soul*, in his own soul, as well as in that of all creatures, and who is equally just to all (whether man or animals) obtains the happiest of all fates, that to be finally *absorbed* in the bosom of Brahma.” (*Manu*, Book xii, sloka 85)

The doctrine of the Moksha and the Nirvana, as understood by the school of Max Müller, can never bear confronting with numerous texts that can be found, if required, as a final refutation. There are sculptures in many pagodas which contradict, point-blank, the imputation. Ask a Brahman to explain Moksha, address yourself to an educated Buddhist and pray him to define for you the meaning of Nirvana. Both will answer you that in every one of these religions Nirvana represents the dogma of the spirit's immortality. That, to reach the Nirvana means absorption into the great universal soul, the latter representing a *state*, not an individual being or an anthropomorphic god, as some understand the great Existence. That a spirit reaching such a state becomes a *part* of the integral *whole*, but never loses its individuality for all that. Henceforth, the spirit lives spiritually, without any fear of further modifications of form; for form pertains to matter, and the state of *Nirvana* implies a complete purification or final riddance from even the most sublimated particle of matter.

This word, *absorbed*, when it is proved that the Hindus and Buddhists believe in the *immortality* of the spirit, must necessarily mean intimate union, not annihilation. Let Christians call them idolaters, if they still dare do so, in the face of science and the latest translations of the sacred Sanscrit books; they have no right to present the speculative philosophy of ancient sages as an inconsistency and the philosophers themselves as illogical fools. With far better reason we can accuse the ancient Jews of utter *nihilism*. There is not a word contained in the Books of Moses—or the prophets either—which, taken literally, implies the spirit's immortality. Yet every devout Jew hopes as well to be “gathered into the bosom of A-Braham.” (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 116-17)

As to practical, not theoretical views on the Nirvana, this is what a rationalist and a skeptic says: “I have questioned at the

very doors of their temples several hundreds of Buddhists, and have not found one but strove, fasted, and gave himself up to every kind of austerity, to perfect himself and acquire immortality; not to attain final annihilation. "There are over 300,000,000 of Buddhists who fast, pray, and toil....Why make of these 300,000,000 of men idiots and fools, macerating their bodies and imposing upon themselves most fearful privations of every nature, in order to reach a fatal annihilation which must overtake them anyhow?"

As well as this author we have questioned Buddhists and Brahmanists and studied their philosophy. *Apavarg* has wholly a different meaning from annihilation. It is but to become more and more like Him, of whom he is one of the refulgent sparks, that is the aspiration of every Hindu philosopher, and the hope of the most ignorant is *never to yield up his distinct individuality*. "Else," as once remarked an esteemed correspondent of the author, "mundane and separate existence would look like God's comedy and our tragedy; sport to Him that we work and suffer, death to us to suffer it." (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 533-34)

TO MY GURUDEV

I walked through parched desert
 Hot and dry;
 Went through slime unbearable
 Beating my breast;
 My fingers bled, clutching
 A handful of thorns;
 I was blind; yet, darkness mocking
 Pierced with needles my blinded eyes.
 I called upon Thy name
 With desperate cries;
 In the darkness without
 There was no light;
 Then didst Thou,
 O Gurudev!
 With infinite Love
 And Compassion unmeasurable,
 Enter my heart,
 And kindle a Flame.

"INTERFERING WITH KARMA"

'IT is said that Masters do not and will not interfere with Karma; then, why should we who profess or aspire to follow them? Is not U.L.T. interfering with Karma?' asks the inquirer.

"It is said..."; but is the statement understood? It is said that the Sun rises in the East, but is the statement grasped? And if so, in what sense? Sight-perception explains it in one way; astronomical knowledge in another; as a symbol it also represents truth, and that is a third view.

"It is said" is one of the traps for the hasty student and for one who reads but does not reflect. The statement is made that Masters will not interfere with Karma, but we must try to understand what that means. Masters do in a way interfere with Karma—Avataras are an example. Whatever does not harm but benefits, that the Masters do; provided, of course, that it is within their power to do so; for Masters, though infinitely wiser and more powerful, because more compassionate than ourselves, do not possess the imaginary powers of an imaginary personal God. In his usual lucid manner W. Q. Judge has handled the subject in an answer to a similar question and we will quote his words from *The Theosophical Forum* (February 1891):

A little more ought to be said upon this question. It has been raised in several places, and is due to a slight misconception of what karma is, and also as to our position as men in the whole natural scheme, whether as judges or as executors. If karma were something about each man which we could plainly see, as, for instance, if each one of us had written upon him what was his karma and what punishments or rewards should or should not be meted out to him, then it would be easy for one to say in any particular case what one should do in the premises. But such a state of things does not prevail. No one of us knows the karma that is coming to another or to himself, and it is only when events have arrived that we know. For each event small and great is Karma, and the result of it as well as the maker of new, since this great law is action and the result of action. Hence, even if we knew the coming karma or that which was due and should then decide, "I will help this person although I know it will interfere with karma," acting accordingly we could not interfere in the least, because it would still be karma. This is an absurdity, but it is just the absurdity of those who talk of interfering with karma. We cannot interfere with it, for it is beyond our power, and we

are, indeed, the very instruments it uses to carry out the decrees we have ourselves been the means of passing. The idea of possible interference has arisen out of the statement now and then made that Adepts have not done this or that because it would interfere with karma; but this has not been understood. What was really meant by such words was that the Adepts themselves are karma just as we are, only they see what we do not, and, as some of us asked for a reason, they said they would not interfere, or, in other words, the law is strong and no being, god or devil or man, can interfere with it. Any attempt to "interfere" is merely new karma carrying out that seed of karma already sown, no matter how many ages or years ago. But, still further, it seems to me that if we assume to decide what we shall do out of fear that our brother may not be sufficiently punished, we not only lay up wrath against ourselves, but at the same time set the germs in our own character which will sprout in selfishness and pain. We need not fear that karma will not do justice. It often does it by offering to us a chance to help another, and, if we stand aside, it will at another day give us the punishment for our selfishness and arrogance.

MAN is not entirely an animal. He aspires to a spiritual vision, which is the vision of the whole truth. This gives him the highest delight, because it reveals to him the deepest harmony that exists between him and his surroundings. It is our desires that limit the scope of our self-realization, hinder our extension of consciousness, and give rise to sin, which is the innermost barrier that keeps us apart from our God, setting up disunion and arrogance of exclusiveness. For sin is not one mere action, but it is an attitude of life which takes for granted that our goal is finite, that our self is the ultimate truth, and that we are not all essentially one but exist each for his own separate individual existence.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The term "democracy" has its origin in the Greek words *demos*, meaning "the people," and *kratein*, meaning "to rule." Thus democracy means literally "rule of the people." The term's ambiguity, however, has resulted in varying interpretations. Throughout history, leaders of every type have justified their rule in the name of democracy.

In an article in the *Journal of International Affairs* (Vol. 38, No. 2), political scientist Leslie Lipson examines the classic governing ideals of democracy—liberty and equality—and argues that the two, as absolutes, are contradictory. The aim of a democratic government is to combine for its citizens as much of both as is possible, but this only compounds their inherent contradictions. What is needed instead, writes Lipson, for governing a democracy effectively, is a single indivisible concept which he terms freedom-equality.

What one quickly discovers in probing the meanings of the two concepts is that analysis of either flows into a discussion of the other. This would seem to suggest that the two are not isolable, but are the connected facets of a single concept, exactly as Einstein conceived of space-time. . . .

Applying this to the dichotomy between the individual and society, one soon recognizes that these are complementary opposites, not antagonistic. Without society, the individual cannot be humanized. Without its individual members, society would be the name for a hollow shell. Each needs the other for its own completion. . . .

The object of our theorizing is to prescribe the relations appropriate to individuals within a democratic community. Liberty is the symbol for those relations when one looks out towards society from the point of view of each and every individual member. The freedom they assert is the affirmation of their individuality. Equality, on the other hand, is the relevant symbol when one looks inward at individuals from the vantage point of the society to which they belong. In some intermediate zone, these two perspectives meet. The aim of public policy is to discover the appropriate distribution of specific freedoms and equalities in contexts which continually change. Sometimes it is necessary to restrict certain liberties of certain persons in order to enlarge the correlative freedoms of others. This is also, as we observed, a process of equalization. Freedom-equality, in short, forms one indivisible concept. Those who hold to democratic values express the complex interrelations

among individuals in society as a system of equalized liberties. . . .

Early in the history of Western political thought, Plato identified justice as the supreme virtue of the ideal *polis*. . . . What distinguishes the democratic state from all the others is that its justice consists in the pursuit of equality-freedom.

Leslie Lipson dwells on the fusion of liberty and equality, but makes no mention of fraternity. The three may be considered as the sides of an equilateral triangle, with fraternity as the base. True democracy, which implies equal opportunities for all souls, leading to the freedom of the individual soul, begins with the concept of fraternity. A sound social morality or true democracy can rest only on the spiritual concept of the unity of all life and the brotherhood of mankind. Until and unless we change our basis of thinking and of acting and regard humanity as one Great Family, and strive together for the enlightened freedom of each unit of that family, we shall continue to have democracy only in name. The foremost thought, therefore, has to be given, not to rights and privileges, but to duties and responsibilities.

The Rev. Chukwudum B. Okolo, a specialist in philosophical systems and developments and Reader in philosophy at the University of Nigeria, writes of the problem of peace from a philosophical perspective, in his article in *Universitas* (Vol. 28, No. 1, 1986). Perhaps never before in the history of mankind have peace and war assumed such a universal and fundamental significance. Though peace is something which all desire, everyone seems to endow it with the content of his own hopes and fears, values and demands; everyone points to different ways and methods of achieving it.

What light do philosophers shed on the causes of war and on the nature and conditions for lasting peace on earth? Rev. Okolo writes:

Both Aquinas and Augustine gave a classic definition of peace as "the tranquillity of order." It is a state of undisturbed equilibrium between individuals, states, or nations. This order of relationship between persons or groups is a natural longing for man, since it is a fundamental condition for the continued existence of mankind.

But peace must not be understood negatively as the mere absence or even elimination of wars. This is only a negative aspect of it. Its positive connotation is more fundamental. The "tranquillity

of order" existing between individuals or social groups is the result of justice, of giving to everyone his due and to nations (in the case of international peace) their due. Respect for others' rights becomes a basic condition for peaceful co-existence. Consequently peace rightly understood implies justice or equity among individuals as well as nations.

As for wars, and for that matter, most of the evils in nature, philosophers, particularly the traditional ones, locate their chief sources in man himself, in his "passions" or "drives" or "appetites." They are eloquent on the fact that human passions, when not controlled by reason, become disordered and engender dissensions, injustice, and ultimately wars of different magnitude in real life. . . .

Augustine is articulate in his *On Free Choice of the Will*: "Meanwhile the reign of lust rages tyrannically and distracts the life and whole spirit of man with many conflicting storms of terror. . . ." Plato in the *Republic* speaks about the acquisitive appetite in man as the cause of dissensions and other social evils among humans. He clearly states, "the dissensions that arise among men from the possession of property. . . ." In *Phaedo*, he makes an explicit assertion that "wars and revolutions and battles are due simply and solely to the body and its desires." Money for him is also a source of social ill since "money," according to him in *Critias*, "locks men's hearts and unlocks their desires." Men, Hobbes remarks in his *Leviathan*, are continually in competition for honour and dignity, which in turn breed envy, hatred, and finally war.

Other philosophers particularly since Karl Marx have gone beyond human passions or men's inherent proclivity to evil in locating the sources of their hostility to one another. The main source, they argue, lies in the socio-economic conditions of man. . . . The problem of peace within man and with others (national and international peace) simply does not solely depend, as Marx saw it, on the mere arrangement of socio-economic conditions of man, since he cannot solely be explained from "without," that is to say, in his external relationships and interactions. He is, at bottom, a metaphysical being.

The emphatic point here is that neither science and technology as often envisioned by scientists nor the external adjustment or change of man's social and economic conditions by *themselves* can guarantee peace. . . . The crisis of peace goes beyond science. There is a metaphysical dimension to it. The causes of wars and endemic disputes among men and nations may well be sought

elsewhere, in the life of the spirit. . . .

In this question of the metaphysical angle to human ills and problems, we have to take note of the fact that the foremost problem of modern man is the crisis of values, the curbing of his appetites and irrational desires, the recognition and appreciation of higher and more permanent goods in the midst of the fleeting goods of the senses, etc.

Can electrical energy be derived from empty space? An Indian scientist, Paramahansa Tewari, claims that it can. A senior electrical engineer in the Nuclear Power Board, Tewari had put forward the "space vortex theory" ten years ago, and he has now confirmed it through experiments performed at Tarapur with the help of a "space power generator." (*The Times of India*, July 18)

These and other tests by American scientists have shown that an output power greater than the input can be generated on the space-energy system. The results are in violation of the law of conservation of energy—one of the fundamental tenets of modern science—unless the "dynamic space" factor and the energy produced by it are taken into account. It is theoretically shown that the additional power originates from "absolute vacuum," which can be rotated to produce an electrical charge.

In his book, *The Substantial Space*, published in 1977, Tewari postulated that space was not empty, as commonly believed, but was a state of matter capable of having fields and its own associated properties. Thus, dynamic space becomes the fundamental state of energy, he said.

Tewari and some fellow scientists are hopeful that a space-energy plant could be "the last stage of technological evolution that mankind was looking forward to"—a perennial source of energy that would never be exhausted.

The Theosophical teaching, as that of the philosophers of old, is that space is not an empty void, although the matter with which it is filled may be of a different variety from that presently known. "Through every point of Infinite Space thrill the magnetic and electrical currents of *animate Nature*," says *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 513). The reality of Space as a Living Presence makes the idea of an "absolute vacuum" entirely ridiculous. There is living Intelligence and Force *everywhere*, and if it were possible to establish a true void anywhere, of whatever dimension, the whole cosmos would collapse to nothingness.

Is electricity a consequence of life, or is it the other way round,

with electricity the primary force and life a consequence of electricity? Modern scientists deal not with Electricity *per se*, but with the purely phenomenal, hence the grossest, effects of electricity, which include sound, light, colour, heat, fire, etc. The "primary force" is Electricity, the all-pervasive life-principle itself, electric vivifier of all things. This is ancient science, re-presented by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*.

Among the research projects within Unesco's "Man and the Biosphere" programme is the ecology of great cities and the effects of growing urbanization on the people who live in them. Within the area of study are the problems stemming from unacceptable levels of uncontrolled sound in modern urban life. Today, the applications of sound to technology and everyday life are legion. Our environment is full of sounds, many of which are danger signals warning us to pay attention. *Unesco Features* (No. 818), under the title "When Sound Becomes Fury," analyses the phenomenon and what is being done to counter it:

Ever since the Industrial Revolution we have been steadily making our planet uninhabitable. On all sides one sees the effects of the waste products of technology on our rivers, our countryside, our towns and on the air we breathe.

There is one form of pollution, however, which is unseen and not generally recognized for the danger it is: noise. The overall loudness of environmental noise is doubling every ten years and it represents a sinister threat to our health and well-being. Mounting clinical evidence suggests that coronary diseases, hypertension, physiological disorders and emotional stress often stem from over-exposure to noise.

A study conducted at London's Heathrow airport indicated a higher incidence of mental illness among those who lived in the neighbourhood compared with those outside the range of the aircraft clamour. According to a French study, noise is the cause of 70 per cent of neuroses in the Paris area. Airport noise and traffic roar come high on the list of culprits. . . .

Marine sonar acoustics work with sounds of low frequency. If we move to the opposite end of the sound frequency scale, well above the upper limit of human hearing, we enter the astonishing world of high frequency sound known as ultrasonics where acoustic vibrations, like X-Rays, can be made to penetrate solid materials, even metals. . . . Ultra-sound passes through a solid by

deflecting atoms along its path, but these are small, elastic deflections that allow the atoms to return to their original positions, which is why ultrasound probes cause no damage. This is especially important in medicine where ultrasonic means are increasingly used in diagnoses. . . .

Man can claim substantial success in harnessing the latent properties of sound for his benefit. At the same time his rampant technology is generating ever more uncontrolled sound—*i.e.*, noise, which is not only harmful to health but is destroying that intangible thing we call “the quality of life.” What then are we doing to protect ourselves from this encroachment? Some governments have introduced legislation designed to protect workers exposed to dangerous levels of noise at the work place; airport authorities tend nowadays to restrict movements of aircrafts at night; the latest aircraft engines are less noisy than their predecessors and new designs for quieter engines in large road trucks are beginning to emerge; designs exist for quieter factory machines but remain slow to be adopted because they cost more to make.

Some progress has been made also at the international co-operation level, involving a number of international bodies. Unesco contributes through its “Man and Biosphere” programme. For example, in some cities research includes studies on the role of vegetation in the cities as a means of lessening noise. Then there is the International Commission on Biological Effects of Noise which every five years organizes an international congress on “Noise as a Public Health Problem.” These and other bodies are trying to create an awareness of the threat posed by noise assaults to tens of thousands of urban communities across the world. Noise is one form of pollution that can be brought under control; there is the know-how, but is there the will to enforce its application?

The dissemination of findings regarding the dangers of noise may well not only furnish the impetus to seek means for abating the noise nuisance but also lead to the investigation of the beneficent potencies of sound—for instance, in healing diseases, particularly of the nervous system, which H.P.B. repeatedly stressed.

Forests have aptly been called the neglected stepchild of India’s agricultural planning. Faced with the ecological havoc that has been wrought in the last decade by indiscriminate deforestation, India is engaged in a desperate race against time. At stake is the

very survival of the country's agricultural livelihood.

India Today for August 15 focuses attention on the horrendous consequences of reckless deforestation:

"Water is the essence of earth, plants are the essence of waters." This seminal environmental wisdom, expressed in the *Chhandogya Upanishad* thousands of years ago, has been stood on its head in modern India which is rapidly entering the twenty-first century not as a grainbowl but as a dustbowl. . . .

At the present rate of environmental assault, India is steadily losing more than 1.5 million hectares of good forest land each year. In other words, every five years, forest cover the size of Haryana vanishes, leaving behind constantly eroding soil that can hold neither water nor nutrients. This apocalyptic scenario is not the projection of some distant Jonahs but of experts and scientists. . . .

Says N. D. Jayal, head of environment for the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage: "Sub-Saharan conditions have already begun to plague several parts of the country which were only recently green and fertile. People sitting in the comfort of their Delhi homes don't seem to realize that every tree that falls or landslide that occurs in the distant Himalayas deepens the survival crisis." Restoration of the land to even a small percentage of its original state, he notes, "is the single most important anti-poverty programme that the Government can take up."

We are already losing about 50 million tonnes of foodgrains each year on account of the loss of topsoil caused by this devastation of our land," notes B. B. Vohra, who interpreted the satellite statistics. "This represents an average of about Rs. 6,000 crore each year in loss of food production. Do you wonder then why there is such chronic poverty?" . . . Floods during the monsoons—because of erosion—and droughts during the dry spells—because of nature's inability to store groundwater—have now become India's man-made legacy to its environment. Over the last seven years one out of every 7 km. of area under forest was denuded. . . .

Whatever the reasons for deforestation—commercial plundering, organized smuggling, treating forests as commercial timberlands rather than as an ecological resource, overgrazing, overcultivation, lopping and chopping of trees—the Government's attitude to the disaster that has overtaken the land so far has been one of tinkering, its reaction to suggestions lethargic. . . . The Indian Government now is embarked on what is widely considered to be the most ambitious reforestation programme in the world. The plan

calls for the reforestation of five million hectares of wastelands each year.

No part of India has escaped the wrath of this environmental holocaust. What is called for is not just new reforestation programmes at the governmental level, but the raising of the environmental consciousness of the common people.

As far back as November 1879, H.P.B. published in *The Theosophist* an article by "Forester" on "The Indian Forest Question," emphasizing the pressing importance of saving the forests. An editorial note in the same issue describes the destruction of forests as the real cause of the decadence of the country:

The stripping of the hills and drainage-slopes of their vegetation is a positive crime against the nation, and will decimate the population more effectually than could the sword of any foreign conqueror. . . . Nature has provided the means for human development; and her laws can never be violated without disaster. A great native patriot wrote us, some months ago, "this poor nation is slowly dying for lack of foodgrains." This is, alas! too true; and he who would learn one great secret why foodgrains fail, poverty increases, water courses dry up, and famine and disease ravage the land in many parts, should read the communication of "Forester," in this number. . . . Our love for our adopted country moves us to give this subject of forest-conservancy much consideration in these columns from time to time.

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
SHE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH
THE ESOTERIC CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS
A BOOK OF QUOTATIONS

By William Q. Judge:

THE OCEAN OF THEOSOPHY
LETTERS THAT HAVE HELPED ME
THE BHAGAVAD-GITA
NOTES ON THE BHAGAVAD-GITA
THE YOGA APHORISMS OF PATANJALI
VERNAL BLOOMS
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AN EPITOME OF THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHY GENERALLY STATED
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By Robert Crosbie:

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Other Publications:

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"BECAUSE—" FOR THE CHILDREN WHO ASK WHY
THE ETERNAL VERITIES
STUDIES IN "THE SECRET DOCTRINE" (BOOK I AND II)
LIVING THE LIFE
THE BUILDING OF THE HOME
"THUS HAVE I HEARD"
THE ZOROASTRIAN PHILOSOPHY AND WAY OF LIFE
THE BROTHERHOOD OF RELIGIONS
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MORAL EDUCATION
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THE U.L.T.—ITS MISSION AND ITS FUTURE
TEXTS FOR THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS
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 professing 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 individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and 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 and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching,*" and therefore has neither Constitution, By-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 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. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished 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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