

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

---

---

Vol. 69, No. 11

September 1999

---

---

### EDUCATION FOR LIFE

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, August 1961.]

Educate! Educate!! The children are our salvation. Just as the student of occult nature can imbue the new atoms of his body, which momentarily replace the old ones, with less vicious tendencies and thus regenerate himself by moral Alchemy and attain the "Elixir of Life," so can a nation work its own regeneration by educating the new atoms of its national body, its children.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE Ancient Wisdom, which modern Theosophy reiterates, asserts that man is a soul and that the course of evolution is the drama of the soul. The experience and emancipation of the soul is the purpose for which the universe exists. No system of education that fails to take serious note of the soul is therefore entitled to be called a proper and sane system; for education that ignores the *whole* man brings about but a lop-sided development in the young men and women who come out of schools or universities. They are consequently not prepared to meet life and its problems as they should be met.

Ancient philosophy takes the view that the "Soul is the seed which desires to know its own nature and therefore creates." The problem of education needs to be studied in the light of this statement. The soul desires or wills to have knowledge of its own

nature and therefore it engages in creative activity. We get five important factors: soul-*purusha*; desire-*ichchha*; knowledge-*gnana*; nature-*prakriti*; creativeness-*kriya*. Education has to deal with these five. Desire or will, knowledge or ideation, creativeness or imagination are the faculties of the soul through which it contacts nature or matter.

The will to manifest is inherent in the soul as it is in the seed. In trying to manifest itself, trying to recognize its own inherent nature, the soul begets ideas. And to create a form through which to manifest in the objective universe it needs imagination. Just as a seed, though it has inherent in it the power to grow, cannot fructify unless it is planted in the soil, so also the human soul which is a seed cannot unfold and see for itself what its own powers are unless it gets the soil of *prakriti*, nature or matter. The powers latent in the seed were acquired from the plant of a previous season; so too were the powers and faculties inherent in the human soul obtained during prior life-periods when it occupied other bodies.

Just as the power of growth inherent in the seed makes it derive from the soil, the atmosphere, the water and the sunshine the necessary sustenance that will enable it to shoot forth into a plant, so the will of the soul, acting on matter, makes for itself the body in and through which it can develop faculties. Ideation energizes the body and produces in us the faculty of perception and sensation. Imagination responds to the sensations and causes emotions. Emotions which are caught up by the sensations, which are dependent on and become subservient to the sensations, are what we call the passions. When the emotions are freed from the tyranny of sensation and are energized by ideation, then they become pure and compassionate ideas, become images created by the imagination, images brought into existence by the power of our own ideation.

Education naturally has to deal with the faculties of will, ideation, imagination, emotion-passion, perception-sensation, the body, and, above all, with the man himself who wills, who reasons, who imagines, who feels pleasure and pain, who perceives and senses and who acts with the body. Thus education becomes a sevenfold process—education of the man, education of the physical

body, and education of the five faculties which enable the man to contact, through his body, the world at large. There is spiritual training, mental training, artistic training, sense training, physical training, and training to perform works.

Real spiritual training does not imply religious training, or the teaching of the Bible or the *Koran* or the *Gita* or some other scripture. Religious training is not spiritual training; nor is it teaching the child the Theosophical doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation. Such teaching is the giving of information. Education consists not in giving information but in developing faculties. Spiritual education consists in teaching how to make use of those faculties which are of a spiritual nature. The training of the will—not obstinacy, hard-headedness and egotistical pride, but the arousing of the Spiritual Will, or the force of Spirit in action—and the directing of ideation along ennobling channels—these make for spiritual training.

Ideation linked to imagination makes for mental training. It gives to the mind the power not only to reason but to create. The image-making faculty—imagination—is a creative faculty. Indulging in fancy is not imagination. Imagination is the faculty which enables the consciousness, the soul, to make an image clearly and precisely.

Next comes artistic education, which consists in the training and proper interblending of imagination and emotion. When the image-making faculty deals with emotions we come into the sphere of art. Art reflects the morality of a people. It can make a civilization or destroy it. In it are the forces of spirit-matter. If spirit overpowers matter, construction results; if matter overpowers spirit, destruction is the outcome. So a proper interblending of soul and body, of spirit and matter, is an important point to take note of in educational programmes.

Emotions get mixed with sensations, and the culture of the emotions and sensations is the training of the senses. The senses cannot be trained unless the emotions are also trained. This is ignored, and then people wonder why one child likes certain things and another dislikes those very things. The eyes, for instance, may

see the same thing, but the response made by the emotions to what is seen, in terms of likes, dislikes, etc., makes the difference in seeing between different persons.

The training of the senses combined with that of the body makes for physical training. Physical culture as we know it today is not sufficient. Not muscular culture but increasing the body's receptivity to the higher influences from within constitutes real bodily training.

And finally there is the man himself, the soul, using his faculties and acting in and through the body. It is altruism, philanthropy, that is the essence of good actions. No civilization can achieve real greatness and prosperity if altruism be lacking. Altruism and art make the soul of a people and survive all else. So, in any programme of education, training in art and in altruism has to be carefully attended to.

Methods of education comprise four important factors: expression, impression, interpretation and imitation—the expression of the soul; the impressions that the soul gets with the help of its faculties; interpretation or the efforts of the soul and its faculties to produce equipoise between expression and impression, and in this the pupil needs the help of a teacher who knows by repeated trial and experimentation what are the right interpretations of the phenomena of life, subjective and objective; and in the fourth factor of imitation the teacher again plays an important role. The teacher's real function is not to stuff the brain of the child with information to enable him to pass examinations, but to provide an example, a model, which the pupil can imitate.

We today divide education into compartments. This is a wrong method. In the ancient system the pupil went to live with the teacher at an early age, and the method adopted was education through life, the teacher providing the example which the pupil could imitate. Possessions, it was insisted upon, must give place to creativeness. We in our age want our children to possess this, that or the other thing. Creativeness taking the place of possessiveness develops the inner faculties. There is no place for competition or dominion over others. An intelligent child must not be told that because he is more intelligent than the others in his class therefore he must defeat them

and get a prize which the others will not get. Rather should he be taught to show his superior intelligence in active life by helping those who are not so intelligent and giving them that which he has; and thus does he learn as he lives. That was the great purpose of the educational system in ancient India.

Three simple qualities that have to be practised in all the affairs of life need to be cultivated in the child. The first is *self-recollectiveness*. At present the mind of the child is made to jump from subject to subject and he does not know what he is about. Therefore should he be trained to recollect himself continually. The next quality that needs cultivation is *deliberateness*. A child has to be deliberate, not only when he is doing his lessons but also when he is eating his food, walking in the street, doing his daily chores. The third great quality is *harmlessness*, which consists in living the straight life, or the altruistic life, oneself, all the time and not on special occasions. All these qualities the child must learn by himself. Today we learn from others for ourselves. The ancient code was that one must learn by oneself for others.

We have an obligation towards the children. Teaching them with the right aim and by the right method will build a new society and bring about the reconstruction of our civilization. Not by giving information but by developing faculties in the rising generation will civilization go forward.

---

UNDER the sway of strong impulse the man who is devoid of self-control wilfully commits deeds that he knows to be fraught with future misery. But the man of discrimination, even though moved by desires, at once becomes conscious of the evil that is in them, and does not yield to their influence but remains unattached.

—*Srimad Bhagavatam*

## KILL OUT AMBITION

THE first set of rules in *Light on the Path* teaches us:

1. Kill out ambition.
2. Kill out desire of life.
3. Kill out desire of comfort.

If we consider the first rule, we find that it is very difficult to practise it in life. People generally push us to advance, and they may mean well. Our families and friends encourage us to rise in our job, or go abroad, or push ahead of others in the field of education, etc. So we grow up thinking that to be more learned or popular or efficient than others is not bad or wrong. But this is working for "self," and "to work for self is to work for disappointment." Nobody dares to say, "Do this for a cause." So all appeals are made for self-advancement. Even when someone takes interest in our welfare, we suspect that person has some self-interest, that probably he has an axe to grind, for the whole society is founded on self-interest and self-advancement.

Ambition is the first curse: the great tempter of the man who is rising above his fellows. It is the simplest form of looking for reward. Men of intelligence and power are led away from their higher possibilities by it continually. (*Light on the Path*, p. 15)

It is said that Lucifer was ambitious and he fell. Ambition can very easily deflect our attention from good works to the reward these works might bring, and that is why it is the simplest form of looking for reward. A person who starts off doing some good work, is in course of time not quite content with the good he is doing but wants importance and recognition to be accorded to him. Mr. Crosbie writes in *The Friendly Philosopher* that if we love to work for Theosophy and do not ask for position as a reward, then we are going in the right direction. As *Light on the Path* puts it, people want reward in terms of four things: wealth, power, fame and love.

The second rule asks the disciple to kill out desire of life. This implies only that desire which binds him to objective physical life. Soul begins to identify itself with objective experiences and therefore

feels that without these there is no life and no existence. This is desire of life. Desire of life is essential, but it must be a means to an end; *i.e.*, we care about life, but we are not attached to it. It is like an artist or workman who takes care of his tools and is therefore very possessive about them. But these tools are to be seen only as means to help him in his work. Like a person may be attached to his pen, and hence may not lend it to anyone; but just because it maybe a fine and expensive pen he cannot just keep it in the box all the time. This is how it is with life; it must be seen as necessary to gain experience for the soul.

As a counterpoint, the fourth rule says: "Respect life as those do who desire it." It seems to say that though one may be willing to leave life if needed, one must, however, respect the life of other people. Their physical needs also must be taken care of, like food, clothing and shelter. Every soul has a built-in thirst for life.

The third rule says: "Kill out desire of comfort." This must be understood and not carried to extremes. It implies being able to be happy in the situation one may find oneself in. But, if one is in comfort, one is not expected to insist upon having discomfort!

The fourth rule points out: "Work as those work who are ambitious. Respect life as those do who desire it. Be happy as those are who live for happiness." This rule gives alternatives to the first three rules. It tells us that as opposed to desire of comfort, we must be happy as those are who live for happiness. There is a great difference between those who *seek* happiness and those who live for happiness. In the first case, happiness is the goal. The American constitution has a clause that pursuit of happiness is the fundamental right of a person. Every person has a right to seek his own happiness. But when happiness is made the goal, it forever eludes the person. On the other hand, *being happy* is different; it is like holiness and wisdom, which does not come to people who are conscious of it. It comes to those who do not pursue it. So also happiness, like all the higher things of life, is not achieved by aiming at it, but just comes as a by-product.

Happiness and holiness are not outer pursuits; they are inbuilt, but we need to give them a chance to express themselves. We have

to fulfil certain conditions to experience happiness. As *Ananda*—unconditioned happiness—is an aspect of the One Reality, if we live the life necessary we can get closer to our higher nature and thus experience this unconditioned happiness. When we *aim* at obtaining happiness, the kind of happiness we get is only transitory and we are easily upset by small events that are not according to our expectations and liking.

As for ambition, *Light on the Path* points out: "It is easy to say, I will not be ambitious: It is not easy to say, When the Master reads my heart he will find it clean utterly." This happens at three levels: (1) When one admits this at the normal conscious level and says, "I will not be ambitious." (2) When one sits for self-examination and is able to see somewhat into the sub-conscious, and then at that sub-conscious level resolves not to be ambitious. Yet this looking into the sub-conscious does not happen at a very deep level. (3) It is when the Master looks into the consciousness of the *chela* that he is able to see if there is ambition lurking even at the deepest level of his consciousness. Generally, even though the Master has this power to look into the mind and heart of a person, he refrains from doing so. It is only in the case of an accepted *chela* that the Master looks into the *chela's* mind—with of course the latter's permission—and if he finds the *chela* going astray he drops a hint.

Ambition is very tricky; as we drive it out at one level, it reappears at a subtler level. It can appear at the level of wealth, fame, power or love. A person does a good deed and decides that he will not look for any material reward, *i.e.*, he will not expect compensation in terms of money or material wealth in general; even then he finds that he is still being ambitious at another level. He finds that he does not want a concrete reward, but he still wants public acclaim, recognition, praise, etc. Thus, from wealth his priority shifts to fame. If even this is forgone, ambition may yet lurk at the level of power. He may not want praise or material reward, but he still desires that he should be consulted, and if he is not consulted before any step is taken he feels angry or offended. Here ambition functions at the level of power. Even when these three levels are surmounted, he might just want to be loved for the good

work he is doing, whereas what needs to be aimed at is that, even when a person who does not love him in spite of his good deeds approaches him for help, he should be able to render it without reluctance.

Further, *Light on the Path* teaches:

Yet it [ambition] is a necessary teacher. Its results turn to dust and ashes in the mouth; like death and estrangement it shows the man at last that to work for self is to work for disappointment....For these vices of the ordinary man pass through a subtle transformation and reappear with changed aspect in the heart of the disciple....The pure artist who works for the love of his work is sometimes more firmly planted on the right road than the occultist, who fancies he has removed his interest from self, but who has in reality only enlarged the limits of experience and desire, and transferred his interest to the things which concern his larger span of life. (pp. 15-16)

The results of ambition "turn to dust and ashes in the mouth." Dust is the form of soil in which nothing is growing or can be expected to grow. Ashes is that which remains after a thing is burnt out.

Why have "estrangement" and "death" been compared to ambition? Death is simple to understand, as we know that with death all our achievements that are of a temporary nature vanish. Death is a factor to reckon with in anything we do in this life. Let us always keep at the back of our mind that we are going to die one day. It is said that in ancient Rome, amidst ceremony and jubilation at the coronation of emperors, there would be someone made to stand behind the emperor to say every few minutes, "You too are mortal," a kind of reminder that is necessary when we are in the midst of so much joy. Death puts a sort of framework around even a most beautiful picture.

As for estrangement, we can see that so long as there are two separate selves, estrangement or separation is always a possibility. Here again there is a warning that one cannot depend upon a thing or a person for one's happiness. Sometimes people say, after loss of money or material goods, or after separation from a loved one, that

they can never be the same again. In the *Gita*, we have been asked to meditate upon birth, death, decay, sickness and error. Estrangement has its roots in decay. Decay is inevitable for that which does not have roots in the spiritual.

It is important to note that ambition, like happiness, which depends upon outside factors, at last turns to dust and ashes in the mouth. The three aspects of the One Reality are *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda*. *Ananda* arises when *Sat* and *Chit* are together. Now this *Ananda*, it must be noted, is unconditioned happiness and does not, therefore, depend upon the happening of this, that or other event; whereas happiness pertaining to the ordinary consciousness depends upon many factors. Like this sort of happiness, even ambition fails to give permanent satisfaction. To be ambitious is to assert one's self as separate from all other selves. But there is in fact no such thing as separateness and we are all interdependent.

Why is it so difficult to kill out ambition, and what do we need to do? There is too much identification with the personality; we must become aware of the fact that we are not this body, just as we are aware that we are not the clothes we wear. This awareness, unfortunately, is there only at the intellectual level and to realize it one should undertake certain austerities. As stated earlier, ambition takes subtle forms in the case of a disciple. For instance, when the disciple feels that he is more pleasing to the Guru than the others, it is a subtle form of ambition. That is why the book says that the artist who works for the love of his work is sometimes more on the right road than an occultist who has merely transferred his interest to the things which concern his larger span of life, but has not really given up interest in self. In spiritual development there should not be the feeling: "I am making progress; I am different from other ordinary men." As *Light on the Path* says:

It must be the eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire of growth. For in the one case you develop in the luxuriance of purity, in the other you harden by the forcible passion for personal stature. (p. 3)

We are required to widen our horizon. We are always bothered about the petty and personal things of life and so are not able to be

happy. We seem to be using *both* the telescope and the microscope and it is up to us how many times we would use the one or the other. We are perhaps using the microscope more often, and so we need to go up on the terrace and use the telescope as well!

For now, at the threshold, a mistake can be corrected. But carry it on with you and it will grow and come to fruition, or else you must suffer bitterly in its destruction. (p. 16)

"Threshold" here refers to the early stage. There are many stages in the process of spiritual development and each new stage has its own beginning, which can be called a threshold. This seems to suggest that in the earlier stages of our development it is easier to get rid of our defects if we notice them, but at later stages it is difficult as we also acquire powers. It is easy to remove a weed, but when a seed remains in the soil and grows into a tree, it fixes itself there with firm roots. Just so there are "weeds" that interpenetrate our thoughts and then it becomes difficult to remove them.

In other words, the neophyte has to be clear about his motives right in the beginning. As he acquires more powers while still harbouring wrong or selfish motives, the greater the harm he can bring to himself and to others. One who has learnt to be modest right from his childhood is not likely to be very puffed up and haughty when he acquires name, fame or money on growing up. Whereas one used to boasting and proud about his smallest achievements is later more prone to pride and vanity at his successes.

Money has its use inasmuch as it helps a person get the necessities of life, leaving him free to use his mental powers for something higher and better. But when he is solely after money, his whole world revolves around it, which at times brings more worry and unhappiness than joy. As Wordsworth says:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers;  
Little we see in Nature that is ours.

There is so much to enjoy in Nature, but one who is entangled in money transactions misses it all.

---

## THE MORAL PATTERN

IN 1893, W. Q. Judge wrote: "This age... 'is an age of transition,' when every system of thought, science, religion, government and society is changing."

Today, the questing spirit of man, like the rising river which overflows its accustomed barriers, is breaking down the dams of tradition, custom and inherited standards. What does it seek? A better avenue for its force, a more profitable use of its energy, a re-oriented direction to the Goal.

One sign of the great change is seen in the search for Moral Values. There is, however, only a minimum basis of agreement as to what constitutes morality. This is significant in uncovering how far apart men's minds have drifted in regard to "morality." For the educated, apart from sex and the dicta of authoritarian religions, the word has no significance, and for a growing number the "moral" qualification has been deleted entirely from sex.

The term "moral idea" is still needed, however, because it represents an organic function in an individual's mental life. So long as he conceives of a Pattern, a Plan, a Picture in Great Nature, he must think of his own place in that Plan and establish his values in life, values that give meaning, direction and purpose to life. Ends determine the character and quality of means; means, in this universal relation, are Moral Ideas.

But goals differ, at least in people's conceptions. There are the two ancient rivals, Religion and Science, one middle-of-road Humanism, and in the dim background a growing, discernible shape of Eastern thought, introduced and vitalized by Theosophic nurture and dedication.

"Which shall I choose?" asks the "angry young man." It is to be observed that some persons remain within the religious fold because they enjoy the "socials"—the get-togethers. Businessmen join in the customary prayers that precede their company meetings and conventions, to gain advantageous "contacts."

Are these people really searching for Moral Values? "No," say the "angry young men"; "they reap their desires, but we want

something beyond immediate security. We need to find meaning in our lives."

Meaning is derived from Truth, the changeless standard. Traditional religious morality is shunned by the intellectually enlightened because of its root in an unacceptable supernaturalism. But the irresponsibility of science has brought humanity to the verge of annihilation. Can *its* world-view be true? Humanistic endeavour does act as a sort of "buffer state" between the ancient antagonists, but offers no conceptual materials for that coveted understanding.

Truth comprises always that which *is*. Nature always *is*. Perhaps we should take a new "look" at Nature. Some of our scientists are doing that and arriving at surprising answers. George G. Simpson, in *The Meaning of Evolution*, reports on the significance attached to the "emergence" of mind in human evolution. He outlines a changed point of view now held by a large number of progressive scientists and names it the "New Evolution." The Darwinian creature, so long a victim of harsh and indifferent surroundings, now discovers, through its "emergent" mind, that environment may, to a large extent, be controlled, directed and planned; the means—Knowledge. Individual man, therefore, owes to his fellow men the careful nurture and transmission of knowledge. This becomes his first moral standard. And following closely comes Responsibility—to prevent the misuse of that knowledge which may bring catastrophe to the race. And finally, to protect and further the development of Individuality, the flower of the long evolutionary line.

This close integration of moral ideas with Nature's ways is the result of a true intuitive perception. It is organic, since it fuses Man and Nature into a living relationship. However, the results, so far, are limited because of the materialistic bias in deriving mind from a physical origin.

There is now sufficient warrant in the findings about the magnetic field, in both physics and biology, to re-examine with an open mind the ancient teachings of Theosophy about Nature and Man. To be willing to recognize that Nature extends beyond the "fences" of

mere physical perception is the "opener" on to the fields of understanding.

Theosophy teaches that the roots of visible Nature must be sought in the invisible realms. There, on the hidden planes, is to be found evidence of Plan and Purpose for a vastly organized living structure. Purpose points to a Goal. Ends imply means. Thus, man's awakened perception recaptures the memory of his place and function in the large framework of Nature's Grand Plan. And the constituent elements of his Path become his vital, meaningful Moral Values.

Specifically what are they, and how are they derived?

The rays of light that encompass our Universe all come from one source, the Sun. The core of Life, energizing and sustaining man and all the creatures of Great Nature, is a Ray from the invisible realms where Life always is, infinite and indestructible. Thus, there is kaleidoscopic variety of face and form, but One Life, making all brothers in fact, though not yet in awareness of this fact. Whatever the drives and impulses that arise from proximate needs and desires of form, they are all subordinate to the overwhelming fact—we are all brothers in Essence. And so, men's true relationship is clearly implied. It is easy and "natural" to say: "I love my family as myself." But we must grow into saying and meaning: "I love my neighbour as myself." This is the first basic Moral Idea.

And the second is—Responsibility. My weaknesses, difficulties, hardships can be traced only to myself, in the long run. Under the laws of Karma and Reincarnation, we recognize this judgment as true and just. And so, wiping away the webs of deceit and illusion that surround us, we awaken to the Power within, the handmaiden of Responsibility.

Power, responsibility and the vast cycles of experience that lie ahead point to the third Moral Idea—Opportunity. Under Nature's wise Plan, man must progress by his own efforts, develop his own initiative. Muscles become strong through use. Judgment and discrimination are the flowers of experience, the vision that encompasses the knowledge of many wrong choices, of the deceptive lures of illusionary appearances. Self-growth, leading to the planes

of higher human life, is the opportunity for every self-conscious Soul—tempered by Responsibility and in the framework of Brotherhood.

Such is the overall pattern of life, as taught in Theosophy. There is, in addition, a more immediate problem having its place in the Grand Plan: the individual as Soul must free himself from the influences of his personality. To live in the world of form, and yet not be of it, he must achieve True Perception and exercise Dispassion. Thus, Detachment becomes his immediate pressing Moral Idea.

With even a modicum of success in this practice, he may soon perceive and understand the possibility of his next step on the path trodden by his predecessors who have achieved a state of human life "devoid of the feeling of personality and of the *human* emotional nature—two purely earthly characteristics." (*S.D.*, I, 275)

Truly, Moral Ideas are the gateways to our liberation, but only when given vitality and meaning through Theosophy, the Soul-satisfying Wisdom.

---

It is not from the immutable and absolute principle, which is only *in posse*, that the gods, or active principles of the manifested universe, emanate. The Absolute neither having, nor being able to have, any relation with the conditioned or the limited, that from which the emanations proceed is the "God that speaks" of Basilides, that is to say, the *Logos*, which Philo calls "the second God," and the creator of forms.... This "second God" is no more an emanation than the shadow that our body casts upon a white wall is an emanation of that body. At all events this God is not the effect of a cause or an act that is reasoned or of conscious and deliberate will. It is the periodical effect of an eternal and immutable law, independent of time and space, and of which the *Logos* or creative intelligence is the *shadow* or the *reflection*.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## THE REAL TRANSMUTATION

IN how many of the Gothic romances of an older generation did not the mysterious figure of the alchemist play a part, seeking either to transmute base metal into gold or to brew the philtre that would bestow the gift of eternal youth! Mary Shelley, wife of the poet, wrote a fascinating story on this last theme. It ends grimly, though, with only bitter retribution resulting from the eagerly desired sip of the magic potion.

How different is the alchemy so often advocated by a wiser Master! Mr. Judge sums it up in a single sentence: "Unselfish labours for humanity can alone relieve us from the ocean of *Samsara* (Rebirth), develop our highest potentialities, and help us to alchemize our human weakness."

*To alchemize our human weakness!* That is the one form of occult art that Mr. Judge would have us practise. He has chosen the word with his usual nicety. For, to alchemize is to transmute. Our base metal must become gold. Our human weakness is to be changed to spiritual strength and integrity.

He would have us set the process going immediately. "Seek, then, to live the Higher Life by beginning *now* to purify your thoughts by good deeds, and by right speech." A short, simple recipe. It should save us from time-wasting at the outset. There is nothing recondite about the method he suggests, yet who can deny that it is indeed the highest form of alchemy? For the "practice of altruism in deed, word, and thought...purifies the covers of the soul," he goes on to tell us.

Altruism first, last and always is for Mr. Judge the *sine qua non*, and he buttresses this tenet many times over in the course of his writings by showing it to be the redemptive process for even our physical bodies. We need not at present go into his teaching on "lives," but as our bodies are composed of these, he reminds us frequently how great is our responsibility to every single one of these almost innumerable living entities, and that only by our practice of altruism can they be purified and advanced in the scale of being. "If we do all our acts, small and great, every moment, for

the sake of the whole human race, as representing the Supreme Self, then every cell and fibre of the body and inner man will be turned in one direction."

Is not this alchemy indeed? Well did the wise of old know it. For the transmutation spoken of by the real alchemists was the alteration of the base alloy in man's nature.

But there is more to the process still. Even our altruism must itself be alchemized. Mr. Judge reasons closely. "The performance of a good act is no virtue unless the person within is in the right attitude of mind. Many an apparently good act is done from selfish, hypocritical, crafty or other wrong motives. These are only outwardly good. So we must attain to a proper state of mind, or mental devotion, in order to know how to perform our actions skilfully, without doing so for the sake of the result; doing them because they ought to be done, because they are our duties." Here the alchemy comes from *motive*. "Motive is the essential test," says Mr. Judge. Always, and repeatedly, does he emphasize the importance of motive. Its transmutative effect is far-reaching.

Is not this overdoing it? After all, are not we students of Theosophy? What need of alchemy when we already have plain lines of conduct laid down for us in the teachings? Says Mr. Judge, we need something more. "The fundamental doctrines of Theosophy are of no value unless they are applied to daily life. To the extent to which this application goes they become living truths, quite different from intellectual expressions of doctrine. The mere intellectual grasp may result in spiritual pride, while the living doctrine becomes an entity through the mystic power of the human soul." Alchemy again! Yes, we *must* practise it. "It is just the difference between intellectual assent to a moral, philosophical, or occult law, and its perfect development in one's being so that it has become an actual part of ourselves."

Mr. Judge provides a simple guideline for the striving alchemist who may be desperately asking himself whether his methods are right or wrong. "The true path to divine wisdom is in performing our duty unselfishly in the station in which we are placed, for thereby we convert"—*i.e.*, transmute—"lower nature into higher,

following Dharma—our whole duty."

Finally, in closing, here are three examples of what we have chosen, throughout this article, to call "alchemy." The first is from the opening letter from Mr. Judge's *Letters That Have Helped Me*. "The reason you have had help is that in other lives you gave it to others. In every effort you made to lighten another mind and open it to Truth, you were helped yourself." And again, "All help you extend to any other soul is help to yourself." Here is a beautiful instance of transmutation—what was *given* becomes what is *received*. In one of his sentences which are often more poetry than prose, Mr. Judge adds the comment: "Those pearls you found for another and gave to him, you really retained for yourself in the act of benevolence."

The second instance comes from the same book: "Do not look at things as failures, but regard every apparent failure after real effort as a success, for the real test is in the effort and motive, and not in the result." Alchemy indeed, when our failures can be transmuted into success! Note Mr. Judge's emphasis on motive.

The third example comes from *The Heart Doctrine* and is interesting because here the alchemist's ingredient for transmutation is one of the "baser" things—personal pleasure. "The desire for physical enjoyment, if rightly directed, becomes elevated, as a desire for something higher, gradually becoming converted into a desire to do good to others, and thus ascending, ceases to be a desire, and is transformed into an element of the sixth principle."

Truly, nothing in life is static. "All," as Mr. Judge says, "is forever in process of *becoming*." Or, to keep to the imagery we have been indulging in, all is *volatile*, like the alchemist's ingredients. And as those mages of the past devoted their lives to one object, namely, the transmutation of "base metal" into "gold," so let us emulate them in zeal and in refusal to admit discouragement, all the more so since our gain will be the greater, for "the real object to be kept in view is so to open up or make porous the lower nature that the spiritual nature may shine through it and become the guide and ruler."

---

## THE CONQUEST OF DEATH

THE whole gamut of human evolution may be defined in terms of the experience we call death. Men and women come and go, are born to die; death conquers them and they are none the wiser, they have not learnt the lesson. Every one of us has died many times in the past, but how many have solved the mystery of death?

The second stage in human evolution is marked when a person begins to inquire about the meaning of death; why death and what comes thereafter? This is the stage of questioning represented by Nachiketas in the *Kathopanishad*. In this second stage, man begins to conquer death.

The third stage is reached when death is conquered and man is no more man but a Master of his Life, wise enough and powerful enough to dispose of his forces and energies as he chooses.

Death conquers man; man struggles against death; man conquers death—these are the three stages which represent the entire curve of human evolution.

A little thought on this reveals another stupendous fact: death and life are not just bodily phenomena; they touch every other part of the human constitution. There is birth and death of the mind; there is death of the carnal person and birth of the spiritual; there is birth and death of soul itself. There are many intelligent persons who are soulless; there are many goodly people who are mindless—just as there are bodiless spooks and ghosts. An embodied person may be, often is, but a ghost, a very vicious ghost, a veritable *pisacha* in his nature and demands. Again, one living in a body of flesh and blood may be patient and loving and kindly—as good as an angel, but often as useless, for angels are not always useful! It is necessary to know this central fact—the death of the body is only one death, it is a type and a symbol of other kinds of deaths, deaths of the numerous constituents of man.

Death of the body is the least important of all deaths. Body is but a shadow; when powerful, it is by turns the house of sense-pleasures and then the house of correction; it is the tavern where drinks are procurable, and then the hospital where cures are effected. Only

when the body has been transformed into a temple does it come to play a really useful and serviceable part. Therefore death of the body is but a shadow of what takes place in the mind and the heart of the individual. Just as a temple-building is renovated and the image or the fire of old is used in the new building, so also the soul in control of the body renovates the body for his own use. It is the high destiny of every man and woman to be the conqueror of death. "Ye are born like ants and perish like butterflies," runs an old saying. "Be like the ray of the sun that is eternal; born every morn, retiring every evening, it ever moves forward."

One of the grand objects of the Theosophical Movement is to impart knowledge so that men and women may conquer death—gain the greatest of victories. To conquer death—that is the task of life. To begin to inquire about death is the first step, to use death as one's own servant is the last.

A human being may be divided into three compartments:

(a) Body and human personality (which includes physical body or *sthula sharira*, astral body or *linga sharira*, energy-*prana*, feelings-*kama*, thoughts-*manas*, "I"-notion-*ahamkara*).

(b) Soul and human Individuality (Thinker-*Manas*, Discerner-*Buddhi*, Individual-*Atma* (*Aham*)).

(c) Spirit and human Universality (Spirit-*Atma*, one with the All, one with *Ishvara* or *Pratyagatma*, etc.)

This classification of the human individual is useful and practical. *Manas* is immanent in the personality and is transcendent. Thus the very particles of the body are soaked through and through with the Highest, the All, *Atma*.

This triple division corresponds to the three classes of beings. Mere personality is conquered by death. Inquiry, search and struggle make the personal and the individual battle. If the Individuality triumphs, it conquers death, and knows itself as Universal.

Most men and women are born and die as personalities. Because of our faulty upbringing and education, the Spirit never manifests, save in very rare and exceptional cases. Mostly, human beings are a mixture of good and evil, but the personal, *i.e.*, the ray of the

Individuality incarnated here, retains its touch with the transcendent *Manas* through the personality's goodness. But through adoption of worldly, selfish ways the link between them becomes weaker with every unspiritual deed.

Because of blunders and sins committed, because the voice of conscience is not listened to, because atheistic and materialistic tendencies are accepted, men and women lose the direct guidance of the ever-brooding transcendent Individuality. Such are called soulless men and women, and we meet them in every walk of life. They are the godless people, for god in them has ceased to function.

Leaving aside the spiritual on the one hand and the soulless on the other, let us consider the case of the average person, a mixture of good and evil.

What is death? It is a gradual process, though it seems to culminate in one moment. Death is the gradual separation of the six constituents of the person. If we consider the processes in the body which bring about death, we can find out the *corresponding* law in reference to other constituents.

How does bodily death come about? Body is composed of lives called fiery lives. Just as fire cooks a dinner but can also burn it, so with fiery lives. These lives live and labour according to their own nature: they are of two categories—builders and devourers, creators and destroyers. They float in *Prana*, Life-Energy, and with its help build. When through worry, anxiety, excesses, etc., we pollute *Prana*, the builders become devourers; having no suitable *Prana* to live upon, the stronger among them devour their own weaker brethren and ultimately cause death of the body.

*Pranic* disturbances cause sickness. *Prana's* harmony gets disturbed by wrong feelings and thoughts; and the rhythm and balance of the body is not able to hold its own any more, and disturbance ensues. Bodily illness is a sign of one kind of *Pranic* disturbance; moods, of another kind of *Pranic* disturbance; similarly mind-activity produces a third kind of *Pranic* disturbance.

*Prana* is often translated as breath—breathing undergoes changes and these are signs and symptoms of health and disease, life and death. When breathing ceases in reference to the body, death

occurs.

There is another kind of death—moral death, death of the soul. Birth and death of the body are natural phenomena at the present stage of evolution, but death of the soul is not. It is an unnatural and abnormal phenomenon. It entails loss of time through loss of experience. Its chief characteristic is passivity which begets obstinacy; ready belief which begets ready disbelief; ready religiosity which begets atheism.

*Manas*, the Thinker, is the saviour of the ordinary person; that *Manas* gets drowned and submerged in the lusts and passions of life and thus a soulless being results. Here is the prototype of the real "untouchable." To him the temple doors are closed; for him no shrine exists. But he himself has closed the gates of the temples and the shrines.

Let us resolve to wipe out untouchability of the true kind—soullessness. Let us seek the company of *Manas*, the Thinker, and ask and learn. The fetters of soullessness are lust-*kama*, selfishness-*ahamkara*, pride-*abhiman*. When these devils live and thrive in the person, there is no compassion-*karuna*, nor charity-*dana*, nor sacrifice-*yagna*, nor dispassion-*vairagya*. Everyone desires to be good and selfless and righteous, but effort of the right kind must be made through study of the Great Books. People do not understand their religions; they cannot, because they do not possess the key. Theosophy offers the key. It teaches about the mystery of many kinds of deaths, as also births.

---

MIRACLES arise from our ignorance of nature, not from nature itself.

—MONTAIGNE

## MEANS OF MIND-CONTROL

COMMENTING on Patanjali's proposition that "Concentration, or Yoga, is the hindering of the modifications of the thinking principle," Mr. Judge writes:

..."concentration" is equivalent...to the obtaining of what the Hindus call "one-pointedness," or the power to apply the mind, at any moment, to the consideration of a single point of thought, to the exclusion of all else.

Training the mind to remain unmoved involves taking a firm position out of regard for the end in view, and adhering to it perseveringly "for a long time without intermission." Mr. Judge explains this as applying but to the length of time that has been set apart for the practice of this exercise. There seems to be a sense, however, in which it can be taken as applying also, though sometimes, alas, with varying intensity, to the entire thread of the life's meditation of the earnest aspirant.

Patanjali concedes the value of goodness.

Through the practising of Benevolence, Tenderness, Complacency, and Disregard for objects of happiness, grief, virtue, and vice, the mind becomes purified.

Mr. Judge adds in his note on this verse that the practice of these also brings about "cheerfulness of the mind, which tends to strength and steadiness."

Elsewhere also Patanjali refers to the beneficent results of harmlessness, kindness and disinterestedness. Most striking of all in this connection is his naming of "Forbearance" first among the practices conducive to concentration and explaining that by it he means "not killing, veracity, not stealing, continence and not coveting." "Happiness or suffering," he says again, "results, as the fruit of merit and demerit, accordingly as the cause is virtue or vice."

From purification of the mind and body also ensue to the Yogee a complete predominance of the quality of goodness, complacency, intentness, subjugation of the senses, and fitness

for contemplation and comprehension of the soul as distinct from nature.

But goodness alone, without control of the mind, will not bring us to the goal. Even the perfect contentment from which "the Yogee acquires superlative felicity" can come only from full resignation to the Law and to the Higher Self. We may equate it with "that tranquillity which only perfection of devotion confers," which Mr. Judge mentions in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*.

Besides "Forbearance," Patanjali enumerates seven "practices which are conducive to concentration." These are "Religious Observances, Postures, Suppression of the breath, Restraint, Attention, Contemplation, and Meditation." Defining "Religious Observances," Patanjali states that these are not rites and ceremonies, but "purification of both mind and body, contentment, austerity, inaudible mutterings" (with which we may perhaps equate Krishna's "diligence in the reading of the Scriptures" in the *Bhagavad-Gita*) "and persevering devotion to the Supreme Soul," than which nothing is more important.

Patanjali gives us very practical hints for gaining the mastery of this wandering mind of ours; for example, his reminder, which we should not need, that "concentrated attention to two objects cannot take place simultaneously," or his prescription for excluding questionable things from the mind—the mental calling up of their opposites. This, promptly and consistently applied, provides the sure safeguard against evil thoughts, the very shadow of which, *The Voice of the Silence* warns us, we should not suffer to approach, lest they overpower us. And experience confirms the value, in moments of vague or confused thinking, of fixing the mind firmly, as he recommends, on an object of sense perception, or on a spiritual subject, or on an ideally pure character.

It should be noted that both "Forbearance" and "Religious Observances" precede in the list the remaining six practices. Of the first of these, Postures, which he does not particularize, assuming apparently Hindu students' familiarity with them, Patanjali remarks, "A posture assumed by a Yogee must be steady and pleasant."

Mr. Judge assures us in his note that "the 'postures' laid down in

various systems of Yoga are not absolutely essential to the successful pursuit of the practice of concentration and attainment of its ultimate fruits."

Certain physiological effects are no doubt produced by particular postures prescribed by certain Hindu writers, but the Theosophical student will do well to remember the words of Damodar K. Mavalankar in his article on "Contemplation":

*Raj Yoga...requires no physical postures. It has to deal with the inner man whose sphere lies in the world of thought. To have the highest ideal placed before oneself and strive incessantly to rise up to it, is the only true concentration recognized by Esoteric Philosophy which deals with the inner world of noumena, not the outer shell of phenomena. (U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 12)*

The Hatha-Yogic practice of *Pranayama*, all too often taken by aspirants of Yoga in the sense of "suppression of the breath," is strongly warned against in our Teachings as being dangerous to health and even to life. The breath of one in deep meditation is observably different from his rate of breathing in ordinary waking life, but is it not the state of meditation that produces the quiet, rhythmic breathing, not the other way about? Patanjali in fact says that it is "when the mind has become thoroughly identified with the boundlessness of space" that "there should succeed regulation of the breath, in exhalation, inhalation, and retention," which regulation, he observes, "is further restricted by conditions of time, place, and number," no particulars of which are given.

Patanjali mentions also "a special variety of breath regulation," by means of which "the obscuration of the mind resulting from the influence of the body is removed. And thus the mind becomes prepared for acts of attention."

Mr. Judge explains that this refers to the governance of the breath by the mind "so as to control its direction to and consequent influence upon certain centres of nerve perception within the human body for the production of physiological, followed by psychological effects."

This seems obviously unsafe for anyone who is not under the direct care and guidance of a living spiritual Teacher. We should,

moreover, remember H.P.B.'s warning in the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*: "...beware of taking the exoteric works on Yoga literally. They all require a key."

It may be worth our while to consider in this connection the words of Shankaracharya on *Pranayama*. He has defined it as

the control of all life-forces by realizing naught but Brahman in all things....

The negation of the universe is the outgoing breath. The thought "I am Brahman itself" is called the incoming breath.

The permanence of that thought thereafter is the restrained breath. This is the *Pranayama* for the wise, while the pressing of the nose is only for the unknowing (*Aparokshanubhuti*, Verses 118-120)

He has also written in his *Viveka Chudamani* (Verse 13):

The knowledge of an object is only gained by perception, by investigation, or by instruction, but not by bathing or giving of alms, or by a hundred retentions of the breath.

---

ONE of the big questions we have about the life around us is how little we know about the fantastic creatures we share the Earth with. We don't know how many there are, or what kinds of things—new medicines or chemicals—they have to offer. It's like a library of unread books, and we haven't even finished the first chapter. And the great tragedy—more so for our grandchildren, who I think are going to be (how should I say it?) really peeved at us—is that we're losing the species around us before we can even turn the next page. Too many are dying that don't need to die.

—EDWARD O. WILSON

## "HEAVEN-SENT MADNESS"

PLATO is reputed to have said in one of his works that heaven-sent madness is preferable to man-made sanity. It is true that we live in a world of man-made sanity. What is regarded as "normal" is that which society decides is acceptable in the light of rules and regulations set by certain individuals or groups connected to a form of religion or political thought. There is certainly no room for spontaneity in all this "cold diplomatic reasoning" and, as society grows increasingly more materialistic, the gulf between the "madness" of the spiritual life and the "sanity" of worldliness grows wider. The wise utterances of spiritually awake individuals are laughed to scorn in our modern matter-of-fact world, and people cry that "seeing is believing" and thereby put an end to any chance they may have of opening their minds to the many wonders of the "Life Divine."

In the heart of a true aspirant for the Theosophical life is a pure and ever-growing love. This love in itself is an alchemy, and the process of bringing this feeling to fruition introduces a kind of "madness" into the life of the individual. Is it not true that once we begin to discern the divinity behind others' eyes, our perception of them changes and we lose sight of the man-made rules and regulations that are supposed to govern our lives? Once we begin to adjust our lives so that we place ourselves under the guidance of our Higher Self, we find that our attitude to life and to our fellow human beings changes. No longer do we respond to them as automatons, no longer do we see them in the ways that we are expected to see them; we gain insight into the real human being, and then we act from these realizations, which confuses the minds of those who proceed along the well-worn lines of conventional thought. Unable to discern the beauty and innocence of life in reality, they regard the gentle and inspiring words of one who is devoted to the Higher Life as a form of madness. Fortunately, there is that in each one of us that intuitively knows what is right. Another famous affirmation of Plato is that all learning is merely recollection. We are awakening to who we are, and although the lower mind may

rebel against the teachings of Reincarnation, Karma and the Divinity of the human race, the Higher Mind *knows* the truth of these and feels content at hearing things that are eternally clear to our true nature.

In truth it is a disbelief in such things that is the real "madness" and a return to an understanding of who we really are that is the "sanity" that we so need in this topsy-turvy world we live in.

Even a cursory glance at modern society will reveal its many shortcomings. But of course it is only when we have studied the precious teachings of Theosophy, as restated by H. P. Blavatsky and the Masters, that we can begin to see life as it is and realize that most of our suffering comes from a misunderstanding of Truth. Without these teachings we almost *expect* life to be full of misery and pain. We resign ourselves to a life of three-score-years-and-ten, full of illness, disappointment and eventually death. The subject of immortality does not enter the mind and so we are content to go on, meticulously avoiding the subjects of old age and death until they are forced upon us, and we complain constantly, pathetically reliving our past because we think we have no future! "Alas, alas, that all men should possess Alaya, be one with the Great Soul, and that possessing it, Alaya should so little avail them!" This "heart cry" from *The Voice of the Silence* is rendered even more poignant when we begin to understand just how relevant it is in modern society and when we begin to discern the potential of our fellow human beings. We read behind their eyes the great drama of their existence unfolding, and begin to comprehend how there are dramas within dramas, and yet most of us are sadly unaware of this, going through the motions of our lives blindly.

It is this great drama, the seeing of life as a stage and the human race, collectively and individually, as players, that invests the whole of existence with meaning. Students of *The Secret Doctrine* will be aware of this magnificent pageant unfolding before our very eyes and within our souls. But in our little lives do we not sometimes intuit this drama unfolding? How many times do we meet individuals or groups and feel that we have known them for ages? As we grow more proficient in Spiritual Yoga these feelings

become stronger, for we recognize that we are treading the same ground, but perhaps with deeper insight, and all our old friends and foes are drawn once again to us. Age-old bonds are renewed and the magic of life is strengthened. We see less and less as if "through a glass, darkly," and more and more as if through a clear window! If we are stunted in our psychological growth, if we are unable to relate to others in ways that are inspirational and radiant, how can we expect to return to sanity and move forward in our relationships for the good of all living things?

A society that regards itself as sane would hardly spend time in developing more complex ways of maiming and killing people, yet is this not the way of modern "civilization"? Certainly one aspect of "man-made sanity" is that we should follow the old Mosaic law of "an eye for an eye" and ignore the injunction of Jesus to "love one another." Indeed anyone who advocates this doctrine of love and forgiveness is regarded as rather odd and may even be ridiculed by his workmates and family. It is regarded as too "soft" to talk of compassion and love in a world where the practice of the survival of the fittest is encouraged. We must be hard in business and in our daily lives. There is no room for tenderness, unless it is to gain some materialistic end. To be sane, balanced human beings we must lie, cheat and bully our fellow human beings, pushing our personalities forward at every opportunity to the detriment of everyone else! If we are followers of orthodox Christianity in the West, then we must condemn to hell anyone who does not accept outmoded ideas, based upon misconceptions. A man may be a good father, spend his whole life helping those less fortunate than himself, be pure in heart and friendly to all; but if he does not accept Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour, he will certainly go to eternal torment in Hades! On the other hand, a cruel murderer, who never had a good thought for anyone and who spent all his life cursing and abusing others, if he accepts Jesus Christ as his Saviour on his deathbed will go to Heaven! And this is accepted as sanity! A thousand times more logical are the teachings of Reincarnation and Karma, which are regarded by these same fundamentalists as fanciful if not as satanic.

It is easy to see the logic in Theosophical teachings, as they are

scientific and in tune with nature. The cyclic law is self-evident and soul-satisfying and appeals to the intuitive part of us that knows reality. If we manage to reach a certain stage which we know rather than read about, then we will begin to understand the sanity that Plato refers to as "heaven-sent madness." Our lives will begin to reflect this "madness" and we will begin to see clearly. It is a fact that most spiritual teachers were regarded as "crazy" by the mocking, sceptical world. Only a few people, keen to understand the mysteries of Life, saw through this apparent madness to the wondrous sanity that animated their lives and made a mockery of the soul-destroying ideals of the society of the time.

---

### IMPORTANT

HAVE you renewed your subscription for the next volume (Volume 70) of THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, commencing in November 1999?

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	£0.40p
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, Mumbai (Bombay) 400 020. Cheques on banks outside Mumbai should carry an addition of Rs.5.00, 50p, 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.

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Geologists are admitting that theories of how continents form may have to be revised, in view of the recent discovery on the seabed, about 4000 kilometres south-west of Australia, of a continent that rose above the Indian Ocean at least three times over 80 million years, only to disappear beneath the waves again each time.

*New Scientist* reports that geologists aboard the drilling ship which is working on the international Ocean Drilling Program, have found that two submerged features, the Kerguelen Plateau and Broken Ridge, now about 2000 metres below the surface, were once joined. Together, they formed a continental shelf of two million square kilometres.

Based on plant remains and fossilized marine plankton found at drill sites, the researchers have identified three periods during which the crust rose above sea level. The first was about 110 million years ago, when the southern end of the plateau rose above the surface. Part of the crust broke the surface again about 85 million years ago, and again 35 million years ago, each time farther to the north and involving a smaller amount of land.

Says Mike coffin, one of the leaders of the drill team, "It is unknown for an event of this magnitude to be repeated three times. It means we don't quite understand mantle plumes."

"Elevation and subsidence of continents is always in progress," says *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 787 fn.), and this happens under cyclic law. The supercontinent which once existed and which scientists know of as Gondwana, was part of the ancient continent of Lemuria which, it is said, "not only embraced a vast area in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, but extended in the shape of a horseshoe past Madagascar, round 'South Africa' (then a mere fragment in the process of formation), through the Atlantic up to Norway" (*S.D.*, II, 333). Present-day Australia is a relic of this gigantic Lemurian continent.

Archaic Science asserts that there is a series of periodical cataclysms from the beginning to the end of every Round, and the Earth's continents have several times been submerged, only to

reappear in changed form and bear their new groups of mankind and civilization. Says *The Secret Doctrine*:

It is absolutely *false*, and but an additional demonstration of the great conceit of our age, to assert (as men of science do) that all the great geological changes and terrible convulsions have been produced *by ordinary and known physical forces*. For these forces were but the tools and final means for the accomplishment of certain purposes, acting periodically, and apparently mechanically, through an inward impulse mixed up with, but beyond their material nature. There is a purpose in every important act of Nature, whose acts are all cyclic and periodical. But spiritual Forces having been usually confused with the purely physical, the former are denied by, and therefore have to remain unknown to Science, because left unexamined. (I, 640)

---

Among ancient myths and legends none is more universal than that of a catastrophic flood in prehistoric times. Christians and Jews know it as Noah's flood. A DPA report from Hamburg (reproduced in *The Times of India*, June 22) says that "the Bible's big flood lies halfway between legend and science":

Authors have produced some 80,000 publications in 72 languages over the years, some of them full of religious zeal, some full of cool scientific detail, all trying to interpret the significance of the flood. The problem has been declared solved a hundred times already, but not even the simple question of whether the apocalyptic flood was a local or a truly global event has been answered....

Modern research techniques indicate that salty Mediterranean waters must have poured through what was then the narrow Bosphorus river valley, rushing down the valley at some 80 kilometres an hour with 200 times the force of today's Niagara falls. The Black Sea, which had been a fertile oasis in the middle of a parched wasteland, became a sea of death, overflowing its shores, driving people ahead of it into the flood....

Could it be that the Black Sea flood disaster left such a lasting

impression on its survivors that it passed on into the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh and from there into Jewish tradition and ultimately into the Christian Bible?

American geophysicists Walter Pitman and William Ryan, in their book, *Noah's Flood: The New Scientific Discoveries About the Events That Changed History*, elaborate on this theory. But not everyone agrees that the flood the authors write about has to do with that recorded in the Bible and the Epic of Gilgamesh. For, though the Deluge is undeniably a universal tradition, there have been numerous deluges. *The Secret Doctrine* states:

There were *several* Deluges mixed up in the memories and traditions of the sub-races of the Fifth Race. The first great "Flood" was astronomical and cosmical, while several others were *terrestrial*. (II, 353)

Stockwell and Croll enumerate some half dozen Glacial Periods and subsequent Deluges—the earliest of all being dated by them 850,000, and the last about 100,000 years ago. But which was *our* Deluge? Assuredly the former, the one which to this date remains recorded in the traditions of all the peoples, from the remotest antiquity; the one that finally swept away the last peninsulas of Atlantis, beginning with Ruta and Daitya and ending with the (comparatively) small island mentioned by Plato. This is shown by the agreement of certain details in all the legends. It was the last of its gigantic character. The little deluge, the traces of which Baron Bunsen found in Central Asia, and which he places at about 10,000 years B.C., had nothing to do with either the *semi*-universal Deluge, or Noah's flood—the latter being a purely mythical rendering of old traditions—nor even with the submersion of the last Atlantean island; at least, only a moral connection. (II, 141)

---

Minuscule filamentous structures found in sandstone deep beneath the seabed off Western Australia are said to be the smallest organisms ever discovered. Geologists at the University of Queensland in Brisbane have named the filaments "nanobes." They are between 20 to 150 nanometres in diameter, and prove that

cellular life can squeeze into tighter spaces than was thought possible.

As remarked editorially in *New Scientist* (March 27):

Just how strange can life be? The "nanobes" ...found in rock more than three kilometres beneath the Earth's surface, are smaller than any creature ever seen before, and appear to have come back to life after millions of years lying dormant....

Life is turning up in more and more bizarre environments. Bacteria are now known to live at least 3.5 kilometres beneath the Earth's crust and others happily survive temperatures as high as 113 °C or as low as -15 °C. Some bacterial spores have survived 20 million years in amber.

So evidence of a tiny new life form must at least be taken seriously. If nanobes really exist, it will certainly cheer up NASA's exobiologists. This month, they again reported evidence of fossilized bacterial life in a Martian meteorite.

If life is *everywhere*, as Occult Science avers, it must exist in what might seem to be the most inhospitable places and the most forbidding circumstances. The metaphysical implications of the ubiquitous nature of life are even more important than the physical.

---

The University of Cape Town archaeologist Christopher Henshilwood and his colleagues have found evidence that humans living on the southern coast of South Africa 80,000 to 95,000 years ago behaved in ways that experts term modern—more than 40,000 years earlier than at any known site in Europe. (*National Geographic*, January 1999)

Anatomically modern humans had already left their mark in South Africa, in 117,000-year-old footprints found on the west coast. But the people of the now excavated Blombos Cave made a variety of standardized bone tools as well as sophisticated pressure-flaked points from stone brought from more than 25 miles away. They drilled ochre, an earthy pigment possibly used for decoration. The cave also held the world's earliest evidence so far found of catching large fish.

"Modern" humans are certainly far older than today's "experts" have any conception of.

---

The Great Sphinx at Giza continues to fascinate people and to appeal to their sense of the mysterious. "It is the brooding enigma of a remote and lofty antiquity," writes Rachel Hajar in *The World and I* (February 1999). Geologists say it could date back 11,000 to 15,000 years, but orthodox Egyptologists reject the notion.

The hybridizing of man and lion [says Hajar] suggests the dominance of human intellect over raw animal power. The head of a king or deity was placed upon the tense body of a lion ready to spring. The result was a creature at once invincible and wise. The royal human head on a lion's body symbolized power controlled by the intelligence of the pharaoh....

The Great Sphinx has inspired a tradition of wondrous legends and stories. Egyptians believed the figure guarded the "Splendid Place of the Beginning of all Time" and revered it as the focus of "a great magical power extending over the whole region."...

Identified with the sun god and the deified pharaoh, the Sphinx fulfilled a protective function. It guarded the spirit's great leap through sacred thresholds, of passage through death to an existence beyond our visible world.

*The Secret Doctrine* offers this hint:

An impenetrable veil of secrecy was thrown over the occult and religious mysteries taught, after the submersion of the last remnant of the Atlantean race, some 12,000 years ago, lest they should be shared by the unworthy, and so desecrated....It is this secrecy which led the Fifth Race to the establishment, or rather the re-establishment of the religious mysteries, in which ancient truths might be taught to the coming generations under the veil of allegory and symbolism. Behold the imperishable witness to the evolution of the human races from the divine, and especially from the androgynous Race—the Egyptian Sphinx, that riddle of the Ages! (II, 124)

---

It is through self-transformation that world transformation take place. It is because of mental pollution that there is atmospheric pollution. The atmosphere is created through people's attitude therefore it is essential for that attitude to be transformed. This the theme of B. K. Asha's talk at the National Consultation Religion and Conservation organized by WWF-India and similar-minded organizations on the eve of Earth Day. (*Pu* May 1999)

Referring to the stewardship of the Earth, the speaker said

What can we do to live in harmony with the environment? What are the most precious resources on the earth and how can we preserve them?

The most precious resources are the spiritual qualities and virtues of the human being. While we need to be concerned about the environment and the Earth's resources on a physical level, it is essential that we learn about the resources of the spirit. The resources of the soul are the qualities that we like to have; they are love, peace, happiness, purity and strength. If these qualities erode then human beings begin to look for fulfilment outside of themselves and in the process the environment is destroyed.

The personal and the planetary are interconnected. What we do to ourselves, we do to the Earth. In order to protect the Earth from the damage that we are causing her, we need to stop harming ourselves. We need to pay attention to and restore the soul's resources. What are the conditions of the inner spirit? Has my peace and happiness eroded? Have I preserved my inner nature? Meditation will help you to see which areas need improvement and will help you restore the original resources of the Earth.

As stewards or trustees of the Earth, we must understand that the Earth does not belong to us. We are the caretakers, the instruments who have to sensibly use the natural resources. We must learn to use them without selfishness and greed....

Our thoughts influence the way we act. Meditation is a tool to help us plant the seed of our powerful thoughts in our Consciousness.

---