

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

---

---

Vol. 64, No. 11

September 1994

---

---

### GENII, GENIUS AND GENIUSES

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, May 1957.]

As my earthly part is a portion given to me from certain earth, and that which is watery from another element, and that which is hot and fiery from some peculiar source (for nothing comes out of that which is nothing, as nothing also returns to non-existence), so also the intellectual part comes from some source.

—MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

TWO lines of evolving forces meet in man and on his attitude to them and his action on them depends his own evolution. The Third Fundamental Proposition describes them as: (1) Natural Impulse, *i.e.*, the propelling force from within outwards, of Nature, Matter or *Prakriti*; (2) Self-Induction, *i.e.*, the propelling of Spirit, *Purusha*, Man, who guides the course of evolution, of his own material or animal nature, and of the entire assemblage called Nature.

This propelling force is Will—"that which governs the manifested universe in eternity. *Will* is the one and sole principle of abstract eternal MOTION, or its ensouling essence" (*The Theosophical Glossary*). Therefore this Power or Force of Will has a dual aspect: that which functions as the impelling motion in matter, and that which functions in the human kingdom as the mind of man. Thus Will becomes free under the influence of the thinking-feeling principle in man.

*Fohat*, the Light of the Logos, is intimately related to Will; it is the Divine Power which moves matter to build forms, using the three

attributes or *Gunas*, preserves those forms, and destroys them to recreate. All that action is designated as Natural Impulse or *Fohatic* Will.

But *Fohat* acts also as the Light of Wisdom. In the human kingdom, in man's reflective self-consciousness, it is the power by which he is able to determine for himself his own course of action, and in doing so he uses that aspect of Will which is designated as Free Will. The root of Life and the root of Light are the material and spiritual aspects of *Fohat*. These two are the lower and higher natures (*apara* and *para prakriti*) of Krishna, the Logos.

In our lower nature the impulse of material life functions. Having arrived at the stage of manhood, we find that the balance principle of the manifested cosmos operates in our being. We are now weighed down in the scale of evolution and gravitate matterwards, and then by self-effort ascend spiritwards. Our lower nature is made up of the Genii which rule our earth; and they do not like to be controlled by the Genius which is the centre of our higher nature.

There are Genii and Genii; and there are Geniuses and Geniuses. The terms are now loosely used and the one class of intelligences and their functions are mixed up with the other class and their functions. For the purposes of this article we are using the term Genii for the powers of life which operate in man's lower or divisible nature, and the term Genius for the Powers of Light which shine as his higher nature, the Indivisible which informs and leads the thinker, the Man, the *Manushya*, to perceive and realize his absolute Unity with Perfected Men—*Mahatmas*; Perfected Seers—*Rishis*; Perfected Sages—*Dhyanis* or *Buddhas*.

Man, by the right use of his Will, which implies the right knowledge acquired by his mind, can become the master of the Genii of the earth and water, the air and fire, and can know the secrets of material life; but this is possible only when man has sought and secured the company of the Holy Ones of the earth—"the conquering of the desires of the outer senses will give you the right to do this," says *Light on the Path*.

Standing as we do in the balance position, the seesaw play between our two natures must be slowed down. The material life is not to be destroyed; it has to be made the vehicle of the Spiritual Light. The Genius and His Peers and Elders must use the Genii to serve Nature. Nature, *Prakriti*, Matter, Life, must not be feared or hated, must not

be dirtied or degraded, but must be served, cleansed and elevated to receive the Light of Soul and Spirit. The Wisdom to use the Light emanates from the Divine *Fohat*, which holds the Secret in the inmost abode of the Most High. *Fohat*, the Light of Wisdom, is the Robe of Glory which veils the Logos. As we serve the Powers of Life by the Powers of Light, the latter illumine our mind and we acquire self-consciously the knowledge of the Supreme Secret—man attains to the state of the Superior Man (*Uttama Purusha* of the 15th Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*).

We have used the term Genii to draw the student's attention to the highly important words of Hermes Trismegistus quoted in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 294-5), on which H.P.B. throws light which is of great practical value to every earnest Esotericist. Pertinent as they are to our subject, these words of Hermes are more than a mere hint:

All these Genii *preside over mundane affairs*, they shake and overthrow the constitution of States and of individuals; they *imprint their likeness on our Souls*, they are present in our nerves, our marrow, our veins, our arteries, and *our very brain substance...* at the moment when each of us receives life and being, he is taken in charge by the genii (Elementals) who preside over births....

H.P.B. contributes an explanatory footnote of great practical value:

The meaning of this is that as man is composed of all the Great Elements: Fire, Air, Water, Earth and Ether—the ELEMENTALS which belong respectively to these Elements feel attracted to man by reason of their co-essence. That element which predominates in a certain constitution will be the ruling element throughout life. For instance, if man has a preponderance of the Earthly, gnomonic element, the gnomes will lead him towards assimilating metals—money and wealth, and so on. "Animal man is the son of the animal elements out of which his Soul (life) was born, and animals are the mirrors of man," says Paracelsus.

Continues Hermes:

They [the Genii] permeate by the body two parts of the Soul, that it may receive from each the impress of his own energy. But the reasonable part of the Soul is not subject to the genii; it is designed for the reception of (the) God, who enlightens it with a sunny ray. Those who are thus illumined are few in number, and from them the genii

abstain: for neither genii nor Gods have any power in the presence of a single ray of God. But all other men, both soul and body, are directed by genii, to whom they cleave, and whose operations they affect....

And to this H.P.B.'s priceless explanation must be added: the "God" referred to above is

the God in man and often the incarnation of a God, a highly Spiritual Dhyān Chohan in him, besides the presence of his own seventh Principle.

Now, what "god" is meant here? Not God "the Father," the anthropomorphic fiction; for that god is the Elohim collectively, and has no being apart from the Host. Besides, such a god is finite and imperfect. It is the high Initiates and Adepts who are meant here by those men "few in number." And it is precisely those men who believe in "gods" and know no "God," but one Universal unrelated and unconditioned Deity.

These extracts from *The Secret Doctrine* are not mere metaphysical teachings to be speculated upon; they touch the constitution of our brain and blood, our bones and marrow. These Genii are the agents of the *Fohatic* Will functioning in the Life of Nature or Matter. We contact them in our body and "they permeate by the body two parts of the Soul"; and only the higher aspect of the incarnated soul is not subject to the Genii, for that higher aspect is "*designed* (italics ours) for the reception of" the influence of the Light of Genius and Geniuses as explained above.

Now H.P.B. has said that the mystery of the two minds is profound, intricate and almost insoluble for us at our present stage. She has, however, given us enough for practical application at our own stage of psychic development.

The lower mind is the seat of human free will, of our volition. This will functions in freedom whenever the lower mind disconnects itself from *kama* ("Psychic and Noetic Action": *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, p. 59). *Manas*, when extricated from *kama*, becomes *Antahkarana*. When *Manas* extricates itself from *kama* it means that man has freed himself from the enslavement of the Genii. It implies some knowledge of the subject of elementals, but primarily man's recognition of his "God," the Being of Light, *Rex Lucis*, who is the Genius keeping company with his peers and superiors. *Antahkarana* is "designed for the reception of the God" in man, "a highly spiritual Dhyān Chohan

in him."

This *kama-manas* in Vedantic classification is *Manomaya Kosha* and it is in close kinship with its Elder Brother, *Vignanamaya Kosha*, a Being of Pure Knowledge; the Parents of both are *Atma* and *Buddhi*, the Father and the Mother of the Human Soul.

The duty or *dharma* of every man is to begin to transmute the *kamic* nature of the Genii by his own inherent Will, and look for and appeal to the Genius, Embodied Knowledge, to help him to master the Genii—the progeny of Gnomes, Undines, Sylphs and Salamanders. The Religion or *Dharma* of the Genius being the spirit of sacrifice and service, He will come to the aid of his little brother suffering the torments of worldly passionate existence.

And there is not only the Genius within us but there are also the Geniuses, Those who have perfected Themselves—the Holy Ones who hold the secrets of Light for us.

The goal is not only worth the effort. It is the Great Necessity. And the Goal?—

Behold, the mellow light that floods the Eastern sky. In signs of praise both heaven and earth unite. And from the four-fold manifested Powers a chant of love ariseth, both from the flaming Fire and flowing Water, and from sweet-smelling Earth and rushing Wind.

Hark!...from the deep unfathomable vortex of that golden light in which the Victor bathes, ALL NATURE'S wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim:

JOY UNTO YE, O MEN OF MYALBA.

A PILGRIM HATH RETURNED BACK "FROM THE OTHER SHORE."

A NEW ARIHAN IS BORN.

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS

FITNESS to fight the battle of life is not from worldly ambition at all, but from a right and strong sense of duty, from a determination to do it, and from a true sense of your duty to your neighbour.

—W. Q. JUDGE

## EVOLUTION—THE ANCIENT DOCTRINE

THE Western world generally believes that the doctrine of evolution was unknown before the days of Charles Darwin. The belief is based more in ignorance than in knowledge, for there are few who study the history of any scientific theory or of any philosophic thought, before arriving at conclusions. Even in the Western world, we must give Aristotle his due, for he certainly held to the doctrine of the gradual transformation of forms, forms which were classified in terms of the Kingdoms of Nature.

We unmistakably find the doctrine of evolution taught in the Jewish Kabala. The well-known Kabalistic aphorism runs: "A stone becomes a plant; a plant, a beast; the beast, a man; a man, a spirit; and the spirit, a god."

In the first book of the Bible, *Genesis*, the evolutionary doctrine is taught, and taught correctly. The difficulty is that it is expressed in allegorical language, so that he alone who reads between the lines can get at the real meaning, especially if he secures the key that the ancient Secret Doctrine provides.

The Greeks and the Jews obtained their knowledge from Egypt—the Land of Mystery, the link between the West and the East. Stobaeus, the Greek compiler of ancient fragments, who lived in the fifth century A.D., has transcribed an old Hermetic fragment giving the Egyptian version of the doctrine of evolution. A word for word translation is given in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 137-38):

From one Soul, that of ALL, spring all the Souls, which spread themselves as if purposely distributed through the world. These souls undergo many transformations; those which are already creeping creatures turn into aquatic animals; from these aquatic animals are derived land animals; and from the latter the birds. From the beings who live aloft in the air (heaven) men are born. On reaching that status of men, the Souls receive the principle of (conscious) immortality, become Spirits, then pass into the choir of gods.

Turning to the East, many are familiar with the Sufi verse: "I died as a mineral and was born as a shrub; I died as a shrub and was born as an animal; I died as an animal and was born as a man; when did I grow less by dying? I will die as a man and be born as a spirit." Where did the Sufis get their wisdom from? Where was Ali, the son-in-law

of the Prophet of Arabia, initiated? Where did he and his colleagues and followers learn? They assuaged their thirst for knowledge at many springs, but the common source of all these springs lay in the mountains of ancient Iran. The Zoroastrian sources of Sufism form a thrilling chapter of Occult history, but that is another story! If modern Parsis would study their own Avesta, Pahalvi and Pazand fragments, they would find therein the doctrine of evolution.

But, just as Egypt is the source of Western knowledge, so India is the fountain-head of Eastern culture. She is the *Alma Mater* for our Fifth Race civilization. There is enough evidence to prove that the Sages of Aryavarta knew and taught the doctrine of evolution. As in the Bible, so in the Puranas, "there is more wisdom concealed under the exoteric *fables*...than in all the exoteric *facts* and science in the literature of the world, and more OCCULT true Science, than there is of exact knowledge in all the academies" (*S.D.*, I, 336). The Puranas contain a veiled record of the order of evolution in this Round. Manu and Kapila, too, esoterically explained the doctrine. The Laws or Ordinances of Manu speak of the "Self-existent Lord" removing the darkness and, "wishing to produce beings from his Essence," becoming manifest in the golden Egg. From this Egg, "that which is the undifferentiated cause, eternal, which *Is and Is not*...issued he who is called in the world Brahma"—*i.e.*, the fructifying Principle. This creative Brahma, issuing from the mundane or golden Egg, unites in himself both the male and the female principles. The order of evolution as given in the Laws of Manu (V, 14-36) corroborates entirely the esoteric teaching.

So the doctrine of evolution was known in ancient times. What is more, the ancient Eastern doctrine is more complete and illuminating than the modern theory. Says *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 332):

It will be an easy task to show that the cosmogonical legends all over the world are based on a knowledge by the ancients of those sciences, which have allied themselves in our days in support of the doctrine of evolution; and that further research may demonstrate that those ancients were far better acquainted with the fact of evolution itself, embracing both its physical and spiritual aspects, than we are now. "With the old philosophers, evolution was a universal theorem, a doctrine embracing the *whole*, and an established principle; while our modern evolutionists are enabled to present us merely with speculative theoretics; with *particular*, if not wholly *negative* theorems.

The fundamental teaching of Theosophy, as of Ancient Science, is that there is the slow, very slow process of "unfoldment"—a more suitable word than "evolution." The unfolding Self brings into manifestation the Kingdoms of Nature. The visible universe proceeds from star dust to stars, from non-man-bearing planets to man-bearing ones, from one Kingdom of Nature to another. But the ancients knew of the invisible Universe as well, the infinitudes of space, and side by side with the process of unfoldment taught also that of emanations. Therefore we have two fundamental propositions regarding evolution—emanations of *Asuras*, *Manushyas*, *Devas* and *Pitris* in orderly succession; and then unfoldment of *Jivas* or Monads of various types and statures in forms of *Prakriti* or Matter. It is a difficult subject and a complicated one, and some of the teachings are in allegorical form. Take, for instance, the strange story of Brahma's four bodies, from which he created four classes of beings. This has profound significance and is not a mere figment of the imagination. It is said that from Brahma's body of night the *Asuras* were born; from that of dawn, *Manushyas* or men came forth; from that of day, *Suras* or *Devas* emanated; from that of twilight, *Pitris*—fathers of our bodies—issued forth. It is a profoundly true classification which requires study.

The evolutionary process for the human kingdom on this Earth, in our Manvantaric cycle, takes place along three lines: (1) that of the spiritual *Jivatma*, the Eternal Pilgrim; (2) that of the human soul, *Manushya* or man, the thinker; (3) that of the form, *Rupa*, or body which the man uses.

In each of us, these three lines of evolution mix and mingle. Entities of different kinds and belonging to different planes have gone to produce the self-conscious thinking human being, before whom a long path of progress stretches. Let us not consider ourselves mere specks of protoplasm or a congeries of cells begetting thoughts and feelings. Each human being is an assemblage of *Pitris* or creative powers, *Suras* or gods, and *Manasa-Putras* or mind-born sons of Brahma. We *have* a body, we are not the body; we *have* a mind, we are not the mind. As thinkers, we are potential Buddhas. A vast, deep and profound background is behind us, and careful study is required if we desire to fathom the mystery that each one of us is.

There are practical, helpful lessons which the Theosophical doctrine of evolution conveys to us. We have had a long and fascinating past, but

we have a more glorious future. Evolution has brought us to our present stage, and it is the unfoldment now taking place to which we must turn our attention. A verse of the *Aitareya Brahmana* gives the clue: "He who knows the gradual unfoldment of the Self in him, obtains further development." Our growth lies in recognizing how the Self is unfolding in us.

The very first step is to recognize that in the human kingdom evolution does not proceed in an automatic fashion. We have evolved the power of speech as well as of thought. By the power of thought we can talk to ourselves; by that of speech we talk to others. We are able to understand ourselves, as well as explain our position to others. To man, the injunction is given—"Know thyself!" No other being can know itself. Man can and should know himself, and the first thing about himself that he should learn is that his evolution is not automatic but under the guidance of his own will and his own thought. Not by natural impulse but by self-induced ways and means man grows. Everyone aspires to become better and nobler. The first step in this direction is to gain the conviction that our inner progress is helped or hindered by our own will, our own thought, our own feeling, our own speech, our own labour. School education, religious and social influence and a hundred outer factors and forces are all incidental, secondary, not primary and fundamental.

What prevents us from realizing and experiencing our longings? If self-induced ways lead to evolution, why is not our self-induction successful in reference to our yearnings and longings? What frustrates us? What checks our growth? Theosophy answers—Karma. We are checked by Karma—reactions from our own past actions. The Karma of each of us draws a circle round us—"thus far and no further shalt thou go." We have by our own past volition, ideation and passion restricted ourselves in the present. We have done that in ignorance; we must gain knowledge and thus remove that restriction for the future—near and distant. In many previous human lives on earth we have been evolving; in many further lives we will evolve still further; but knowledge makes the difference. Knowledge of the process of evolution, and of the laws governing it, lies in the twin doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation.

But we are not bound. We can quicken the process of our evolution by taking it into our own hands. We can begin where we now are.

---

## THE ASTRAL LIGHT

[This article by Mr. Judge appeared originally in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* (Chicago), December 24, 1887.]

IN the records of forty years of American Spiritualism the Astral Light is not unknown; it has been referred to by many mediums while under what is called "control," and spirits in speaking of it have at times detailed some of its properties. Its place in nature and the part it plays at seances, mind reading and tests, demand for it more attention than it has hitherto received from those who believe in the Summerland.

The real witnesses produced for the majority of spiritistic phenomena are these spirits, and their word must be taken by their followers wherever possible; especially must this be so whenever the spirits agree with a large body of evidence found in ancient and medieval writings.

Some years ago Mrs. M. J. Hollis-Billing gave the editor of the *JOURNAL* several sittings with the spirit Jim Nolan, who delivered replies to queries prepared, and which were published. Mrs. Billing has never been accused of fraud, and by turning to the files of the *JOURNAL* the report can be found. This spirit's utterances are entitled to weight. He said, in substance, that there is a plastic medium existing in nature called the Astral Light, in which are pictures of persons, dead and living, and of all their thoughts, actions and circumstances; and that in producing what is called a materialization of a deceased one, a magnetic mirror was constructed by the control, on to which was reflected out of the Astral Light, the face or form desired to be seen, and that as each change was made a new picture was drawn from the Astral Light.

Although as a body—whether in published works or in private discussion—Spiritualists have ignored the Astral Light, it has long been recognized by Theosophists of both the present Theosophical Society and those of two hundred years ago, while the Hindus have, for ages, known of it and called it the *Akasa*.

What, then, is this Astral Light? It is what is called by Eliphas Levi, the "plastic medium" that interpenetrates each thing and every point of space; a medium, plane, place, state or condition of the ether, wherein is recorded an image of every object that comes before it, an echo of every word ever spoken, an unbroken chain of continuous pictures of all that happens here below.

As well also are to be found in it the shades or lemures of the departed—not their spirits but their reliquiae, existing there until they shall pass away in natural course; and there, floating, darting, wavering, swimming to and fro, like fishes in the sea, are the other class of spirits, called "elementals" by the old Kabalists, nature spirits by others, Gnomes, Sylphs and Salamanders.

In this Astral medium is a vast babel of sounds—the undying reverberations of uttered speech, the utterers of which have long ago passed away; noble sentiments clothed in faultless rhetoric; horrible discords produced by the senseless and vicious talk of all times and persons; sweet music, the din of war, and the solemn chant from out cathedral aisles. Every odor man ever smelled, and every sound, divine or diabolical, are there. It is a burial ground for mummies, as it were. The fluidic envelope passed off by every one at death, is caught in it and there leaves its impression, even after that envelope has itself dissipated into the various elements. Just as the long ago dead tribolite impacted in the earliest fossiliferous strata, leaves behind it, when removed, a clear impression of itself, so that which lodges in the Astral Light stamps there an imperishable image.

Finding, then, this Jim Nolan agreeing with ancient records on that subject, Spiritualists are bound to investigate along the lines indicated, or else be guilty of ignoring an important element in the problem before them.

An intelligent reply from a thing or influence, unseen and unknown, except by what it manifests, is not, *per se*, proof of an intelligent conscious entity behind it, or of identity with a deceased person. An unintelligent man can learn and repeat like a parrot a series of highly intelligent sentences. Out of the Astral Light can be brought—resurrected so to say—either a picture of a person or a scene, or the discourses of Plato. How then can we afford to ignore the existence of the Astral Light or refuse to make some inevitable conclusions? Is it because we are afraid that the Summerland will disappear, or that we do not wish to accept as true something not in accord with our preconceived notions or present experience? As for me, give me truth, no matter what it costs or what fondly loved idea it destroys.

---

## SELF-SATISFACTION

SELF-SATISFACTION or complacency is an evil confronting individuals as well as nations. This characteristic veils and disguises the true nature of events and environment. Self-satisfaction, to the extent that it is present, causes us to underestimate our associates and conditions generally. This is a great error, always productive of tragic consequences. It demands that all people conform to the standard defined by the self-satisfied, who live in a world seen through rose-coloured glasses. Complacency is a universal characteristic. Students of Theosophy also are inclined to be influenced by its insidious effects, as are members of creeds and religious sects.

An examination of the events and attitudes attending the decline of former great civilizations will indicate that complacency was an important contributing factor in preparing the way for their eventual downfall. Some of the great errors being made in the diplomatic world today flow from the weakness of complacency. The failure to concede the right of others to pursue their self-chosen ways of life arises, more often than not, from a self-satisfied regard for our own achievements and position. If our particular way of life leads us to assume that we live "in the best of all possible worlds," then we shall hardly extend sympathy to those who choose to lead a different kind of life.

This characteristic when evidenced by nations produces arrogance and the desire for conquest and tyranny. Numerous examples could be quoted. To take but one: the Spanish conquest of South America, and especially of Peru. The conquistadors were completely satisfied that theirs was the only true religion; they believed that their way of life was the only right and satisfactory one. Their conviction was so strong that in spite of the friendly and brotherly manner in which they were received by the Incas, despite the riches and wealth showered upon them, they did not hesitate to slay cruelly the rulers and thousands of people because they would not accept God as described by the Christian Church.

Suppose these conquerors had been less self-complacent, less sure that they were the sole possessors of truth. Suppose they had been able to admit that maybe there was some merit in the faith of the Incas; could they then have behaved with the same degree of ruthless savagery toward the welcoming and kindly Incas? We think not. All persons, be they ever so evil, constantly strive to justify their actions.

The notions of life of the complacent make them feel justified in imposing their ways upon others, even at the point of the sword. For, if one believes one's own way to be the best of all possible procedures, then why not by all means demand conformity from others, in order that they too may enjoy such felicity of life? Such has been the fallacious rationalization of the conquerors throughout the ages.

What of the student of Theosophy and his all-embracing philosophy? Self-satisfaction will lead him, too, to stagnation and deterioration. Unquestionably the student of Theosophy is in a strategic position compared to the average man. He possesses a philosophy that presents no contradictions; it is logical and consistent, dealing with all departments of nature and providing eternal principles for the study of science, religion and philosophy. The key to an understanding of the nature of man is available in Theosophy; hence, it might be argued, the student of Theosophy has every reason to be satisfied with his philosophy.

Complacency, however, does not arise from such satisfaction, but from self-satisfaction. It should not be subtly implied that because the student of Theosophy is identified with a soul-satisfying and consistent system of thought, therefore he must be one of nature's favoured few. What ground for self-satisfaction is there if one is as yet unable to embody the noble teachings and ethics of the Wisdom-Religion—and who on this side of Mahatmaship is able to do so? When such Mahatmaship is reached, where is the evidence of self-satisfaction, complacency? To be firmly grounded in and motivated by the Teachings the Great Ones present is to be incapable of complacency.

"He does good who knows how to do good" is axiomatic. Its realization calls for a degree of understanding that only the tolerant can achieve. Tolerance can spring only from an attitude that is the opposite of a false sense of self-satisfaction. It can spring only from a willingness to accept, in all humility, the identity of all souls with the Universal Soul. Thus one may come to realize that the only real "sufficiency" is to be found within the precincts of the Self of All. There is no room in such an attitude of humility for complacency; for, by understanding the hierarchical nature of Brotherhood, all are recognized to be the same in kind, differing only in degree. So we never should be self-satisfied, but should ever strive to satisfy the demands of the great SELF, in which we live, move and have our being.

---

## THE PRACTICE OF LOVING-KINDNESS

LOVING-KINDNESS is one of the foremost practices of Mahayana Buddhism and is the pre-eminent characteristic of great spiritual teachers, such as Gautama Buddha and Jesus. It is also the driving force behind the Theosophical Movement, at least for those who have comprehended the real purpose of that Movement. Jesus taught us to love our enemies and to bless those that curse us and pray for those that despitefully use us. Nowadays our cynical society tries to find ways to discount this wise advice, and to show that it is impractical. Civilization is based on a "cold diplomatic reasoning" and people who try to live according to the dictates of their Higher Self are sometimes labelled "charlatans" or "crackpots." In fact, modern society makes the honest man feel frustrated and begin to doubt his own usefulness in this world of illusion. What we all must do is to hold on to the Divinity that we feel within our hearts and let that be our guiding light despite all else. If the world around us cries, "an eye for an eye," then we must keep in mind the words of H.P.B. in *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 233):

Selfishness, indifference, and brutality can never be the normal state of the race—to believe so would be to despair of humanity—and that no Theosophist can do. Progress can be attained, and only attained, by the development of the nobler qualities.

We need to keep our faith in human nature, no matter how terrible the atrocities that are perpetrated in the name of religion or politics. This is not easy, but if we are to live our lives in the light of true Theosophy, then it is our duty to make the effort. In the memorable words of the Master:

It is he alone who has the love of humanity at heart, who is capable of grasping thoroughly the idea of a regenerating practical Brotherhood who is entitled to the possession of our secrets....There was a time, when from sea to sea, from the mountains and deserts of the north to the grand woods and downs of Ceylon, there was but one faith, one rallying cry—to save humanity from the miseries of ignorance in the name of Him who taught first the solidarity of all men.

The last sentence of this quotation refers to Gautama Buddha of whom the Masters were the avowed followers. The key words in the quotation are "a regenerating practical Brotherhood." This leaves us in

no doubt as to the nature of our practice and the goal that we must aim at, in our work for the Theosophical Movement at least. It has little to do with political utopias or speculative theories. Yet, it is strange how many of us miss the point. The writings of the Masters, of H.P.B., W.Q. Judge, Robert Crosbie and many others teem with allusions to this practical Brotherhood, and yet we do not grasp the import of it all. This is the basis of our whole Movement: "a regenerating practical Brotherhood." In her article "Practical Occultism," H.P.B. gives us an idea of the conditions "under which alone the study of Divine Wisdom can be pursued with safety." We are told:

Meditation, abstinence in all, the observation of moral duties, gentle thoughts, good deeds and kind words, as good will to all and entire oblivion of self, are the most efficacious means of obtaining knowledge and preparing for the reception of higher wisdom.

This is in line with the compassionate thread that runs through the Buddhist teachings. The Theosophical ideal goes deeper as it seeks to unite all beings, regardless of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour, and takes no note of religion. All religions, though pure at their source, have later degenerated into sects. There have been attempts, whether conscious or unconscious, to introduce sectarianism in Theosophy. Those who have the ideal of "a regenerating practical Brotherhood" lodged firmly in their hearts and go about trying to make it a reality in the world, and who are firmly grounded in the original teachings of H.P.B. and the Masters, will be less likely to make this mistake.

"Gentle thoughts, good deeds and kind words" are sorely needed in this world at the moment, as well as something else that is fast disappearing—sincerity. Kind words and good deeds may be bandied about daily, but how many of them are sincere? Do we still know how to be sincere? These are questions that we need to ask ourselves. It is only by working towards an entire oblivion of the personal self that we can be sure that we are straightforward in our relationships with others. Are we deluding ourselves? Are our kind words and good deeds motivated by loving-kindness, or has the personal self some ulterior motive? Is it self-image that we are trying to create? We need to reaffirm our motives and look within ourselves constantly. Life has to become a continuous meditation if we are to avoid being caught up in its turmoil, without even knowing it. This does not mean that we have to sit cross-legged and repeat

*mantras* all day, as is the popular conception of meditation. We have rather to be aware and wakeful constantly. We have to know what is going on around us and within us, and to keep the fire of Divinity burning in our hearts, no matter what Karma brings to us. Above all, we need to cultivate loving-kindness.

Compassion is the thing most needed in the world today. Brotherhood and morality may be of vital importance, but without compassion they are likely to become hard-and-fast dogmas. Magnanimity must be tempered with the warmth of understanding. This can only come from an awareness of the Oneness of all things. Without this, all schemes for the welfare of humanity are doomed to failure in time, because the personal element will triumph in some form or other in the short or long run. This is why H.P.B. and the Masters constantly stressed the importance of this sensibility to Universal Brotherhood and Human Solidarity, and why we have to keep this idea at the back of our mind during all our studies. But this is not enough; we have to live it as well. This is the only way to make the teaching authentic and for it to have any effect in the world around us. H.P.B. has written that "every man has a responsive chord in his nature that will vibrate and respond to words of kindness and of truth." Would that those in positions of power world-wide took heed of these words instead of bullying people into compliance with their demands, generally based upon materialistic concepts and the worship of Mammon!

It is well past the time that the human race as a whole started behaving a little more humanely. The cold insensitivity of our age is breeding suicidal and depressive tendencies in millions. Few are capable of appreciating the effects of their actions, karmically; and this is another sad facet of society. It is unable to provide answers to age-old questions. It is only the minority who possess some hints. This is another vital function of the Theosophical Movement. The Master K.H. once said that "the greatest consolation in and the foremost duty of life is not to give pain, and to avoid causing suffering to man or beast." H.P.B. states that he who spreads the gospel of goodwill is working for the Theosophical Cause, and *vice versa*. She also says, in the first of her *Five Messages to the American Theosophists*:

...the essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in

him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, good-will to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to one's self, are its chief features.

Theosophical literature—above all *The Voice of the Silence*—also provides us with hints as to how we can develop this loving-kindness. At the time it was written, the book was somewhat of a revelation. It introduced a concept that was practically unknown in the West—that of the Bodhisattva Path. Read in the context of other Theosophical literature, this valuable little book provides that added dimension of mystical teaching which complements the more technical expositions in works like *The Secret Doctrine*. It also contains that special Theosophical ingredient of universality and impersonality, and is free from the sectarian religious imagery of most other treatises on the Bodhisattva ideal. It will remain a priceless guide to the true aspirant.

This little book abounds in information on the practice of loving-kindness. The whole work contains countless meditations that could occupy each one of us for an entire lifetime. Who can forget, for instance, the following lines from Fragment I:

Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain, like as the lotus bares  
its heart to drink the morning sun.

Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast  
wiped it from the sufferer's eye.

But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there  
remain; nor ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed.

The more one reads this over the years, the more one can enter into the real spirit of it all and discover that behind the words is an infinity of meaning that only the dedicated practitioner will perhaps ever really understand.

If we really follow the thread, we will become aware of that Mystical Brotherhood that watches over and protects humanity, and we will begin to clear our spiritual vision. We will understand a little more about the "Nirmanakaya robe." In a footnote to one of the verses, H.P.B. writes, concerning this vesture, that it is

that ethereal form which one would assume when leaving his physical he would appear in his astral body—having in addition all the knowledge of an Adept. The Bodhisattva develops it in himself as he proceeds on the Path. Having reached the goal and refused its fruition,

he remains on Earth, as an Adept; and when he dies, instead of going into Nirvana, he remains in that glorious body he has woven for himself, invisible to uninitiated mankind, to watch over and protect it.

This is entering the deepest waters of spiritual teaching and it needs a strong soul to live the kind of life that will lead to this lofty condition. But "the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step," and in our day-to-day practices we can slowly lay the foundation for the kind of life we wish to live as students of Theosophy. What we are aiming at is the realm of freedom and light, which can never be as gloomy as this vale of tears that we live in; so there is no need for regret of any kind. As mentioned earlier, to prepare ourselves for the reception of this higher wisdom moral duties have to be discharged by gentle thoughts, kind words, good deeds and good will to all. This will help us to conquer "the great dire heresy of Separateness" and to find out what life really is all about. We have to gradually become at one with the UNIVERSAL ALL and live a life that befits the quest for such an understanding. But let us not be too hard and fast in our observances nor lose the "common touch." Let us not shrink from anyone with pride, but hold out a helping hand to everyone.

We read about our first object countless times, but how many of us truly live it and how many find reasons to be excused in one way or another! We should live the life, but beware of dogmatism. H.P.B. herself said that outward observance of fixed rules of life is a matter of secondary moment, whereas the chief necessity is absolute unselfishness of purpose and devotion to Truth. By way of example, she mentions Father Damien and Sister Rose Gertrude who went to work and live among lepers. H.P.B. writes in her article "The Last Song of the Swan": "Before such work, of practical Theosophy, religion and dogma, theological and scholastic differences, nay even esoteric knowledge itself, are but secondary accessories, accidental details." This should make us all think very deeply. It should help us to put things in perspective and give us some clues as to how we should manage our day-to-day lives. Perhaps we cannot be like Sister Rose Gertrude or Father Damien in this life, but in even the smallest duty we can try to exercise a little loving-kindness, and thereby make the path less thorny for someone.

---

## THE PHENOMENAL AND THE NOUMENAL

THE physical world in which we live is phenomenal; it is functional. The world to which Theosophy strives to direct our attention is one of cause; it is noumenal. The words of the Teaching and the example of its Teachers and disciples of whatever grade or degree of development convey to us the importance of this philosophy's insistence on the consideration of both the functional and the causative aspects of life.

Because we live and work in a phenomenal world, our nomenclature is predominantly functional. Significantly enough we find that the Theosophical terms, those directly presenting the Wisdom-Religion, are both functional and causative, phenomenal and noumenal. When we deal with only the functional aspect of these words, we are skimming, relating the contrasting effects of illusionary objects or actions. When we begin to probe the hidden meaning and implications of the terms, we are reading within the words, approaching the noumenal side of the philosophy. This is just another way of saying that we are employing a procedure which brings us to one aspect of the occult world, which is hidden within the phenomenal world. It is the noumenal world, the world of causes. It is open to students of Theosophy for the simple price of a practical approach.

Now the first step in this practical approach is to develop a kind of "divine discontent," an insatiable desire to *know*, coupled with a firm conviction that knowledge is obtainable only by those who make an unremitting effort. The kingdom of heaven is taken by storm. The kingdom of heaven is within, and the within refers to the Mind so far as most students are concerned. It is a faculty, a principle, too often neglected by would-be Occultists. These are prone to believe that familiarity with certain basic terms constitutes knowledge, that in defining an act they are explaining a cause. They believe that the repetition of sacred phrases is all that is needed to arouse eventually the intuitive faculty which, in some miraculous manner, is going to make the incomprehensible plain, the crooked road straight.

If this were so, all that the Masters would have needed to do was to give us *The Voice of the Silence* and a few other devotional books and rest there. Where was the need for the ponderous volumes of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, and for the hundreds of articles by H.P.B., Judge and other qualified persons? Surely they were not writing simply

to display their knowledge. On the contrary, they knew that the only way to the spiritual life in this age is through the mind. They make every appeal to the mind, for if the Buddhi and the Manas of the race are to be raised, what is needed is an aroused, questioning and comprehending mind, acting as a magnet for the illuminating, inspiring and compassionate light of Buddhi.

How then can we begin to look within a term, how approach its noumenal, causative aspect? Consider the word Karma. This is quite a familiar term in its functional aspect. It means action and reaction. We think of it as a body of accumulated effects which is gradually and continuously precipitating itself upon us. Moreover, if we are not careful, we consider it as something related mostly to the "other fellow." If the "other fellow" is suffering or is in bad conditions or is being exploited by another, we readily agree that it is his Karma to be so placed, and this conclusion is used as a kind of excuse for not bothering to improve his situation. On the other hand, if he is in good conditions we may admit that somehow he must have earned being so, though it may seem to us a mystery how one so obviously undeserving should be the recipient of so much good! Somehow we are inclined to feel that the good things we receive come because of our ability, our acumen, etc., but the bad are unfortunately being precipitated from the past. At best we *believe* that law prevails and we try our best to accept this as a means of reconciling ourselves to bad conditions. But to whom does it occur that it is just as necessary to attempt to reconcile ourselves to the so-called good conditions? In short, we accept the good as our due, but the bad we do all in our power to reject.

We speak of Karma as being good or bad in terms of our likes and dislikes, comfort and discomfort. This is the functional aspect of Karma. From one point of view this differs little, practically, from the theological beliefs in a divine dispensation and in a Saviour.

Earnest students of Theosophy can never be satisfied with such a functional, phenomenal understanding of Karma. They will demand a more basic understanding of this central proposition. Why does Karma adjust the effects flowing from causes? Why is it unerring and inevitable? To believe that it is so, forms, no doubt, a good working basis for an ethical system more satisfying and more reasonable than that of divine dispensation.

How shall we proceed to a better understanding of the term "Karma"?

Let us look within the term and, with the knowledge that Theosophy provides, try to see how it may function. One way is to begin by analysing the term itself. Three basic terms seem to be suggested in the word Karma. *Ka* can be considered as related to *Kama*; *R* as related to *Rajas*; and *Ma* as related to *Manas*. Here, then, is a world of clues for our consideration. Thus we may infer that Karma is the effect or result of the operation of two principles, *Kama* and *Manas*. We say that Karma is action; and *Kama* plus *Manas* produces *Rajas*, action. This of course is the process Theosophy repeatedly describes. Desire, "which was the primal germ of mind," arose in That and from it was produced the universe. Intelligence, an aspect of mind, functions in all parts of Nature.

From this many inferences can be drawn. The operation of Karma is inevitable and just. Justice is present only to the extent to which equilibrium prevails or is in the process of being restored. Now, since Karma is unerring and Mind is a ruling factor in Karma, we can conclude that the action of Mind should be infallible. Applied to the intellectual process, we must see that, given a certain premise and honest thinking, the false premise must produce an incorrect conclusion and its end product will be unbalanced action. This is true at all times and in all circumstances.

The intelligence in Nature, moved by Desire, mathematically proceeds upon a basis or premise of inherent impressions to develop all the multitudinous forms in Nature. This we call evolution by natural impulse. It comes about as the action of Desire plus Mind, which equals Karma in its universal aspect. The intelligence in man, motivated by Desire, mathematically proceeds upon a basis or premise of inherent ideas to develop all the multitudinous relationships we observe in the human kingdom. This we denominate intellectual evolution. Here Desire plus Mind equals Action, equals Karma in an individualized or separative aspect.

Again, in some exemplary members of the human family we observe Mind, motivated by purified Desire, mathematically proceeding from a basis of Divine Ideation, developing the universal, brotherly relationships of the Theosophical Movement. Here again Mind plus *Kama* in its purest form equals Action or *Kama* in the Universal aspect which we call Spiritual Evolution.

From all this it follows that as individuals we can have wrong thoughts, but never honest conclusions that contradict our premises. We

may start from a false premise, but our thought process and deductions in terms of it will be correct though the resulting action may be undesirable. Thus it becomes evident why Theosophy is a system of Knowledge, not beliefs; why the Teachers insist upon the development and proper use of the mind as an indispensable factor in the evolutionary process; why H.P.B. stated that Theosophy must remain a riddle "to the mentally lazy or obtuse."

Mind plus Desire produces Action, *Rajas*; this is Karma. Here, too, is the clue to the *Gita's* insistence on the necessity for being unaffected by Desire and the resultant action. Desire in its widest sense is the motivating force of life, of any phase of life. Hence release from any form of existence can come only from the cessation of the Desire relating to that form.

But mark this well: We obtained our complex involvement in form by the action of *Kama* and *Manas* working toward involvement. Hence release from this can be obtained only by an equal amount of energy being expended in the opposite direction. Both Desire and *Manas* must be employed incessantly to obtain release from our phenomenal involvement, and the Path to this is indicated by the Masters.

It is the Path of Knowledge, Knowledge of the noumenal, the causative. The first gate to the Path is that of learning. Learning what? Learning to look within the words, learning to realize their meaning, learning to apply the result of the knowledge obtained, for in this manner alone is Karma worked out. We must remember that Desire and *Manas* are but two sides of the triangle. The third side is Action, *Rajas*. That is why it is said: "He does good who knows how to do good." These three principles are inseparable—first the Desire, then the Knowledge, then the Act. These three are actually one, separated only by our illusionary, deceptive concept of time. We call these three principles—KAMA, RAJAS, MANAS—KARMA.

---

EVERY man feels instinctively that all the beautiful sentiments in the world weigh less than a single lovely action.

—Lowell

## THE TRUE AND THE FALSE

The weakness is not that of our real Selves, the inner Man, but of that which we have leaned upon, the *false ego*.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE false ego is very real to us indeed. Most of the time it is the false ego that is acting in us. The great tragedy of man is that he has forgotten the existence of the Real Ego. Instead of acting in accordance with the promptings of the Real Ego, he constantly responds to the dictates of the false ego; and he does this so persistently that, as noted, he forgets the nature and the presence of the Real Ego. We must learn to distinguish between the promptings of our lower nature and those of the higher. One help in doing this is to be found in the knowledge that all actions prompted by the false ego are directed towards itself; that is, these actions are always centripetal, self-centred. The actions prompted by the Real Ego are centrifugal, that is, away from the lower centre—unselfish or selfless. The false ego responds to conditions by making demands for its own satisfaction, with no consideration of others. The Real Ego always inspires altruistic actions, that is, actions performed for the benefit of others. The false ego always works for separative and material benefits. The Real Ego always works towards unification and spiritual benefits.

The objective of the present evolutionary process is for us to convert or transmute the false ego gradually so that it will act in accord with the dictates of the Real Ego, the Inner Man. This is done either through a gradual, self-induced procedure or through drastic revolutionary methods. The first is the proper method, as it is relatively painless and wise. But when we do not take our evolution into our own hands, then we are compelled to learn the lesson the hard way and are subjected, either individually or collectively, to upheavals, suffering, sickness, wars, epidemics of one kind or another. This brings to us the realization, however fleeting, that the false ego is indeed but a mask and a deception.

The Masters of Wisdom down the ages have always acted in terms of the Real Ego. In Them the lower, false ego has been transformed into a completely centrifugal, outgoing, altruistic, unifying, spiritual force. We naturally hold Masters and Great Souls in esteem because They have discarded the mask, the false ego, and reveal to us Their true nature. This is in part the secret of the tremendous popularity of Jesus, of the Buddha,

and of all great men who have succeeded in becoming the benefactors of mankind. Our admiration develops also from the fact that They show to us what we may become.

To have a glimpse of the God within, the Real Ego, the less progressed need a Bridge—the Great Ones. The light shines in all, but in Them alone It shines forth in all its splendour. Jesus said: "...how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Again, he said: "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." In such Great Ones the false ego has been subdued; it has become completely transformed and identified with the Real Ego and hence the personality (the son) and the Divine Self (the Father) are one.

The Mahatmas love humanity because They are able to see the soul and the spirit behind the mask of each personality. When we look for the best in others, we are striving to see behind their masks, their false egos. That is why it is constantly taught that we should not accentuate or be disturbed by the petty, selfish or evil acts of others, but should rather look for their good intentions and actions.

Sometimes men and women become so steeped in the machinations of the false ego that the Masters can do nothing but withdraw from outward contact with society. Nevertheless, They do this under cyclic law, without prejudice, knowing that the world, aided and often humbled by revolutions, will eventually turn toward the Light once more and be in a condition that will again permit more direct help from Them.

The same principle can be applied in relation to our own individual experience. Sometimes we must do the same with those we want to help, and others may find it necessary to do the same with us. But if we are honestly motivated we shall eventually become amenable to proper help from others. Again, sometimes through our own accentuation of the false ego the Real Ego is prevented from coming to our help in times of stress and need. We then have to go through periods of suffering until we adjust the lower aspect of our nature and make it sensitive and responsive to the Real Ego, who then is again able to function as our guide and mentor.

---

HITCH your wagon to a star.

—EMERSON

# CULTURE OF CONCENTRATION

## V.—The Awakening Will

IN the very early stages of its "Comments," *Light on the Path* discloses that its teachings are chiefly directed towards the cultivation of the astral life, and that until the first step has been taken in the development of that life the swift knowledge that is intuition is *impossible* to us. It therefore becomes necessary to promote that particular type of astral development which that treatise advocates. It is that particular type of concentration which is achieved by the exercise of a purified will alone that is enjoined. Practice of this along well-established lines precedes and aids astral development. It is this particular and specialized aspect of concentration that has now to be understood. Before the goal of the entire suppression of all *vrittis* can be reached, the student has to learn how to suppress the undesirable ones.

When the awakening will has achieved this to some extent, the next step, namely, the maintaining of certain selected *vrittis* to the exclusion of others, becomes possible. The discipline chosen and the methods by which it can be woven into the fabric of life must now remain the chief, if not the exclusive, subject for the aspirant's contemplation. Considerations such as these are germane to the larger life. However, long before they can be translated into action, the individual has to enter upon a rigid discipline which promotes a balanced and healthy astral growth. *Light on the Path* gives the time-honoured Rules and their earthly rationale. But unless these Rules are studied by him who in heart has become a disciple, the astral message remains sealed.

Fixity of mind motivated by that pure aspiration which alone goes into the making of a disciple is enjoined by teachings which are common to all mystic Brotherhoods. Any work undertaken, be it the most trivial—taking a bath, sitting down to a meal, partaking in recreation, enjoying the company of the like-minded—each affords a unique opportunity to exercise the same fixity of mind which later will be used to help the Soul reach its high and exalted estate. The vague haziness that surrounds and obscures most human efforts must henceforward be replaced by a determined and concentrated will—not that kind of will which is frigid and destructive of brotherliness and which is so commonly displayed by the selfish egoist, but the one which, though more concentrated and focused, becomes a force that is benign and radiates the strength which

resides in faith, hope and love. In the ultimate analysis, this superior force comes through the invocation of the Inner Ruler to preside over the bath, the meal, the recreation and the congregation of friends. The living, vitalizing presence of the Ruler makes the trivial act important, invests it with spiritual potency and makes of it an engine for the propagation of the faith.

Concentration of this kind is to be specially fostered in four important avenues of the disciple's endeavour. These are: (1) performance of duties; (2) study of the instructions received; (3) seeking of all avenues to help brothers who are of the same persuasion; and (4) reverting to a contemplation of the Spirit in all moments not occupied by spiritual undertakings. This concentration of the disciple's mental essence into spiritual moulds has to be attained by constant and unremitting efforts. It trains the will and advances astral growth.

Here a word of caution becomes necessary. Concentration has been known to be so applied as to serve ignoble ends. The successful tycoon; the scientist who perfects greater and more devilish engines of torture, are all indebted to concentration for their success. Stumbling upon an inner power does not give them the qualifications for discipleship. Their concentration bears the taint of earth-bound desires, and for that reason the fruits which grow upon their tree of life have at the core the worms that precipitate putrefaction and death. Such men, too, have an astral development because concentration ensures that growth, but that development pertains to the dark side of life and, if pushed further, may lead to unmitigated black magic.

Yet another case where caution has to be exercised is in respect of those steeped in earthly lusts, prone to lying and the coveting of another's happiness. Such persons have to shed their failings before they can be considered fit to receive the secrets of the inner life. Then, there are those whose imaginations are fired by tales of magic. The glamour of the unknown becomes so strong for them that for some time they may fascinate themselves into an outward calmness that hides the seething passions within. These, too, are not ready for the inner life and the secret instructions. Their time will surely come when, after cleansing themselves, they are ready to honour pledges for the higher life. But not before. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Krishna gives the warning and the injunction: "Thou must never reveal this to (a) one who doth not practise mortification, (b) who is without devotion, (c) who careth not to hear it, and (d)

who despiseth me." No true Yogi, no saint or prophet has departed from these instructions. The moment he does so, he loses all that he has gained.

To the ordinary person, the ways to occult wisdom are barred. His mental make-up is under disarray. The lenses, to use a simile, are not put to their precise uses and, without a rearrangement, things remain out of focus, or become distorted, or are magnified unduly, or even minimized as when the wrong end of the binoculars is used. A mere desire to become a disciple or to penetrate the arcana of the divine astral is not sufficient for admittance. The aspirant has to prove that he cannot be frightened by false fires; that neither swooning pleasures nor yet excruciating agonies are capable of throwing him off his fixed purpose. For this, no special tests like the labours of Hercules are imposed. No examination papers are set for answers within a prescribed time. The fact of the matter is that even the very manner in which the aspirant approaches the circumstances of his life is a test and a trial.

Yet, the aspirant will find when he looks back on those early days that the circumstances appear to have been set by a master hand, that exactly those temptations came which in their alluring garb he was induced to toy with and later to accept. This is proof positive, if proof were indeed needed, that Life is intelligent and that it can judge motives as well as probe weak chinks in the aspirant's armour. The role of this intelligent life as a teacher dare not be ignored any longer. By "circumstance," Arjuna lost his inheritance, his princely rank, and had to wander for many long years in exile. The Buddha, led on by what Sir Edwin Arnold called the "Voices of the Wandering Wind," laid aside his rights to a kingdom, left home and friends, to roam the earth—a beggar-prince, ill-fed, ill-clothed, living with the meanest of the land, till salvation came as a culmination of the long and agonized vigil. The aspirant to discipleship cannot avoid the agonizing trials which will result from his own little efforts at the arousing of his inner secret nature. By entering upon the quest symbolized by the Holy Grail, he lashes to fury his greatest enemy—his lower self, and once that both are locked in combat, only death or subjugation of one or the other will end the fight. Even for the Christ, the agony must have been so great as to make him exclaim: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Yet not as I will, but as thou wilt" (*Matthew*, xxvi, 39). And this at the level of the Christ! How terrible must the ordeal be for him who faces a darkness that to him becomes a frightful void, and if fancy is not held in check, it may drive him mad with fear. The only

consolation the aspirant can have is that there have been persons, and there probably are quite a few even now, who are going through these tortures, who as the necessity ceases will find those who have already made the grade, ready to receive them as of their company.

During the dark hours of his trial, the aspirant has to accept the darkness as a gift without which he would never gain concentration of that quality which alone can change the colour and fabric of his mind to suit the atmosphere that he will enter on success being achieved. He *has* to achieve the balance point where neither pleasure nor pain can send their oscillations to the Soul. In achieving this, his mastery over the pairs of opposites establishes that particular type of equanimity which is called Yoga. This is essential for the simple reason that it is only when the Soul can stand firm and unaffected that it can weigh and test all experience and learn what each particular occasion—painful or pleasurable—has to impart. The poise which the Soul is being trained to adopt is analogous to that of the babe who is learning how to stand or walk. If it gets frightened by any sight or sound, the muscles that preserve the balance are for an instant paralysed and the child falls. This same phenomenon is observed when the child is emotionally stirred by gladness. It loses, for the time being, the power to control the mechanism that governs the aligning of the constantly shifting centre of gravity of its body. We see the same force at work in a strong, healthy person when under the stunning effects of sudden alarm or dismay he totters and abruptly sits down. The balance which is required for the erect body is for that instant lost—a case of partial paralysis of the faculty which in some cases is so acute as to become complete—and people say that he has suffered a stroke.

The student has therefore to learn how to grasp each measure of pleasure or pain as it comes to him—in large quantities or in small—and wrestle with it to master his own reactions. So may the eyes and the ears be now used to bring their partial messages of the chaos outside—not for the gaining of pain or pleasure (the person sometimes yearns for pain as fiercely as he longs for pleasure), but to derive from their resistance the exercise he needs to lift weightier loads. He has no need to seek out or create the circumstances that would best serve his growth. Nature, which in all departments is intelligent, provides these in abundant measure.

When the disciple enters upon this discipline he faces what to him must appear as a dark and terrifying void. For, as it were, only a moment

back those very things bespoke to him a sensation of pleasure or pain. The oscillation between these two was to him life. He was familiar with them from infancy. Now, when he is asked to see and hear and at the same time ignore them and not permit any oscillation to affect him, he faces a stark negation of the values on which he had built his life. He faces a blank void, and not finding any moorings there, he rushes off to change his vocation and environment. But the voidness is now within him, and though he hide himself in the most unlikely places on earth, the emptiness of the void precedes him there. He seeks out priests, yogis, ashrams and monasteries where he can bury himself in oblivion and keep away from the mocking ghosts that he has aroused. And those ghosts follow him and perform their great duty of teaching him that the only haven of refuge is within that part of him which he has yet to acknowledge. But this blankness of the void has to be complete. No enemy can be allowed an entry, nor yet a friend. Sight and hearing must have evoked all their images of joys as well as of horrors and the Soul must have remained aloof—a spectator of the events which do not concern his larger life and which must therefore be ignored. He learns that it is possible for him to stand apart from himself—to observe from an elevated position the buffetings which his mortal lower self receives. He learns that that part of himself which oscillates between pain and pleasure and which weeps or rejoices at scenes which are gone for ever is not himself but is something which he has himself created as an instrument for grave and profound experiments.

It is only when the aspirant has passed through his terrifying ordeals and discovered his place of peace that he qualifies to come near to those who are Teachers of disciples. It is indeed a truism that when the pupil is ready, the Teacher is ready also.

---

TRUTH will never come into our minds so long as there will remain the faintest shadow of *Ahamkara* (egotism).

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In recent years, psychologists have come up with new findings about what happiness is and how to achieve it. The general consensus is that to feel happy our focus should be on the daily positive events in our lives, on our little accomplishments and victories. Something as simple as finding a good book, spending time with our loved ones, supportive relationships, challenging work and active leisure, can lead to subjective well-being, or happiness. It is when we put too much emphasis on occasional intense moments of joy that we risk disillusionment. Research has also revealed the need for self-involvement and control over the events that occur in our lives, both good and bad. Such mastery, and our awareness of it, say the psychologists, is the key to happiness.

In the July/August issue of *Psychology Today*, four top researchers define happiness, who has it, and how to get there. Their findings are drawn from interviews with thousands of subjects of varying ages, economic and educational backgrounds, sex, cultural origin, etc. One of the researchers, Dr. John Reich of Arizona State University, observes:

Based on clinical interviews and self-report measures I've initiated and studied, I believe that happiness is being aware not only of the positive events that occur in your life but also that you yourself are the *cause* of these events—that you can create them, that you control their occurrence, and that you play a major role in the good things that happen to you. Of course, though to a lesser degree, happiness is also the awareness that you can prevent *negative* events from happening. This sense of mastery over both the good and bad events in your life contributes to an overall sense of well-being....

The happiest people are not only able but also *motivated* to make good things happen in their lives—and are somewhat successful in their endeavours. Less motivated people are less happy, simply put....

Winning a lottery may make you happy for a short while, but a random event, occurring without our input, will not create long-term happiness. We need the sense of mastery, of control; the feeling that something good has happened because we *caused* it to happen.

One thing that people today believe leads to happiness is money. "But does wealth produce well-being?" asks David G. Meyers, Ph.D., author of *The Pursuit of Happiness: Who Is Happy—And Why*.

Have people in rich countries been consistently happier than folks in not-so-rich countries? Are people with high incomes...happier than folks with middle incomes? Have we become happier as a people thanks to our doubled real incomes since the mid-fifties?

The answers are no, no, no, and no. Wealth is like health. Its utter absence can make you miserable. But once your real needs are met, having more provides diminishing emotional dividends. A boost in income or possessions can make us happy temporarily. But soon we adapt, and begin lusting for a bigger fix.

Compared to 1960, the America of today has doubled spending power....But what has this economic growth meant for morale? Over the same period, depression rates have soared. Teen suicide has tripled. Divorce rates have doubled. The percentage of children born to single parents has sextupled (pun intended). The violent crime rate has boomed. Surely Al Gore was correct when he wrote that "the accumulation of material goods is at an all-time high, but so is the number of people who feel an emptiness in their lives."...

As we finish this millennium, one hears voices, including many feminists and those familiar with Asian and Third World countries, saying that the current definition of happiness is not only too materialistic but also too individualistic. It's good to accept ourselves. But it's also good to value close relationships, to be sensitive and responsive to others, to give and receive support. To be interdependent, not just independent.

And it's good to balance our celebration of individual rights with a parallel concern for social responsibilities and well-being. We need to define a ground between "me-thinking" and "we-thinking."

Another researcher, Alex C. Michalos, Ph.D., of the University of Guelph, Ontario, is of the same opinion—that the correlation between income and happiness is much less than people imagine. He attaches greater importance to good interpersonal relations with friends and family, to self-esteem, to short-range and long-range goals in life, and to varied interests:

People have always needed a portfolio of interests in their lives. And if you look at the descriptions of what makes people happy, they've remained incredibly similar over the years: healthy bodies, good, productive jobs, love, family, friends. And, on the internal side, contentment, peace of mind, satisfaction....

Remember that the "Big Bang" achievements are not as important, in terms of life satisfaction, as the sum total of all the little

moments. We need to cultivate an appreciation for the little things in life. Being able to recognize the everyday pleasures is every bit as vital as achieving new ones.

What true happiness is and the way that leads to it is indicated in the *Gita* in more than one place. It asks us to renounce all selfish desires and to be "happy and content in the Self through the Self." (II, 55)

For those enjoyments which arise through the contact of the senses with external objects are wombs of pain, since they have a beginning and an end...the wise man delighteth not in these. (V, 22)

...those who thus desire riches and enjoyment have no certainty of soul and least hold on meditation. (II, 44)

Stress has become a much discussed topic in our day and age when people are aiming at higher and higher materialistic objectives. Stress management consultants have sprung up in urban India, catering especially to executives and managers in the corporate world where there is a high level of competition and pressure to perform better and better. In *Saturday Times* (July 2, 1994), S. R. Josse writes of today's high-strung executives and their problems:

Welcome to the wonderful urban world where cholesterol levels rise in direct proportion to one's income; where ulcers, blood pressure levels, migraine, insomnia, schizophrenia and skin diseases, to name just a few, flow parallel with one's career and success. Stress—it's what makes some people tick while others have heart attacks....

Change—job changes, geographical moves, divorce or remarriage—appears to be the common denominator of stress. According to Dr. Alan McLean, a psychiatrist and area medical director at IBM: "All change involves a loss of some kind—familiar faces, places, pleasures, ways of doing things, or organizational supports. Promotions, demotions and transfers, however desired, are changes. Such losses are more severe than many persons recognize. Change is a threat to the ways people have developed to handle their dependency needs."

But change has become a prevailing life mode today. This is a time when "making it" is paramount; books telling how abound and many have even graced the best-seller list and shall continue to do so. A life rooted in constants is a thing of the past. While these conditions

do make life stressful for the individual, it is the individual who is responsible for the conditions.

Survival techniques, in whatever form, are essential if one wants to maintain one's sanity, and prosper in the corporate world today. While there are hundreds of antidotes to reducing stress that abound today, from religion, yoga, TM [transcendental meditation], river-rafting to ayurvedic and allopathic treatments, it is up to each individual to maintain his or her own equilibrium by way of career and personal goals. The fact is that, like a boat-race crew, people today are using all their energy to go faster and faster. But sooner or later they must realize that although the boat is still moving under its own momentum, the crew is completely exhausted, having used up all its energy.

According to Dr. Hans Selye, who introduced the modern concept of stress almost 50 years ago, "Everyone has to assess his strengths and weaknesses. Only through such self-assessment can a person decide what paths of life are worth pursuing, how fast he can run to achieve his goals, and how he can minimize the negative effects of stress on his life." All of this points to the need to slow down one's speed of living. Counting one's blessings, however scant they may be, is immeasurably wiser and psychologically healthier than straining to achieve material goals.

---

Suicide, common in most countries, accounts on an average for nearly one per cent of all deaths, and there are far more unsuccessful suicide attempts. Such prevalence of the behaviour, say some evolutionary geneticists, cannot be accounted for by standard explanations like social malaise or random cases of psychiatric aberration. Natalie Angier's article, "Evolutionary Angst" (reprinted from *The New York Times* in *The Sunday Review*, May 15) refers to recent research in the persistence of suicide at a fairly high rate across most cultures:

Dr. Daniel Wilson, a clinical psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School and an anthropologist at the University of Cambridge in England, emphasized that nobody argues that there is a single gene for suicide, or that suicide or mental illness should be thought of as good. But he and others said there may be plausible evolutionary explanations for at least some self-destructive acts....

Other evolutionary biologists suggest that suicide may not be an inheritable behaviour in itself but is simply the most tragic outcome of another trait that may be selected for—the tendency toward depression....

Some researchers have looked to other species for insights into the genesis of depression and suicide. The exercise is fraught with pitfalls....But biologists have identified numerous examples of creatures that sacrifice themselves for their kin, from termites that explode their guts, releasing the slimy, foul contents over enemies that threaten their nest, to rodents that deliberately starve themselves to death rather than risk spreading an infection to others in their burrow.

From the occult viewpoint, suicide is "the most dastardly and cowardly of all actions," for "there is far more courage to live than to die in most cases." No one has a right to put an end to his life simply because he thinks it is useless. In answer to "An Inquirer," H.P.B. wrote in *The Theosophist* for November 1882:

"Inquirer" is not an Occultist, hence his assertion that in some cases suicide "is not only justifiable, but also morally desirable." No more than murder, is it ever justifiable, however desirable it may sometimes appear. The Occultist, who looks at the origin and the ultimate end of things, teaches that the individual, who affirms that any man, under whatsoever circumstances, is called to put an end to his life, is guilty of as great an offence and of as pernicious a piece of sophistry, as the nation that assumes a right to kill in war thousands of innocent people under the pretext of avenging the wrong done to one. All such reasonings are the fruits of *Avidya* mistaken for philosophy and wisdom....

But there is hope for certain suicides, and even in many cases A REWARD, if life was sacrificed to save other lives *and that there was no other alternative for it*....There is a vast difference between the man who parts with his life in sheer disgust at constant failure to do good, out of despair of ever being useful, or even out of dread to do injury to his fellowmen by remaining alive; and one who gives it up voluntarily to save the lives either committed to his charge or dear to him.... all these *are not suicides*. The impulse which prompts them thus to contravene the first great law of animated nature—the first instinctive impulse of which is to preserve life—is grand and noble. And, though all these *will* have to live in the *Kama-Loka* their appointed life term, they are yet admired by all, and their memory will live honoured among the living for a still longer period. ("Is Suicide a Crime?":

reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, May 1954)

Suicides have not completed their natural term of life; and, as a consequence, are earth-bound. The prematurely expelled soul is in an unnatural state; the original impulse under which the being was evolved and cast into the earth-life has not expended itself; the necessary cycle has not been completed, but must nevertheless be fulfilled. The Ego, or the sentient individual soul, is unable to free itself from the attraction of the earth and has to vegetate and suffer all the torments of the mythical hell in it.

---

Does the depiction of violence on TV engender violence in society, or merely reflect it? In *The World and I*, July 1994, Barbara Hattemer argues that television violence directly promotes violence in the young. A vast amount of scientific research bears this out. Though the writer refers especially to conditions obtaining in the United States, other countries are not lagging far behind.

Throughout childhood, children learn by imitating what they see others doing [Hattemer writes]. Two-to six-year-old children cannot evaluate the messages they receive from the media they watch. They simply accept what they see as normal behaviour. Children cannot tell the difference between reality and fantasy until the fifth or sixth grade. Six-to twelve-year-olds imitate what they see and hear without fully understanding the consequences of what they are doing. Most adolescents do not have a fully developed, internal set of morals and values. They accept the conduct they see in the media as the social norm and integrate it into their own behaviour patterns.

What are the predominant messages of television, movies, and other media that our children are accepting and imitating? That violence is an everyday occurrence and an acceptable way of solving problems and that promiscuous sex is normal and expected of everyone, including younger and younger children....While television has unlimited potential for good, at the present time its influence on children's lives is largely negative....

Not everyone reacts the same way to violence. Poorly nurtured children with few inner strengths and without internalized boundaries are more susceptible to its influence than well-nurtured children who have received a strong value system from their parents. Children who

are under-supplied with parental love are often angry and chaotic inside. They are drawn to violent films, heavy metal music, and gangster rap because it reflects their inner turmoil. It both reinforces and offers approval for their negative attitudes. The combination of being undersupplied with parental nurture and overstimulated by violent media can be deadly....Research has found that the best defence against the media is a strong family that makes an effort to impart values and gives children clear boundaries.

It is adults, first and foremost, who must become more discriminating viewers and set an example to the young by not watching violent programmes. The essence of the old motion picture code, which declared that "self-regulation is wholly consonant with freedom of expression, needs to be recaptured.

---

### IMPORTANT

HAVE you renewed your subscription for the next volume (Volume 65) of THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, commencing in November 1994?

If not, may we have the necessary remittance soon?

The rates are:

|               | Annual Subscription | Single Copy    |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------|
| India         | Rs.30.00            | Rs.3.00        |
| Sterling area | £4.00               | £0.40 <i>p</i> |
| Dollar area   | U.S.\$12.00         | \$1.20         |

It is hoped that subscribers and sympathizers will renew their subscriptions at their earliest convenience. The remittances should be sent to Theosophy Company (India) Private Ltd., 40 New Marine Lines, Bombay 400 020. Cheques on banks outside Bombay should carry an addition of Rs.5.00, 50*p*, or 50 cents for bank charges.

Readers who find THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT helpful are requested to send in the names and addresses of friends who are likely to be interested in the magazine. Sample copies will be sent without charge.