

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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THE RECOGNITION OF UNIVERSAL LAW

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THE word "Law" brings to the mind of the ordinary person the vast and complicated machinery by which the community tries to keep order in terms of its own degree of public conscience. Human laws state the way in which the community considers people ought to act, and also impose penalties on those who are proved to have "broken the law." But, since human nature is imperfect, ignorant and biased, so too are human laws, which are continually needing re-examination and revision. The fact of their existence, however, points to the abstract ideal of law and order.

When we come to consider what are called "the laws of Nature," we find that these are an index to the invariable behaviour, under given conditions, of the elements of Nature, the units in the lower kingdoms. For, here there is no self-conscious mind and free will, and therefore all activities are in conformity with natural law—most noticeably in the mineral kingdom, and least in the animal, where the foreshadowings of conscious mind begin.

Man's understanding of and power over material Nature depend on his knowing and using the laws of the natural sciences—chemistry, physics, astronomy and the rest. Most of us take the stability and security given by this reliance on law for granted, yet what a nightmare world it would be if these constant modes of action in Nature did not exist! Solid earth might be set afire or turn into water as we trod on it! The force of gravity might, or might not, hold us steady. We could never tell whether a substance would be wholesome

or poisonous and inedible. There would be no certain day and night, nor the round of the seasons. We could make no defining terms such as hard, cold, wet, or slow. We could never depend on anything, could neither plan nor create, but would be carried along passively like a dreamer immersed in the phantasy of his dream. The scientists, in their observations of and deductions from natural laws, acknowledge their indebtedness to the universality of Law as a mode of action on which one can rely, but the ordinary person needs to become much more aware of the stability afforded by this fact. As for the laws of the spiritual life, he ignores these to an even greater degree, and this despite the insistence by the great religious Teachers on the reality of such laws.

"Hatred ceaseth not by hatred, but by love. This is the Law Eternal," said the Buddha. The Christian teachings state categorically that "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." The ancient Druids of Britain held the same idea. "The well-being and happiness of one human being must not arise from evil, nor from the misery of another. This is a beneficent and eternal law, the violation of which inevitably brings its own punishment." Confucius taught that "without recognizing the laws of Heaven, it is impossible to be a Superior Man."

All the Teachers have presented the same lesson, though often in different forms and from an angle which the people of the time could best understand. The particular aspect that present-day Theosophy offers is that of synthesis, of unity. It states that all Life is one, all beings in their essence are that One, although they *appear* as separate, in millions of different ways. So, too, the modes of action (all the laws of life) are one. The One Law is the One Life in action. That is, the motion of Life (and it is always moving) is always the same motion—action-reaction—whether at the spiritual level, the psychic (or soul) level, or the material one, and it can therefore be relied upon. That movement gives a cyclic rhythm, a periodic recurrence, in which action and reaction are exactly in equilibrium. It may be considered as a circular outgoing and incoming ripple (as from a stone dropped in water); or as a wave motion—flux and reflux, rise and fall; or as a pulse beat—a throb and a rest; or as a pendulum swing from side to side; and finally as a circle, half the curve of which is exactly balanced by the other half. They all are expressions of the same polar

mode of action.

Just as the One Life in manifestation has to be understood under three aspects—Substance-Spirit-Mind—so the nature of the One Law can be grasped more readily if we view it also under three aspects—Cycles-Karma-Reincarnation.

I. The Law of Cycles describes the Law in terms of time and space, all levels.

II. The Law of Karma describes the cyclic action in terms of the harmonious relation of the action to the reaction, of the cause to the effect, and while it operates at all levels, it has a special reference to human beings psychologically.

III. The Law of Reincarnation introduces the factor of the Soul-consciousness that develops through the experience gained from cyclic, karmic action.

Yet all three are only aspects of the same One Law.

I. THE LAW OF CYCLES

Our power to grasp and to correlate all the natural laws would be helped immeasurably by the recognition of cycles as universal. The vibrations of heat, light and sound that form the field of physics are cycles of different types and periodicity. The X-ray photographs of the atomic patterns of chemical substances show all manner of variations on the theme of the circle round a central point. There are the innumerable seasonal cycles in the flora and fauna of the earth that take their time and beat from the sun and the heavens. Even the human form, itself a little mirror of the whole, is an interwoven structure of dynamic cyclic systems, and can serve as an example:

(a) The nervous system, with sensory and motor circuits, carrying the messages of sense impressions *to* the brain, and orders *from* it to the body.

(b) The respiratory system, by which we inspire and expire the breath of life.

(c) The circulatory system, arterial and venous, that carries the nourishing oxygen in the blood stream to every part, and brings back the mixture of foodstuffs, waste products, gland secretions, etc., to the heart, ready for the next round trip, after its interaction with the respiratory circuit.

(d) The digestive system, whose cycle of digestion, assimilation and excretion is linked with the larger cycle of soil fertility.

(e) The muscular system, which changes chemical energy into mechanical work (liberating a little heat) and, as the muscle recovers from its contraction, the chemical process is reversed, producing again the equivalent heat.

(f) The generative system, with its lunar periodicity.

(g) The glandular system, whose balance regulates the rhythm of the other circuits.

We may also add to the above the mysterious biological rhythm of sleeping and waking, the alternating periods of growth and of consolidation of the body, to mention only a few examples of the Law. It may be observed also in the cycles of habits and moods (caused by the life-atoms that constitute our make-up, reproducing periodically the particular pattern impressed by us on them). The cycles of creative and sterile periods in writers, musicians and artists are a subject of current research. The cycles of history (despite the conflicting views of historians) can be ascertained if one remembers that they overlap and also have a double action. Types of civilization recur in a definite rhythm, while the fluctuation of two opposing (or rather complementary) trends in every field can be readily traced. In fact, the recognition of the universality of cycles is invaluable in the task of correlating facts to show their significance.

As for the practical aspect: the health of the individual, both physical and psychological, depends on his working with cyclic law. The health of the body politic is also related to it. There is a seed time for sowing ideas and initiating reforms. To attempt to force even well-intentioned measures against the current of the cycle means either failure or a "remedy" that is worse than the disease. Recognition of the times and places of the cycles brings the power to create harmony. Accuracy, punctuality and purity of motive cease to be catchwords, and take on a real, practical significance, if we fit them in with the working of the cyclic law.

II. THE LAW OF KARMA

The mode of working of this aspect of the One Law, its fields of action, its three phases (Karma resulting now, Karma being made now, and Karma already made and held over), as well as its moral implications—all these are described in many places in our literature and there is no need to go over the same ground here. But, in our approach to the practical application of the Law, three headings will

help: (1) Acceptance, (2) Avoidance, (3) Advancement.

(1) Acceptance of karmic results as they manifest is as different from the popular attitude to "Kismet" or "Fate" as gold is from pinch-beck. The latter is an apathetic make-believe, the former "buys possessions." The first stage in remaking anything is to take hold of the thing itself, that is, to accept it. Without that, nothing can be done. Now, in order to be able to accept Karma, it is essential to give up the habit of "making comparisons." We have to stop comparing our lot (however hard) or our capacities (however limited) with those of other people, or with what we ourselves had in the past, or with what we hope to achieve in the future. All these pictures confuse the issue. If we concentrate on the simple relationship between ourselves and the karmic effect now ours, we can accept the latter and take the next creative step. For example, a Theosophist in this life may find it difficult to study, and may admit that he is slow and stupid. But until he stops making comparisons between himself and other more "fortunate" students (often taking the blame on himself) he will never make headway. The example of others more "gifted" than ourselves is not necessarily an incentive to the will to put forth greater effort; real acceptance of one's own capacity is. The same thing is true of other limitations. Conversely, if anyone is highly endowed, so that study and social poise are easy and satisfying, it would be fatal for him to make comparisons between what he achieves (without effort) and what other people may do (perhaps with far greater struggle). If he does not fulfil the obligation to use his gifts to their full capacity, he, no more than the first student, has accepted what Karma has brought him—in his case, because of pride engendered by comparisons.

(2) Avoidance comes next. What "is to be shunned—is pain not yet come." This means avoiding anything that will bring karmic suffering to anyone (including ourselves) in the future. Again there are three things that bring trouble. We generally recognize that (a) wrong thought, selfish motive, wrong speech and action bring unhappy results, but the most common factor in the production of ills is (b) thoughtlessness. More harm is done by thoughtlessness than by deliberate wrongdoing. Hence we find, in the teachings of the Buddha, the emphasis on "mindfulness," awareness of what we are doing. Finally, (c) anticipation and fears of the future may well tangle up the karmic lines, spoil what we hope for, precipitate what we fear, and

thus once again bring pain.

Many popular proverbs support all this: "You do not gather grapes from thistles." "Think before you act." "Don't cross your bridges before you come to them." But there is one thing essential to this avoidance of future ills that is too far little recognized—especially in these days when people's private lives are mercilessly thrown into the arena of publicity. "Mind your own business" is related to the most subtle and unrecognized workings of Karma. Poking our noses (an inquisitive mind is even worse than an interfering act) into matters with which we are not karmically connected entangles us in them for the future, with *fresh* karmic knots of trouble that need not have arisen. An even greater temptation is that of involving other people in *our* business. We make demands on their attention, their sympathy, their support in matters with which they have no karmic concern, and thus cause confusion between the two Karmas, often with dire results.

The same principle holds in every relationship. The history of the Theosophical Movement, during the last century, was marked by serious crises. In every case these were brought to explosion point in the same way. Someone in the Movement, finding himself or herself at loggerheads with the leaders, or with fellow members, aired grievances to others outside, who had no karmic connection with the matter, and even made public, in the open press, to every curious Tom, Dick and Harry, all the details of dissensions that only concerned members. So, in avoidance of future ills, we need to keep the karmic lines of action *in* their own places, according to *Dharma*, or to the Law of Necessity. This does not mean that we make no fresh relationships, but we need to watch how and why we make them.

(3) Advancement is yet another aspect of the Law of Karma—something over and above the discipline of acceptance, the paying of past debts, and something more even than the gaining of the power to distinguish the right course of action and to avoid the wrong. With foresight of future needs, one can make an additional deliberate use of whatever comes, fair or foul, to build up karmic stamina and to acquire a storehouse of virtues (in the sense of *virtus*, strength), against the time when one will have to cope fully with group Karma and not just one's own. We shall have, at some time, to be strong enough to face the Karma of our family, nation and race. We always need something in hand, in the way of strength. Otherwise, without

such reserves, we either cannot advance to the next stage, where greater demands on us will be made, or else we will be thrown back. Each event is thus a karmic exercise for the development of power. And this brings us to the aspect of the consciousness unfolding, through Karma and cycles.

III. THE LAW OF REINCARNATION

The Third Fundamental Proposition of Theosophy speaks of "the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul—through the Cycle of Incarnation (or 'Necessity') in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic Law" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 17). Thus the Soul unfolds from unconsciousness to a state of human self-consciousness that has in it the potentiality of full divine SELF-consciousness. And *The Key to Theosophy* states:

The spiritual Ego of man moves in eternity like a pendulum between the hours of birth and death. But—these hours, marking the periods of life terrestrial and life spiritual, are limited in their duration—and without such limited intervals the divine Ego could never reach its ultimate goal—.Collecting from every terrestrial personality, into which Karma forces it to incarnate, the nectar alone of the spiritual qualities and self-consciousness, it unites all these into one whole and emerges from its chrysalis as the glorified Dhyān Chohan. (pp. 165-6)

The contrast of the terrestrial and the spiritual gives a circle which is not merely obedience to Karma (action-reaction), but is a self-created, self-energized, circle of sacrifice. In incarnation the Higher Ego sacrifices itself in its "descent" to the lower personal ego. But the circle is not complete until the lower is, in its turn, able to sacrifice itself and carry the current round, full-cycle, in "ascent" to the Higher. When the sacrifice is complete, then, under the Law, each half has the power of the whole. The Divine Ego can work free, on this plane. The personal ego can live as divine. And just as the interaction of the various physiological circuits in the physical body of man becomes the means for a greater manifestation of activity and intelligence, so the interaction between the Divine and Personal Egos, that results from successful reincarnations, opens up wider and wider cycles of power and understanding. Sacrifice is the Law of Growth, but sacrifice is not complete till the self-consciousness in incarnation voluntarily chooses to work with the Law.

THE ANCIENT WISDOM

SANATKUMARA, it is said in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, was approached by Narada, a very learned ascetic. "Sire," said Narada with folded palms, "be gracious and teach me." Thereupon Sanatkumara said, "I shall do so when you have narrated what you already know." Narada told him what he knew: he was familiar with the four Vedas; he could repeat the ancient stories in *Itihasa-Purana* as a fifth Veda, and further he knew *Vedanam-Veda*—the essence of all the Vedas; still more, he knew mathematics, calculation of time, astronomy, polity, mythology and logic; he was proficient in *Manta-Vidya* and had the faculty of divination; being a Kshatriya, he knew the military arts; and lastly, he knew the art of fascination. Yet this very learned personage came to Sanatkumara—he who is *Sat* (truth), for *Ananta* (eternity)—to know what? Narada said, "I have heard that beings like you who know the Self, the Atman, are free from sorrow, and I am drowned in sorrow." Sanatkumara smiled and said, "Verily, thou knowest but the names or appearances of things."

Here in this ancient Upanishad we get an excellent appraisal of the learned men and women of our civilization who use long Greco-Latin names and want us to believe that they know. "Names" or surface knowledge is all that the science of matter can boast of; it deals with the mere appearances of things.

What is worse, unlike Narada modern inquirers recognize no Teachers who are Knowers of the Self; our era is so saturated with the notion of *Ahankara*, egotism, that it would not occur to the learned men of today that perchance there may be on this Earth the Knowers of the Soul of things. Nay more, they are so sure of their observations, their statistics and catalogues of "names" that none among them question their methods of classification of knowledge. Their Aristotelian heritage precludes them from sensing that there may be a Superior Knowledge, the approach to which lies by roads other than those with which they are familiar. Our whole educational upbringing is so very different from that of the ancients. How many among us could answer the preliminary questions: What are the divisions of knowledge? How should all things and beings and processes in the universe be classified, so that inquiry into their seeming and formal natures, as also into their reality and essence, may be scientifically pursued?

There is another story, this one in the *Mundaka Upanishad*, related to the one we have already considered. This *Upanishad*, as its name suggests, shaves a person clean of all his mistaken notions and errors; therefore it is called the "Shaving Upanishad." It is said there that one Saunaka, the householder, approached Angiras with due rite and asked, "Sire, through what knowledge does everything become known?" The reply was that there are two kinds of knowledge: *Apara Vidya*, the lower, and *Para Vidya*, the higher knowledge. The lower, said Angiras, is composed of the four Vedas, of the sciences of ritual and astronomy, and of grammar, etymology, phonetics and metrics. Even this lower knowledge is not known fully to our learned men of science and academicians. *Para Vidya*, the Higher Knowledge, on the other hand, is "that by which the Imperishable *Akshara*, the Ineffable Word, is attained."

This *Mundaka Upanishad* deals with *Brahma Vidya*, Divine Wisdom, which is Sanskrit literal of Theosophia, or what is known today as Theosophy. This *Brahma Vidya*, says the *Upanishad*, is that by which "what is not heard becomes heard; what is not thought of becomes thought of; what is not known becomes known." Nowadays our knowledge is what we hear from the lips of those who are spiritually deaf; who believe only in what they see with their physical eyes, aided by the microscope or telescope or spectroscope; who know only the names and appearances of things. It certainly is a case of the deaf shouting to the deaf, the blind leading the blind! As knowledge grows from more to more, reverence grows less and less. That is why Spiritual Teachers belonging to the Great Lodge, the Great School, are not sought.

Next, the *Mundaka Upanishad* tells us that Brahma, the first among the gods, in his capacity as the "Protector of the World," taught *Brahma Vidya*, which is described as the foundation of all knowledge, to his eldest son, Atharvan. The latter in turn taught it to Angir in ancient times; Angir repeated it to Satyavaha, son of Bharadvaja, and he then passed it on to the Angiras. And thus from the elder to the younger, the Divine Wisdom or Theosophia was transmitted. It is to this Angiras that Saunaka came to learn the truths of *Para Vidya*, of Soul Knowledge, of Wisdom Absolute.

These two stories from the Upanishads go to show, first, that Theosophia or Theosophy or *Brahma-Vidya* or *Para Vidya* is not

something new, but is the most ancient of knowledges; it began with the foundation of the world. Next, it must be learnt that while the body of knowledge we know today as Theosophy ever exists, its Movement in the world of men comes and goes. As men and civilizations become morally and spiritually elevated, the Supreme Truths become known publicly; when vice and selfishness are to the fore, these Truths get drowned and "the mighty art is lost," as Krishna says in the *Gita*. Why then does Krishna say that He incarnates when *adharma* or unrighteousness flourishes? Evil-doing, false speaking, selfish feeling, egotistic thinking, bring misery and pain; vice drowns men and women in the turbid waters where moral degradation and suffering overtake them, and then only they seek the Self that is pure, and its Knowledge that is sacred. There is a cry for Knowledge of the True, and the Great Lodge of Mahatmas compassionately responds.

Brahma Vidya or Theosophy, then, is not the exclusive property of any race or nation or community. The same traditions exist, if not fully and in detail, then in allegories and symbols, in other cultures as well. If Christian churches were to study the real genesis of their ceremonials, if even the New Testament were studied and not merely believed in, Christians would find out soon what Jesus meant when he said that he had come to fulfil the Law and the Prophets. The Gnostics, the mystic Essenes, the sect of Ebionites, from whom Jesus sprang, knew of Theosophy. The Essenes, for instance, had many Buddhistic ideas and practices. They were healers, and the Therapeutes were an offspring of that order. The very word Therapeutes comes from the Buddhistic *Thera-Putta*, sons of that great *Sangha* or Brotherhood from which they went out to preach the Law of the Buddha. They went to Egypt, to Greece, to Judaea, and one group of them settled on the shores of the Dead Sea. Jesus was born among them, and was taught by the Essenes; that is why there is so much similarity between Christian and Buddhist teachings and stories.

Next, the Hebrews should study the *Book of Enoch*, should ponder over the *Kabala* and the *Talmud*, and they will find that their great Lawgiver, Moses, was an Initiate, a twice-born, belonging to the Egyptian branch of the great Fraternity.

Then, let Muslims study their own Sufis and they will learn that *Roohani*, the Wisdom and Light of the Soul, or Theosophy, was not and is not unknown to them. The real Sufis, unknown and

unrecognized, still flourish.

If Parsis would ponder over the very name of their faith, the *Din* of Mazda, or Wisdom, they would lose their communal pride, their exclusiveness which is but a superstition.

Theosophy can be traced likewise in all religions, which, alas, became non-theosophical in course of time. One of the tasks of the present Theosophical Movement is to unite the followers of separative creeds, not merely in a religion of nationalism, but in the Religion of Altruism, the Religion that makes men say, "The world is my country, all mankind are my countrymen." Nationalism is a passing phase in the history of human thought; as long as nationalism, as we know it now, persists, so long will there be wars. If, on the other hand, we destroy nationalism without spiritual knowledge, we can, as history shows, enter the bog of narrow socialism, drown ourselves in the muddy torrents of bolshevism, ruin our land and our civilization in the desolation of materialistic communism. Let us move away from all these to the ideal of a practical Brotherhood based on the knowledge of Theosophy, on the Eternal Verities of *Brahma Vidya*, the Wisdom-Religion.

In the last quarter of the last century, when H. P. Blavatsky began to teach these Eternal Verities, what was the condition of our civilization? The blind and narrow dogmatism of theology had driven people away from religion, and those who still believed in it were slaves to superstition and to priests. Those who were driven away became sceptics, then materialists, then atheists, and the typical prayer was: "O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if there be a soul!"

Indeed "the mighty art was lost" when H.P.B. launched her mission. She was the ambassador of the Adept Fraternity and all she claimed was that she was a chela of an Indian Guru. On one occasion when a devotee of hers referred to her as his guru, she said, "I am no guru; I am but the window through which the light comes." And again and again she reiterated, "Do not follow me; follow the Path I show." Read her books, study her teachings, follow the Path she showed, and you will see how your minds are enlightened and how your hearts expand. She taught the Immemorial Wisdom, repeated the Truths imparted to early humanity and ever after by her Illustrious Predecessors. We study what she taught.

And what did she teach?

(a) The truth about God: not about some cruel, angry Jehovah, but about that which Jehovah represents—for that word is but the "rabbinical secret substitute for the ineffable and unpronounceable name" (*S.D.*, II, 508). Theosophy teaches that there is no personal God, inside or outside the cosmos. God is the omnipresent Life, not a being. "I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings," says Krishna. "My name is 'Omnipresence,' says Ahura Mazda. "In him we live, and move, and have our being," says the Apostle Paul. "The Initial Existence in the first twilight of the Maha-Manvantara is a conscious spiritual quality," says H.P.B. By a person's belief in and description of the nature of God we can know his true character. Therefore Great Teachers have taught first and foremost about God. That is why the First Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* is about Deity.

(b) The truth about Man: not about mortal, carnal man, glorified into something big, but about the immortal soul that man truly is, "one with the Father in Heaven," as Jesus said, and who falls into matter to learn from it and to raise and elevate it. Everyone in his spiritual nature is divine; therefore the Zoroastrian scriptures assign to every creature, from a pebble to a sage, a Fravarshi. Ahura Mazda asks his prophet Zarathushtra not to worship him but his Fravarshi—*i.e.*, to commune and become one with the Impersonal Deity. Divinity and devilishness mix and mingle in man; *sura* and *asura* both live in man; Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu both fight in man; and so death and immortality overtake man. This also H.P.B. taught.

(c) The truth about Evolution: Man will evolve by self-effort to perfection. The law of Karma was taught by Krishna, but was later forgotten. It was taught by Buddha, and again it was lost. It was taught to the early Christians—"as you sow, so shall you reap"—it is forgotten by most. H.P.B. once again taught that man is the maker of his destiny, the moulder of his fate; he himself is godlike, though he has forgotten the truth. How to know ourselves as souls is the task before us.

(d) The truth about Masters, Mahatmas, Elder Brothers: The Upanishads speak of those who know the Self and who are Masters of *Para Vidya*. The *Gita* refers to those who have attained to the Supreme and are not disturbed by manifestation or non-manifestation.

The Buddha spoke of his Illustrious Predecessors and of the Buddhas-to-be. H.P.B. once again taught the forgotten truth that Masters are living beings, that they can be approached, and that she had "intimate acquaintance" with them. If we would study what she taught, we would know the way that leads to them.

All those who follow the Path shown by H.P.B. are engaged in the study, application and promulgation of Theosophy in its pristine purity. She had to face much sacrilege and much derision, but such is the lot, such the Karma of all true Messengers. Our salutations, with gratitude and reverence, to those who sent her. The real founders of the Theosophical Movement were the Invisible Sages whose messenger and pupil H.P.B. was. Through her alone can they be approached and known. They are our Teachers and we call them Masters, Gurus, the givers of Light, the custodians of the Wisdom, the adjusters of our minds. They are living men, and the way to them lies through our heart. The Upanishad gives the injunction: "Awake, arise, seek the Great Ones and attain." Let us all awaken ourselves, arouse ourselves, and seek by study and by sacrifice, and we *will* attain and reach perfection through their grace, their help, their compassion, their wisdom. So let us repeat what others before us have chanted, addressing it to the great founders of the Theosophical Movement:

You are our mother and our father. You are our brothers and our friends and our kin. You are our knowledge and you are our wealth. You indeed are our all in all.

The universe is everlasting.
 The reason the universe is everlasting
 Is that it does not live for self.
 Therefore it can long endure.

Therefore the Sage puts himself last,
 And finds himself in the foremost place;
 Regards his body as accidental,
 And his body is thereby preserved.
 Is it not because he does not live for self
 That his self achieves perfection?

—LAO TZU

THEOSOPHIC DUTIES

[This article by W. Q. Judge first appeared in *The New Californian*, July 1892.]

IT is not our duty as Theosophists to meddle with politics, saying "such and such a policy is Theosophical," but it is our duty to avoid dragging the Society into any political movement. The T.S. is unsectarian and unpolitical, and no member has the right to say that Theosophy teaches this, that or the other sort of government or form of law. Forms of government and legislation all pass away. The truth alone remains. Man himself is the greatest truth of all, for he is Truth trying to make itself known.

Under any form of government or any social order men may prosper if they follow the dictates of the soul. It does not follow that either republics or monarchies or empires are the best form. Each age determines for itself those things; and yet Theosophy remains.

There are enough good laws on the statute books to make this an Arcadia, if only men would abandon selfishness and practise brotherhood. But you cannot force the development of a people by laws or revolutions. The first are passed as limiters or agitators; the second result from inherent disorders in the people.

But it is no part of a Theosophist's duty to condemn another member because he upholds any particular law or policy, so long as the Society is not involved in it.

It is our duty to refrain from declaring, too definitely and on insufficient proof that the Adepts, or H.P.B., have said the world is on the eve of war, and that the close of the cycle in 1897 will witness revolutions, or to assume we can alter these events within that time. For the proof is not clear that the Adepts ever said these things, and it is quite plain that no causes for revolutions explodable into such disasters in five years, could be altered by us—supposing them now fixed—in so short a time. I say this in view of statements to that effect made by sundry members.

It is not the duty of a Theosophist to pry into the motives, the means, or the actions of other members. By attending strictly to our own duties we will have enough to do. We cannot know the limitations nor the conscience of any other person.

What is the plain duty of every Theosophist? To read and

understand, so as to be able to explain, theosophical doctrines. The Society has never suffered from outsiders so much as it has from its unintelligent representation by members. The world is full of minds who wish to know, and Theosophists should form clear conceptions of what they think they believe, in order to meet objections, dispel doubts and carry conviction. Such is our duty.

"THE way of inward peace is in all things to conform to the pleasure and disposition of the Divine Will. Such as would have all things succeed and come to pass according to their own fancy, are not come to know this way; and therefore lead a harsh and bitter life; always restless and out of humour, without treading the way of peace."

Know then Oh Man, that he who seeks the hidden way, can only find it through the door of life. In the hearts of all, at some time, there arises the desire for knowledge. He who thinks his desire will be fulfilled, as the little bird in the nest, who has only to open his mouth to be fed, will very truly be disappointed.

In all nature we can find no instance where effort of some kind is not required. We find there is a natural result from such effort. He who would live the life or find wisdom can only do so by continued effort. If one becomes a student, and learns to look partially within the veil, or has found within his own being something that is greater than his outer self, it gives no authority for one to sit down in idleness or fence himself in from contact with the world. Because one sees the gleam of light ahead he cannot say to his fellow "I am holier than thee" or draw the mantle of seclusion around himself.

The soul develops like the flower, in God's sunlight, and unconsciously to the soil in which it grows. Shut out the light and the soil grows damp and sterile, the flower withers or grows pale and sickly. Each and every one is here for a good and wise reason. If we find partially *the why* we are here, then is there the more reason that we should by intelligent contact with life, seek in it the farther elucidation of the problem. It is not the study of ourselves so much, as the thought for others that opens this door. The events of life and their causes lead to knowledge. They must be studied when they are manifested in daily life.

ACCEPTANCE OF KARMA

IN her *Key to Theosophy*, Madame Blavatsky distinguishes between the simple feeling, "I am I," which she calls the individuality, and the complex thought, "I am Mr. Smith" or "Mrs. Brown," which she calls the personality. The latter is dependent on memory. The former, or the essential "I," subsists when memory is lost as in amnesia or in dream experiences; or when it is stripped of any possession, such as the faculty of sight or hearing or speech. It is the Perceiver looking out upon all the changes of ideas, feelings and sensations of the composite personality. As it bridges the gap of sleep, so it bridges the gap of death, carrying with it the nectar extracted from the experiences of prior incarnations. This individuality is centred in what Theosophy calls Manas, or mind.

Madame Blavatsky adds that, once incarnate, Manas assumes a twofold aspect, in its essential heaven-aspiring characteristic and its desire-tending animal cogitation. Manas, or soul, ascending towards its divine Monad or Parent is called Buddhi-Manas, Buddhi being the vehicle or emanation of that Divine essence, Atma, through which its omnipresent light or rays radiate on Manas. The soul tending outward and downward is called Kama-Manas, Kama being desire. Buddhi-Manas is master in its own realm, has detached itself from the reactions of the person to his environment, and is free, free to do right without consideration of self-interest. "I" centred in Kama-Manas is egotistical and in bondage to self-interest. It may intend good, but, if faced with an apparent choice between right and its own survival on the one hand and its standing in its own eyes or in those of others on the other, it will choose the latter. It has an irrepressible capacity for self-deception, for it will allow self-assertion to masquerade as any one of the virtues so that philanthropy may mask a simple desire to appear virtuous before others.

The prerequisites of full human maturity are, first, knowledge of ourselves in our dual capacity for infinite self-deception and slavery to our egotism, or for self-mastery and union with Atman, the Universal All, which in conjunction with Buddhi becomes the Higher Self of man; and second, acceptance of that unseen and unknowable Law of Karma which adjusts wisely, intelligently and equitably each effect to its cause, tracing the latter back to its producer. Though itself unknowable, its action is perceivable and calculation from cause to

effect is possible. Acceptance of Karma is not passive submission to the decrees of a relentless fate, but courageous acceptance of all the implications of that law. Under such acceptance the darkness of blindness, for instance, or any other handicap, is but an incident in the greater life of the soul. It is the inner attitude that determines the unfolding of past Karma, the creation of the future. Resentment, self-pity, refusal to make the necessary adjustment to altered circumstances, make of the Karma, Nemesis. Receive the circumstances as just and necessary, have pity for others, seek courageously the kernel of the experience, and out of it is resurrected the soul of man.

ANANDA, why is concentration of mind necessary before one can keep the Precepts? And why is it necessary to keep the Precepts before one can rightly practise dhyana and attain Samadhi? And why is the attainment of Samadhi necessary before one may attain true intelligence and wisdom? Let me explain this to you. All sentient beings in all the six realms of existence are susceptible to temptations and allurements. As they yield to these temptations and allurements, they fall into and become fast bound to the recurring cycles of deaths and rebirths. Being prone to yield to these temptations and allurements, one must, in order to free himself from their bondage and their intoxication, concentrate his whole mind in a resolution to resist them to the uttermost. The most important of these allurements are the temptations to yield to sexual thoughts, desires and indulgence, with all their following waste and bondage and suffering....

Ananda, a man who tries to practise dhyana without first attaining control of his mind is like a man trying to bake bread out of a dough made of sand; bake it as long as he will, it will only be sand made a little hot. It is the same with sentient beings, Ananda. They cannot hope to attain Buddhahood by means of an indecent body. How can they hope to attain the wonderful experience of Samadhi out of bawdiness? If the source is indecent, the outcome will be indecent; there will ever be a return to the never-ending recurrence of deaths and rebirths. Sexual lust leads to multiplicity; control of mind and Samadhi leads to enlightenment and the unitive life of Buddhahood. Multiplicity leads to strife and suffering; control of mind and dhyana leads to the blissful peace of Samadhi and Buddhahood.

—From the *Surangama Sutra*

FREEDOM FROM BIGOTED SECTARIANISM

The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, revealed to the Third Race by their celestial teachers in the days of their purity, became a great focus of light, the rays from which became necessarily weakened as they were diffused and shed upon an uncongenial, because too material soil. With the masses they degenerated into Sorcery, taking later on the shape of exoteric religions, of idolatry full of superstitions, and man-, or hero-worship. Alone a handful of primitive men—in whom the spark of divine Wisdom burnt bright, and only strengthened in its intensity as it got dimmer and dimmer with every age in those who turned it to bad purposes—remained the elect custodians of the Mysteries revealed to mankind by the divine Teachers.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 281

"YE cannot serve God and mammon."

Engrossment in the world, or worldliness, means absence of spirituality.

One cannot serve with a full heart the cause of Theosophy as long as one clings to orthodox old-time dogmas and notions.

Mr. Judge wrote in his article on "Mechanical Theosophy":

The EARNEST, devoted student can hardly believe that there exist any theosophists sincerely holding a belief in theosophical doctrines but who are, at the same time, found to have such a mechanical conception of them as permits one to retain undisturbed many old dogmas which are diametrically opposed to Theosophy. Yet we have such among us. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 31)

And unfortunately, even today we find such among students of Theosophy.

To break away from orthodoxy, to reject the prescribed forms of rites and ceremonies, and to cast off old superstitions, seems to be difficult for some of our students. Traditions die hard. "The ties of life are still as strong as chains." From their own study and reflection students recognize that Theosophy rejects the idea that rites and ceremonies performed mechanically are of any benefit to the soul of man; that nowhere in the literature of Theosophy, ancient or modern, is to be found support for the ceremonies now in use; that the Path of the Masters is opposed to the path of orthodox religions. Why then do some students cling to superstitious customs? Because their fathers

and grandfathers did so! Where is the courage to break away from corrupt religious practices? Because of oversensitiveness to the opinion of others, to the regards of non-Theosophical relatives and friends, they disregard Theosophical associates and companions. Is this fair and just?

Yet the Master has warned us: "You must thoroughly put aside the personal element if you would get on with occult study." Whatever we undertake, the good of humanity as a whole should be the only consideration. In the words of the Master:

To all, whether Chohan or chela, who are obligated workers among us the first and last consideration is whether we can do good to our neighbour, no matter how humble he may be; and we do not permit ourselves to even think of the danger or any contumely, abuse or injustice visited upon ourselves. We are ready to be "spat upon and crucified" daily—not once—if real good to another can come of it.

Why should a student of Theosophy put any value upon his neighbour's good or bad opinion of himself? He is taught to look "popular prejudice straight in the face." For this, courage is necessary. What are the prime wants of Theosophy today? "True and unselfish hearts; fearless and confiding souls." Says the Master:

Courage then, you all, who would be warriors of the one divine Verity; keep on boldly and confidently; husband your moral strength, not wasting it upon trifles.

The Theosophical Movement was started to destroy dogmatism, and above all religious dogmatism. The student's attention may be pertinently drawn to the explanations given by H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine* about the real origin of creedal exoteric religions. Further, we are told about the bad magnetic emanations that surround the dogmatic-minded person, and how erroneous beliefs and superstitions attract "millions of foreign influences, living entities and powerful agents" of the dark side of Nature. The Masters themselves have nothing to do with orthodox religions and ceremonialism. Ponder over what is implicit in these strong words of the Master:

It is useless for a member to argue "I am one of a pure life, I am a teetotaller and an abstainer from meat and vice. All my aspirations are for good, etc." and he, at the same time, building by

his acts and deeds an impassable barrier on the road between himself and us. What have we, the disciples of the true *Arhats*, of esoteric Buddhism and of Sang-gyas to do with the *Shasters* and Orthodox Brahmanism? There are 100 of thousands of Fakirs, Sannyasis and Saddhus leading the most pure lives, and yet being as they are, on the path of *error*, never having had an opportunity to meet, see or even hear of us.

In another place the Master states:

To the psychic sight India seems covered with a stifling grey fog—a moral meteor—the odic emanation from her vicious social state.

Our task, then, is to purify ourselves of the dross of perverted beliefs. Let us make a united effort to fight the evil of bigoted sectarianism; to muster our courage to give up our old superstitions and shed the fear of adverse criticism. Recall the words of the Master:

Unity always gives strength: and since occultism in our day resembles a "Forlorn Hope," union and co-operation are indispensable. Union does indeed imply a concentration of vital and magnetic force against the hostile currents of prejudice and fanaticism.

We doubt not that among U.L.T. Associates and companions there are those who feel strongly on this point and who are prepared to cooperate in the task of freeing people everywhere from the pernicious influence of orthodoxy and priestcraft. Says the Master:

Here and there twinkles a point of light which marks a nature still somewhat spiritual, a person who aspires and struggles after the higher knowledge. If the beacon of Aryan occultism shall ever be kindled again, these scattered sparks must be combined to make its flame.

Our work is to labour to find those Points of Light, to erect a Beacon and keep it alight, so that others may see it and benefit by it.

THEN I discovered the Secret of the World: that all things subsist, and do not die, but only retire a little from sight, and afterward return again.

—EMERSON

THE THEOSOPHICAL IDEAL

IT is self-evident nowadays that the world is in need of some spiritual guidance. Man is not living as a human being should live and every day we hear or read of some terrible atrocities perpetrated in the name of a personal God, or of "freedom," or of some other mistaken or warped notion. At the personal level, belief in "the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest" is responsible for the most sickening crimes and murders. It would seem that the world is on the way to mass insanity and that respect for life has almost disappeared. Behold the legacy of materialistic science that would have us believe that man is no more than a lump of protoplasm! It is true that some scientists are moving away from the idea that man is a walking automaton, and the outlook is good in this field. What we are reaping now are the karmic effects of a protracted misunderstanding of the dignity and beauty of human nature as it really is.

H.P.B. was instrumental in restoring to the world some vital information concerning the Divinity that we have so foolishly exiled from our lives in favour of a few will-o'-the-wisps connected with the personality. Theosophy correctly understood should be regenerative and provide a constant source of inspiration to those of us who wish to assist humanity, during these difficult times, to rediscover its lost integrity. As regards the phrase "Universal Brotherhood," it may be true to say that we are so accustomed to hearing it that we are in danger of becoming blind to the real meaning behind it. A Master of Wisdom has this to say:

The term "Universal Brotherhood" is no idle phrase. Humanity in the mass has a paramount claim upon us...It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for mankind: and it is the aspiration of the *true adept*.

If we are to be followers of the Theosophical Masters and their teachings, then it stands to reason that the noble ideal of a "Brotherhood of Humanity," a real "Universal Fraternity," should always be uppermost in our minds. Our studies should bring us an understanding of what this really means and reveal to us the way of life that can lead to the breaking down of mind-constructed barriers. We should do this at the individual level, at the same time never losing sight of the fact that the real work has to be for the whole of humanity. If we work

for ourselves alone, then we have not understood the message of the teachings. If we study and apply the writings of H.P.B. and the Masters, then we cannot go wrong as regards discovering the signposts that we have to follow. If any mistakes are made, these result from a misunderstanding on our part, and not from any fault of the teachings. Everything that we need to know is contained in the writings of H.P.B., and if we make them a part of our being then we will most certainly pass through the "gates of gold" and discover the TRUTH that all the holy scriptures speak of. The trouble is that most of these sacred teachings remain incomprehensible until study of Theosophy gives us some insight into the Path that all religions advocate, if only we look behind the veil of dogmas and rituals that seem to separate them. As one studies, almost imperceptibly this realization dawns upon one's mind. This is the great alchemical process that goes on in the consciousness of a devotee of the spiritual truths that have been restated in the genuine teachings of Theosophy.

The Theosophical Ideal is inspired by the compassion expressed pre-eminently in the teachings of Gautama Buddha. The Masters have great reverence for the Buddha and mention him many times in their communications. They describe him as "the patron of all the adepts, the reformer and the codifier of the occult system." The emphasis on brotherly love and compassion for all things is something that both Theosophical and Buddhistic teachings have in common. It is easy to get absorbed in the complex metaphysical teachings of Theosophy and completely lose sight of their practical application. In reality the purpose behind the study of the principles of man and of the cosmos is to give us the correct basis on which to build our practical discipline. The section in *The Key to Theosophy* on "Practical Theosophy" should leave no doubt in our minds as to the altruistic nature of the whole Theosophical Movement. The ideal of everyone who wishes to be a true Theosophist is world regeneration based on a thorough understanding of what Universal Brotherhood really means. There are scores of organizations worldwide that have brotherhood as their goal, but often it is partial brotherhood, and many of them are politically motivated, believing that their aims can be achieved by "cold diplomatic reasoning." H.P.B. stated:

It is only by the close brotherly union of men's inner SELVES, of soul-solidarity, of the growth and development of that feeling

which makes one suffer when one thinks of the suffering of others, that the reign of Justice and equality for all can ever be inaugurated. This is the first of the three fundamental objects for which the Theosophical Society was established, and called the "Universal Brotherhood of Man," without distinction of *race, colour or creed*.

Students of Theosophy can attest to the fact that the teachings of H.P.B. and the Masters are not meant to appeal to the personal self, nor do they attempt to coerce the student-aspirant into following certain set rules and regulations. Total freedom is given to the individual and he is given the opportunity to develop his intuitions rather than rely on others. This is the true way of gaining spiritual knowledge. It cannot be bought with the coin of the realm, nor can it be bestowed on us by some "enlightened" teacher; it is something we must discover for ourselves by diving deep into the shoreless ocean of Being. This inner quest will involve some suffering on the part of the student, but the true seeker will battle on despite this, as he will have some idea of the priceless nature of the knowledge that he seeks. If his motives are right, and he seeks this understanding for the sake of humanity, he will find that this altruistic feeling carries him through the worst of ordeals. We have to live in the Eternal and communicate to our fellow creatures the freedom of the infinite SELF. Our minds need to become like a "becalmed and boundless ocean," spreading out in shoreless space. This is the experience verified by all the genuine religious and spiritual traditions and by mystics of various cultures. It is a state of consciousness that anyone can reach if he is willing to live the life recommended in the holy scriptures. H.P.B., in her writings, was keen to show that the spiritual path was open to anyone who desired to tread it, and that it was not reserved for the "chosen few."

One of the most important facets of the multi-dimensional Theosophical Ideal is to show to mankind that it has capacities that have remained hidden for centuries as a result of a few self-seeking individuals or groups whose interest lay in preventing the true spiritual teachings from being known. Even today the maligning of Theosophical teachings and of the one who imparted them to the world goes on. H.P.B. is not "dead and gone." The personality may be gone, but the real H.P.B. lives in her message, in the example of her self-sacrificial labours for the good of humanity. Study of the

lives of great spiritual teachers is both instructive and inspirational. H.P.B. once said that the "World" will find no more in her teachings than its utmost comprehension can grasp. "Every form, no matter how crude, contains the image of its 'creator' concealed within it. So likewise does an author's work, no matter how obscure, contain the concealed image of the author's knowledge." This is an amazing thought and leads us to believe that H.P.B.'s works must contain all that she knew herself and a great deal more than that, as much of it comes from Adept-Teachers whose Messenger she was. Furthermore, each will find in her words only as much as he is capable of receiving. The teachings therefore hide more than they reveal, the understanding of the average man of today in matters spiritual being what it is. Further knowledge will come to us as we forge a link with the Brotherhood of Adepts who were the real Founders of the Theosophical Movement, and their Ideal lives just as strongly today in their words, and those of H.P.B., at it ever did. It is we who may have fallen from "grace" as a result of following false prophets and allowing ourselves to be led along paths that may be *cul-de-sacs* in the end, even if they seem right at the moment.

It is possible to restore our awareness of what the real Theosophical Ideal is, but we must be faithful to the teachings and be capable of going to them in the right spirit. This means not getting caught up in the dead letter and not being so blind as to think that mere words can convey to us the whole Truth. We should always be aware that Nature is our guide. As the Master says in reply to a correspondent: "Nature follows the same groove from the 'creation' of a universe down to that of a mosquito." Therefore the answers lie all around us and within us if we are prepared to look deep enough and to discipline ourselves to be capable of doing so. We need to be serious about our commitments to the Theosophical Ideal and to have great enthusiasm for the Cause. This enthusiasm is engendered by deep study and by the realization of the essentiality of putting into practice what we learn from our studies. If we can grasp the fact that the world is steeped in the "great dire heresy of separateness" and that true peace can only come to us when we realize that there is no such thing as a separate existence, then we can start to act for the good of humanity. The Theosophical Masters are always glad to have volunteers in the great Work, but it is we who must cross over to them; and this means "living the life."

If we are merely fired with enthusiasm and have no intention of trying to adapt our way of life so that it is in tune with the "vibrations" of the holy Brotherhood, then we will not get very far in our quest.

All the information that we need at the moment regarding the qualifications for chelaship is to be found in the writings of H.P.B. and the Masters. So-called "occult" literature abounds in weird ideas, and some "esoteric" schools play down, or ignore, the practice of morality, although this is one of the most essential traits to be developed. If we read the article "Occultism versus the Occult Arts" by H.P.B., we can gain some idea as to why morality is so important. Unfortunately, today's society is governed by the animal passions, and sex has become an obsession with most people. The truth is that sexual intercourse is a phase in our evolution and its only purpose is reproduction. Men and women have turned it into a source of pleasure and this is sheer folly, as well as being dangerous karmically. There have been other forms of reproduction in the past, as there will be again in the future.

The qualifications required for chelaship may seem stringent to most of us, but this is because of the lax morality of our civilization. We find it difficult to give up the lifestyle that we have been indoctrinated into, and we cannot see that by giving up those addictions that bind us to the physical world we will be much happier in the long run. Besides, marvellous vistas will be opened up to us and we will find that we are able to relate to our fellows with much greater ease. If one is placed in a dungeon while still a child, he will eventually grow accustomed to his life and will be afraid to face the light. But if he can be convinced of the benefits of doing so, and shown the way to gradually wean himself away from the darkness and to face the daylight without ruining his eyesight, then he will come to realize that what he called "life" was merely a poor substitute for reality. In the same way, we are living a life that is full of shadows and are blind to the Truth that will set us free. It is by studying Theosophy that we come to understand what life is truly all about. We come to realize what is really meant by Universal Brotherhood and we can add our own individual actions to the vast storehouse of altruistic works done for "poor orphan humanity." If we are persistent in our endeavours, we also have the opportunity in a future life, however distant it may seem now, to enter into that sacred Brotherhood who form the

"Guardian Wall" that protects humanity from far greater suffering than it is going through at the moment.

Students of Theosophy need to have a thorough understanding of what the Theosophical Ideal truly is. Their gathering together to study and talk about Theosophical topics, important as it is, is not enough. They need to be constantly aware of their duty to the Theosophical Movement in general. "Preaching to the converted" and basking in the splendour of the teachings for one's own personal benefit is hardly the attitude expected of sincere student-aspirants. We may condone our actions by occasionally referring to Brotherhood, stating that all our works should be dedicated to the good of Humanity; but we need to go further. If we could *really* grasp the Theosophical Ideal, then our groups would become powerful spiritual centres that work tremendous good in the world. There is strength in numbers and genuine study and practice in groups can even contribute towards altering the consciousness of a nation.

How many among those who call themselves "Theosophists" or "Theosophical students" are aware of the true Theosophical Ideal? As we approach the 21st century, we should take stock of our position and make a united attempt to help to set the tone for the coming years. If people had listened to H.P.B. at the end of the last century, the wars and cruelty that abound in our modern "civilization" would have been greatly reduced. The message is today just as clear and inspiring. Have we the strength to be its messengers?

ALL the shadows in the Universe cannot put out the light of one candle.

To see into where there is no "something," that is the true seeing.

Foolish are they who turn their backs on the light and argue about the nature of the shadow in front.

—D. T. S UZUKI

LINES OF EFFORT

WHAT lies between the virtues we possess and those we do not possess?

What lies between the mental recognition of the facts given out to us by Theosophy and their realization in the heart?

Is it not effort, self-effort, that we lack? Do we not sometimes rely too much on virtues growing of themselves, misinterpreting the advice to grow as the flower grows? All Nature shows us that nothing grows without effort. Why then should virtues grow without effort, or vices be slain without effort?

A difficulty arises in our minds, for effort can be emotional or mental. We can *force* vices to disappear; we can *force* virtues to appear; but in neither case are the results permanent. Virtues grow and vices disappear, knowledge grows and realization dawns, through mental effort. But mental effort has to be made with the help of the desire principle, or the *will* will not work in us. Therefore we have been told to make ourselves *want* to do this or that. If in our lower nature we do not *want* to do something that in our higher aspect we know is necessary, we must make the effort to *want*. It is this that we do not recognize. We force ourselves to get what we know is right, without first training the lower nature to appreciate the need and to sense the joy of achievement.

So often we say, "But I do not feel the reality of this or that truth." This negative approach will bring a negative result. Let us rather say, "I am trying to feel the reality of this or that." Logic is of great help, though it does not go all the way. An ever-growing devotion to the ideal must be fostered with logic. We need to know more about the Great Ones, to think more about Them, to read more of the lives of the great people of our own time and of the past to widen our horizon. We need to develop, *i.e.*, work for, a *devotional* attitude while studying *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Ocean of Theosophy* and other Theosophical books. Somchow, by strong effort, H.P.B., W.Q.J. and others down the line who have helped us must become real to us, real teachers, real helpers in our struggle to live—for, if Theosophy does not make us struggle more to *live*, it is of no use to us. We all need help, but often we do not know this! Humility is the first necessity. We have a difficult task ahead; we need all the help we can get. That help is there; we have but to see it and humbly accept it.

If we do not see the need now for acting as indicated above, let us think along these lines and cultivate in our personality the germ of this idea. To some of us the birth of this attitude is as difficult as the birth of a child. But it must be worked for if we would not waste our incarnation.

EVERY human being is unconsciously shut up within a system of mistaken ideas and feelings which thwart the fullest expression of the powers of the Self. They add to the necessary limitations of the natural laws of his being which he must take into account.

The individual is limited, also, by the defects of the culture of his time. Its biases, prejudices, unscientific assumptions, historic errors, mistaken beliefs, all bind him with fetters that seem to be unbreakable and often are never discarded. Such is our human fate that however good may be the intentions of our educators, in the broad sense, we suffer from the mistakes they unconsciously reflect in their dealings with us. Being human, all such persons express in their behaviour the mistakes of their own ego and unconsciously influence us accordingly....

A lifelong problem is the discovery of the errors built into one's ego, for only by discovering them does one come to crack his shell and remove its limitations even piecemeal. This discovery grows only out of the realization that one's system of living does not work.

It is possible for one to learn his mistaken ways from the reasonably calm contemplation of his life in the light of kindly observations by a friend or helpful suggestions in a book. But we must distinguish between an intellectual insight into the broad fact that the ego is only our second, not our real, nature—and the actual breakdown of the shell. In only a very few instances is insight alone sufficient. In the end, it seems that nothing short of the severest kind of pressure is enough to shatter the shell.

This drastic experience we call the major crisis. All egocentricity leads toward it. Moreover, it should be welcomed; for through its suffering, as will be seen, we may move into that joy and peace which comes from releasing the Self within from the limitations of its shell into the creative, productive, courageous, loving expressions of which it is capable. That is indeed the abundant life.

—FRITZ KUNKEL

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The role of religion in the 21st century was the subject of a discussion between Dr. Lawrence E. Sullivan, professor of the history of religions and director of the Center for Study of World Religions at Harvard University in the United States, and Daisaku Ikeda, President of Soka Gakkai International. A report of the discussion appears in *Soka Gakkai News*, May 1993.

It was noted in the course of the discussion that many people today felt that religion did more harm than good. There were enough instances of narrow-minded self-righteousness arising from fanatical religious belief, violent religious-based confrontations, corrupt clergy, and religions which had little relevance to modern life. It was also pointed out that religions were powerless to cope with inhumane tragedies occurring worldwide and had failed to assuage the painful spiritual emptiness felt by people living in the modern world. The contradictions between religious doctrines and science were also confusing many.

While acknowledging that much controversy surrounds religion, Mr. Ikeda stressed the importance of focusing on how religion, if it performs its true function, can contribute to people's happiness. He made the following points:

(1) Love for humanity has neither national nor religious boundaries. Thus, the possibility exists for different religions to transcend their established dogmas and rediscover a more humane and universal vision by returning to the fundamental spirit of their respective founders.

(2) It should be possible, through the peaceful means of dialogue, to promote communication between different religions based on the shared desire to secure the happiness and welfare of humanity.

(3) The choice of religion must be left to each individual. As one standard of selection, Buddhism offers three proofs by which to evaluate religion—documentary, theoretical, and actual.

(4) ...Religions that may have contributed to great prosperity in various spheres of society at a certain time in history may now have lost their vitality, or may do so in the future. It is important, therefore, to discuss the requirements of religion in the 21st century, taking into account the changing times.

(5) ...When spirituality is given secondary importance to religious form, the religious order inevitably grows rigid and

stagnates, frequently leading to abuses of religious authority by "professional" clerics....The fundamental goal [is] people's happiness.

Agreeing with Mr. Ikeda's observations, Professor Sullivan remarked that those looked upon as the founders of religions were perceptive to the true needs of the people of their day, and that this perceptivity is also required of religious leaders today.

A religion either is a vital force in the lives of its adherents or it is a farce, a psychic dissipation. The days of blind belief in religious dogmas are fast receding. It is the ethical basis of any religion—which if examined will be found to be common to all other religions—which alone can make it relevant to our age. Unless exoteric religions are discarded in favour of Religion, ceremonial in favour of Ethics, priest-reliance and vicarious atonement in a variety of forms in favour of Self-Reliance—misery, the offspring of selfishness and passion, must continue to flourish, and the goal of happiness will evade the men and women of our age.

Anyone who has ever tried to extend the boundaries of the unknown universe, and penetrate the veil of the invisible, has encountered opposition from the conservative and the orthodox. Most scientists today as in the past look askance at psychic research. A hundred years of study, they say, have failed to produce any concrete evidence of psychic abilities that is scientifically acceptable. And when an experiment does produce a result, they invariably attribute it to a "design flaw," a "statistical fluke," or downright "cheating." However, the results of recent telepathy experiments have made even sceptics admit that they "cannot be due to any obvious experimental flaw" or that any fraud is involved. (*New Scientist*, May 15)

Chuck Honorton, the researcher behind the experiments carried out over a seven-year period at the Psychophysical Research Laboratories in New Jersey, U.S.A. (see "In the Light of Theosophy" for November 1992), died towards the end of last year, but his attempt to exonerate ESP and put it on a firm scientific footing has caught the imagination of parapsychologists. The experiments are now continuing under the guidance of Robert Morris, the head of the

parapsychology research unit at the University of Edinburgh.

In Honorton's experiments, subjects were shut in a sensory deprivation chamber, cut off from all sounds and images. Senders sitting in another acoustically shielded cubicle had the task of transmitting telepathically the target image—a sequence of video film that featured either a moving target, such as a clip from an old film, or a static image. The targets were selected automatically under the control of a computer using a random number generator. This meant that even the experimenter would have no way of knowing which target was being used in a particular trial. Every precaution was taken to protect against possible collusion between subject and sender and against deception of any kind. Subjects were asked to describe aloud any images passing through their minds. Both experimenter and sender were able to listen in on this description over a one-way intercom, allowing the experimenter to record what was being said and the sender to give extra telepathic encouragement if the subject appeared to be close to identifying the target image. The experiments yielded positive results. But sceptics are still not convinced.

In any case, one series of experiments is not going to prove the existence of paranormal powers. Nor is the strictly empirical approach pursued by parapsychologists the best way of studying such powers and phenomena. Psychical researchers have been going round and round the sphere of their investigations into the abnormal. While physical sciences have made gigantic strides, psychical ones have hardly made any progress during the last one hundred years and more. Parapsychology has in fact received a severe battering at the hands of its critics and several laboratories have had to shut their doors as funds dried up. However, the study of parapsychology has survived, collection of data has been going on, observed phenomena are being recorded and tabulated, and new names are being coined for old phenomena—*e.g.*, Robert Morris prefers to talk about "communication anomalies" rather than use terms such as telepathy. But rational explanations are still absent. This is Karma: if the psychical researchers of the eighties of the last century had listened to the words of instruction of H.P.B., their successors today would not find themselves in the predicament in which they are now.

But it is never too late to mend. If some at least among them would study the explanations contained in the writings of H.P.B. they

would find not only hints but clues to their many puzzles. Meantime students of Theosophy will do well to be in touch with the trend of events. In the ideas of some physical scientists we have a foreshadowing of how they will sooner penetrate the sphere of the abnormal than the psychical researcher. At least a few among the former recognize that there is but a hairline dividing the physical from the metaphysical. But Western thought in general has yet to recognize that there is a complete science of metaphysics and a complete philosophy of science, that back of Occult science lies an all-embracing philosophy. Let the scientists, putting aside their scorn of ancient learning, turn to that invaluable mine of Occult lore, *Isis Unveiled*, and study supernormal phenomena in the light of its ten fundamental propositions of Oriental philosophy. Then alone will Western psychical research be elevated into an exact science commanding attention and respect.

One encouraging sign of the times is that the dogmatism of physical scientists of a few generations ago has given way to humility and a more liberal spirit. "The history of science," acknowledges the eminent scientist Jayant V. Narlikar, "is littered with sterile theories and theories which were ultimately proved to be wrong." His views on the changing face of science appeared originally in *Mainstream* and are reprinted in *The Times of India* for July 8:

Indeed, the modern scientist knows that no scientific theory, however right it may seem to be at present, will be entirely correct. Sooner or later, some new experiment will be designed which will disprove some crucial prediction of the theory. For a while this may lead to an apparent breakdown of law and order in the regime of science; but experience has shown that a new enriched order eventually emerges. Thus the disproof of a well-established scientific theory is regarded as a very exciting event by the scientist. It means that nature has considered man to have matured enough to appreciate yet one more of her bag of secrets.

However, the scientific outlook need not be the prerogative of the scientist alone. After all, it owes its origin to human curiosity about nature and as such every one of us, whether a scientist or not, is entitled to it. Indeed, just as in the case of science, progress could be achieved only when the scientific outlook prevailed over innate

conservatism, so in the case of a society of human beings this outlook acts as an antidote to the evils of prejudice and superstition.

Superstitions are born out of ignorance of how nature functions. Science is dedicated to the unravelling of the mysteries of nature. As one particular mystery is solved, we should expect the superstitions based on it to disappear. Yet, this does not always happen in practice because of the lack of scientific outlook in the typical human being.

This humility of science is cause for congratulation, but it needs to go a step further and recognize, in the words of H.P.B., that "there do exist mysteries behind the veil which are unreachable without a new key." To recognize boundaries beyond which science is powerless to guide the questing mind without aid from Occultism, "the complement and missing soul of the former," is not to fall into unreason and superstition, as might be alleged. Theosophy accepts the reign of law in every circumstance, but it submits also that "to make of Science an integral *whole* necessitates, indeed, the study of spiritual and psychic, as well as physical Nature."

Theosophical philosophy has always emphasized the importance of numbers. Number and numbers, it teaches, are at the root of manifestation. "There was not a people with anything like philosophy," says H.P.B., "but gave great importance to numbers in their application to religious observances, the establishment of festival days, symbols, dogmas, and even the geographical distribution of empires."

A study of the Fundamental Propositions of Theosophy (*S.D.*, I, 14 *et seq.*) reveals to some extent the significance of the numbers one, two, three and four. The numbers three, four and seven, we are further told (*S.D.*, II, 590), "are the sacred numbers of *Light, Life, and Union*—especially in this present manvantara, our Life-cycle; of which number seven is the special representative, or the *Factor number*."

In view of this, it is interesting to find Prabha Chandran writing as follows in *Saturday Times* (June 5), under the title "The Septimal Phenomenon":

Man's perception of himself and his universe begins with the

concept of numbers. Moving from the perfect unity of one to the duality of two is the point at which numbers begin. And from the dawn of civilization, there have been systems of quantification—Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian and Indian....

The number 3 embodies the *triloka*, or the three orders of space—nether, terrestrial and celestial; also the three *kal*, orders of time—the past, present and future; and the three attributes of human life. In geometry, it leads to the important concept of the triangle which can point upwards or downwards, releasing energies in nature which are creative or destructive.

The number 5 embodies the world. Man's five senses of touch, taste, sight, smell and hearing are a microcosm which relate to the five elements of the macrocosm, water, fire, earth, wind and space....

But the number 7 has an extraordinary resonance in the religions and myths of all cultures. *Sapta bhuvana* are the seven worlds of Hindu cosmology or the seven planets of our solar system....It is no coincidence that the seven days of the week—God, says the Bible, created the world in seven days—are named after the seven planets in every land and clime....Also, the seven days of the week represent a quarter of the moon's 28-day orbit around the earth. Hence, the lunar calendar which governs our festivals....

VIBGYOR, or the seven primary colours of the rainbow, represent the entire range of the colour spectrum. Every hue in nature, every stroke on canvas, comes from mixing various proportions of these colours. And if that is not impressive enough, consider music—the *sapta sura* or *sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni* are identical to the western seven tone heptatonic scale of *do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti*. All music that has ever been created is based on those seven notes....

Then again, Dr. Jyotindra Jain reminds us that "it is not just the arts which are represented on a scale of seven, but mankind itself, for the *Rig Veda* talks of *sapta manusha* or the seven races of man." ...Which brings us to the seven wise men, the *sapta rishi*—Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Vasistha, Pulaha, Kratu and Bhrigu. Curiously enough, we find parallels in other cultures....

Is it a coincidence that there are seven archangels in the *Revelation*, seven sephiroth of the Hebrew Cabala, seven spirits of Egyptian mythology and seven *devas* of the Hindus? The seven angels are paralleled in the Judaeo-Christian tradition by the seven archdemons which mediaeval scholars equated with the seven

deadly sins....

The topography of ancient India is also neatly encapsulated in the number 7....The *sapta sindhu* are the seven rivers and there are also seven mountain ranges or the *sapta kula parvata*....

The external geography synchronizes, in traditional Indian thought, with the internal geography of man. The *sapta chakras* are the seven levels of consciousness through which the Kundalini rises to attain universal consciousness.

"To attempt to cite all the things included in this mystical number would require a library," says H.P.B. However, enough has been said about the mystery and sacredness of the number seven, not only in *The Secret Doctrine* but also in articles such as "The Number Seven," "The Septenary Principle in Esotericism," and "The Number Seven and Our Society" (reprinted from *The Theosophist* in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for October 1935, July 1963, and April 1981, respectively).

That "crime comics" and "horror comics" have a deleterious influence on readers, especially youthful readers, has been well established, but are the comic strips in newspapers, purporting to offer "harmless entertainment," all that harmless? The daily dose of Western comics in the newspapers has coloured the way we view ourselves, claims Indranet (*The Sunday Times of India*, July 4):

Phantom, Mandrake, Tarzan and others are standard stereotypes. Superior to blacks in mental ability, analysis and maturity, they are paternalistic in their attitudes towards them and even have supernatural abilities. They save blacks from their ineptitude, irrationality and foolishness, having ready solutions to any problems. Blacks are childish, gullible, backward, ignorant, superstitious and unable to do the most elementary things on their own....Tarzan's height is almost twice that of the blacks—obviously, all that human problems need are big muscles and rugged jawlines!...

The jungle tribes are portrayed as brutal and cannibalistic or strangely passive creatures with childishly ridiculous rituals. There is no comprehension or appreciation of their rich cultures, moral insights, or indigenous knowledge....

Women in macho comic strips are obviously not worth much

characterization....The Hubert comics are decidedly anti-feminist....Hubert echoes the author's bias: "Today's women libbers are pussycats—it was the flapper era that produced the really opinionated dames."...

Newspapers are guilty of communicating cultural inferiority, violence, racism and sexism, through this "harmless" entertainment. Comic strips created at the height of western dominance, reflect the objectives of the imperialists....Hidden in the lines between the blurbs and in the pictures, their messages, constantly fed to our children, though perverse, disrespectful and crude, are slavishly followed. Identifying with the whites in the comics, most Indians applaud this insulting "entertainment," little realizing that the whites identify us with the blacks.

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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.

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