

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### MEDIUMSHIP VERSUS MEDIATORSHIP

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The work upon which all disciples are employed is that of rendering the body more porous, more fluidic, more responsive to all spiritual influences which arise in the inner centre, in the soul which is an undivided part of the great Soul of all, and less receptive of the outside material influences which are generated by the unthinking world and by those qualities which are in nature.

—*Letters That Have Helped Me*

IT would be extremely difficult to find a human being whose thoughts and emotions, and consequently whose actions, cannot be influenced in some way by the consciously or unconsciously active will of another, or by the good or evil forces of Nature. A kind of mediumship prevails: if a loved general leads, even the coward becomes filled with heroism and enthusiastically follows; a favourite school teacher is looked upon by the pupils as an idol to be followed; a speaker or a writer may inspire others and awaken the slumbering ideals in their hearts, or may arouse the low and the bestial in them; the radio, the television, the cinema, can mould men's minds and influence them for better or for worse. All these afford examples of outer impress made on the brains of men through the power of suggestion. Modern educational methods may vary

in details, but all of them have this common foundation—impress through suggestion from outside.

Theosophical education is founded upon the opposite principle: culture that will make the brain, not pervious to outside suggestions, but more receptive to the soul's influence. All exercises of self-discipline are directed to a common end—that of making the brain porous to the soul's recollections. As a moon reflects itself in the tranquil waves, so in the brain freed from the turmoil of passions the light of Egoic omniscience is reflected.

The recognition of the fact that we draw from the common reservoir of thought and feeling in terms of our positiveness or our passivity, our receptivity to the higher or our impressionability by the lower influences, is an important step in individual advancement. Every human being is to some extent mediumistic to these two different types of forces, and a preliminary necessity is to draw a line of demarcation between the two. In the words of H.P.B.:

Every individual is a medium in whose magnetic atmosphere the denizens of higher invisible spheres can move, and act, and live....Mediumship is measured by the quality of the aura with which the individual is surrounded. This may be dense, cloudy, noisome, mephitic, nauseating to the pure spirit, and attract only those foul beings who delight in it, as the eel does in turbid waters, or, it may be pure, crystalline, limpid, opalescent as the morning dew. All depends upon the moral character of the medium. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 487)

An article in *The Theosophist* for June 1884, "Are Chelas Mediums?" (reprinted in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13*), defines different types of mediums, but all have one thing in common—they have relinquished their self-control and their power or will to regulate their own actions.

Now such a relinquishing of self-control may be either active or passive, conscious or unconscious, voluntary or involuntary, and differs according to the nature of the beings who exercise the said active influence over the medium.

A person may consciously and voluntarily submit his will to another being and become his slave. This other being may be a human being, and the medium will then be his obedient servant and may be used by him for good or bad purposes. This other "being" may be an *idea*, such as love, greediness, hate, jealousy, avarice, or some other passion, and the effect on the medium will be proportionate to the strength of the idea and the amount of self-control left in the medium. This "other being" may be an elementary or an elemental, and the poor medium become an epileptic, a maniac or a criminal. This "other being" may be the man's own higher principle, either alone or put into rapport with another ray of the collective universal spiritual principle, and the "medium" will then be a great genius, a writer, a poet, an artist, a musician, an inventor, and so on. This "other being" may be one of those exalted beings called Mahatmas, and the conscious and voluntary medium will then be called their "Chela." (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13*, pp. 14-15)

The phenomenon of mediumship *appears* similar to that of Chelaship; but if by a "medium" is understood one who is fast degenerating into a passive instrument of dangerous foreign influences, then the Chela is moving in the opposite direction, for he is steadily learning to control himself and all inferior potencies, developing his own Soul to become a Mediator between the Universe of Light and this world of shadows. He is on his way to becoming a real genius, and, as H.P.B. points out in her article on "Genius" reprinted in the same pamphlet from which the above has been quoted, "true genius is a synonym of self-existent and infinite mind, mirrored more or less faithfully by man." An Adept, who becomes such by walking successfully the Path of true Chelaship, is not a genius only in the sense that his own Ego energizes and inspires his personality; he is the highest type of true genius mirroring the "self-existent and infinite mind." This type of genius H.P.B. calls a Mediator in *Isis Unveiled*.

About such men as Apollonius, Iamblichus, Plotinus, and Porphyry, there gathered a heavenly nimbus. It was evolved by

the power of their own souls in close unison with their spirits; by the superhuman morality and sanctity of their lives, and aided by frequent interior ecstatic contemplation. Such holy men pure spiritual influences could approach. Radiating around an atmosphere of divine beneficence, they caused evil spirits to flee before them. Not only is it not possible for such to exist in their aura, but they cannot even remain in that of obsessed persons, if the thaumaturgist exercises his will, or even approaches them. This is *MEDIATORSHIP*, not *mediumship*. Such persons are temples in which dwells the spirit of the living God; but if the temple is defiled by the admission of an evil passion, thought or desire, the mediator falls into the sphere of sorcery. The door is opened; the pure spirits retire and the evil ones rush in. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 487)

Mediumship, as practised in our day, has come to mean the yielding of a weak nature to the control and suggestions of “spirits” and intelligences other than one’s own immortal spirit. Such mediumship is always passive; it is in fact a diseased condition and has been called by H.P.B. “a more undesirable gift than the robe of Nessus.”

Side by side with passive mediums (whose counterparts can be found in the witches and wizards and jugglers of old) there have always existed on the earth active mediators, or hierophants. The former exercise their gifts for money; the latter hold that the accepting of pay transforms an act of White Magic into Black Magic.

Buddha was a mendicant and refused his father’s throne. The “Son of Man had not where to lay his head”; the chosen apostles provided “neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in their purses.” Apollonius gave one half of his fortune to his relatives, the other half to the poor; Iamblichus and Plotinus were renowned for charity and self-denial; the fakirs, or holy mendicants, of India are fairly described by Jacolliot; the Pythagorean Essenes and Therapeutae believed their hands defiled by the contact of money. When apostles were offered money to impart their spiritual powers, Peter, notwithstanding

that the Bible shows him a coward and thrice a renegade, still indignantly spurned the offer, saying: “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.” These men were mediators, guided merely by their own personal spirit, or divine soul, and availing themselves of the help of spirits but so far as these remain in the right path. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 488)

Just as there is in all persons a latent mediumistic faculty, so have we all within us the latent germs of mediatorship; but for some individuals it is infinitely easier to bring them into activity than for others. The passivity that mediumship develops is the opposite of true receptivity—receptivity to the Inner Ego. The task before the Theosophical practitioner is to transform his brain from a passive into a receptive instrument. The present quality of the elemental lives making up our brains renders them susceptible to impressions from the lower astral light. The animal nature in us also makes its corresponding impress on these lives. To purify the brain, the mind needs to check the ebullitions of the personality, to curb the tendency to daydream, and to cultivate intelligently the Divine Paramitas. This will give an upward impulse to the tanhaic elementals and will make the brain receptive to impressions from the God within.

The Theosophical student-aspirant is called upon to resist quick responses to outer suggestions, training himself to evaluate the latter calmly before acting on them, and, above all, to initiate activity from within, in terms of first principles, in the light of the philosophy which he is studying. The habit of speaking and acting after proper consultation with one’s own Ego must be developed.

Among the qualifications expected for Chelaship is “an intuitional perception of one’s being the vehicle of the manifested Avalokitesvara or Divine Atman (Spirit).” When read superficially, this instruction remains but a mental picture; but when, through meditation and sustained purity of thought, remembrance of this idea becomes permanent, then the mind catches glimpses of the Inner Divinity and the latter becomes the guiding and ruling Force

within us. In order that the Avalokitesvara, “the on-looking Lord,” the Higher Self, may work through us as constantly as possible, we have to learn to develop the necessary sensitiveness or receptivity of the brain. Correct receptivity develops *pari passu* with the awakening Will which is Buddhi made active.

While the student is preparing himself to become what a true Mediator is—a temple “in which dwells the spirit of the living God,” of what use is that temple if his fellow men gain no benefit, find not the temple giving forth Light? As the God within the shrine becomes more and more active, the aspirant becomes a centre from which, in his measure, flow out the potentialities for good that from the Perfect Blessed Ones come in large and affluent streams.

Know that the stream of superhuman knowledge and the Deva-Wisdom thou hast won, must, from thyself, the channel of Alaya, be poured forth into another bed.

Know, O Narjol, thou of the Secret Path, its pure fresh waters must be used to sweeter make the Ocean’s bitter waves—that mighty sea of sorrow formed of the tears of men.

Alas! when once thou hast become like the fix’d star in highest heaven, that bright celestial orb must shine from out the spatial depths for all—save for itself; give light to all, but take from none. (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 73)

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IN each of us that golden thread of continuous life—periodically broken into active and passive cycles of sensuous existence on Earth, and super-sensuous in Devachan—is from the beginning of our appearance upon this earth. It is the *Sutratma*, the luminous thread of immortal *impersonal* monadship, on which our earthly lives or evanescent *Egos* are strung as so many beads—according to the beautiful expression of Vedantic philosophy.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 513

## CYCLES IN NATURE AND THE FATE OF THE SOUL

WHAT people generally call God or Deity is one aspect of LIFE—the Omnipresent Principle which invisibly functions in the atom as in the cosmos, and which abides as the Self in the heart of every creature. Another aspect of LIFE is Law. People speak of the laws of God, the laws of Nature. It would be more accurate to speak of God as Law. God, Life, Self, are not different from Law; they *are* Law.

Theosophy says that there is not an inch of space in the boundless expanse we call the Cosmos where Law does not operate. There is no lawlessness in Nature anywhere. Everything in the vast universe comes to birth, advances to maturity, declines to death, to come to birth again, through, by and under Law. We may see the activity of Law sometimes, we may not perceive it at other times; but known or unknown, perceived or unperceived, Law operates everywhere, at all times. This Law has many modes of expression; these modes are intricate, and not understanding them fully people become confused. Thus modern scientists are disputing as to whether the Law of causation is absolute or whether it operates in a restricted way. While modern science is changing and arguing, the ancient science of Theosophy holds to the ageless teaching that Life manifests as Law, by Law, under Law; that the universe is *not* lawless, and that rigid justice rules the world—not only the world of matter, but also the world of morals and feelings, of mind and thoughts.

So the first idea to grasp is that Life and Law are two aspects of one and the same reality and therefore both are coeval and coeternal. The one Law of Life binds the entire universe. Just as even manmade law binds any human society, so also the Law operating in Nature binds the whole of Nature in one divine rhythm or harmony. The poet Shelley says:

Nothing in the world is single;  
All things by a law divine  
In one spirit meet and mingle.



That is an occult truth. One Divine Law binds all men and women, all kingdoms in Nature, the whole of the Universe.

Next, Theosophy teaches that the primary and most striking expression of this Law is the law of periodicity. It says that wherever we examine Nature, there we find effect rooted in its cause. Each cause in producing its due effect marks a period of time, short or long, and this time forms a cycle. The law of periodicity means that a period elapses before the cause produces its effect; the period begins with the generating of a cause and ends when its effect has worked itself out. Take a simple example: We shall go to sleep tonight—because we woke up this morning. Between our waking and our sleeping there is a period of time—it is a cycle. Similarly each one of us is going to die—because we came to birth; between coming and going, birth and death, is a period we call life.

So cycle means a period of time. We call it a cycle, which means a circle, because the end of the effect meets the point at which the cause started. The symbol of the cycle is a wheel—the Greek *kuklos* or the Hindu *chakra*. The *Chakra* of Vishnu represents the Grand Cycle—made up of many cycles of manifestation—a period during which Vishnu performs his function, completing that which he began. So too Krishna says that he incarnates cycle by cycle.

We need to get hold of the general principle that everything in the universe has a beginning and an end; some things live long, some things have very short lives. In every kingdom there is birth and death, beginning and ending, and that makes a cycle. We have astronomical cycles—day and night, one year of 365 days, the sidereal year which is a little over 25,000 years. A month of 30 days is a solar cycle; but there is the lunar month of 28 days. We have four seasons, but in ancient Iran they had six seasons. These are all astronomical cycles. There are also other types of cycles. The important factor to note is that all things, all events, all beings move by Law and begin and end their existences in definite periods. Short periods combine to make longer periods—days make a month, months make a year, years make *yugas*, and so on.

It is sometimes asked: When was the first beginning? Theosophy answers that there was no first beginning. Which came first—the

hen or the egg, the mango tree or the mango seed? Can we have a mango seed without the tree? Can we have a mango tree without the seed? There never was a first day. Yesterdays and tomorrows are both numberless. There was a first day for any one particular body of man; there was a first day for any particular hen, or any particular egg; there was a first day for any particular mango tree or mango seed; but there never was a first beginning. There is a succession of events—beginningless and endless. Each cycle of time, short or long, is a period of life for any thing, any being. The life-period of a human body is, say, 70-80 years; the life-period of the waking consciousness of man is, say, 14 to 18 hours; the life period of the entire universe is a *Maha-Kalpa*; however long (it runs into 15 figures), it is still definite. Even a *Maha-Kalpa* begins and ends.

The Secret Doctrine teaches the progressive development of everything, worlds as well as atoms; and this stupendous development has neither conceivable beginning nor imaginable end. Our “Universe” is only one of an infinite number of Universes, all of them “Sons of Necessity,” because links in the great Cosmic chain of Universes, each one standing in the relation of an effect as regards its predecessor, and being a cause as regards its successor. (*S.D.*, I, 43)

Each universe is an effect caused by a previous universe. It is the Law inherent in the universe that brings it to life, maintains it in existence and dissolves it into non-existence. *Prabhava* and *Pralaya*, starting-forth and dissolution, are true for the universe as birth and death are true for all things *in* the universe. Appearance and non-appearance, manifestation and non-manifestation, are the results of Law, and that Law works in the vast universe as in the tiny atom; it also works in our body, as in our mind.

This Law of Periodicity or Cycles is expounded in ancient Indian texts in great detail. *Yugas* and *Manvantaras*, *Kalpas* and *Maha-Kalpas* are known to every student of Hinduism. In Zoroastrianism also the Great Cycle called “sovereign time of the long period” is recognized. It is said to be 12,000 years long; but these 12,000 are

*divine years*, explains H.P.B. in *The Theosophical Glossary*. There are clear indications of various other cycles in Zoroastrianism where the time concept had important developments round the term *Zervane Akarne*.

Let us turn to the practical and ethical side of the subject. Cycles in Nature have an intimate connection with the fate of the soul. Cycles and destiny are so close that we generally speak of cycles of destiny. *Chakra* and *Karma* represent the round or circle of birth and death. In the *Gita*, Krishna defines *Karma* as “the emanation that causes the existence and reproduction of creatures” (VIII, 3). Again: “At the end of a kalpa all things return into my nature, and then again at the beginning of another kalpa I cause them to evolve again” (IX, 7). This act of emanation is called Karma, for there is no active Karma in *Pralaya*. There is no active Karma unless there is a being to make it, and in *Pralaya* there are no beings; they have merged into the nature of Krishna; they are asleep. At the dawn of a *Manvantara* they awake, and then they continue their Karma, their tasks, in a new universe, taking up the thread of the last universe when and where they stopped.

This is an important as well as a practical idea. In Nature, the Great Cycle is divided into two: the semicircle of activity called *Manvantara*, and the other half-circle of rest called *Pralaya*. This is the basic principle of the Law of Cycles—activity and rest. Therefore we have activity during the day and rest during the night; activity after the birth of the body and rest after the death of the body. Active Karma, new action of body, of mind, of soul, is possible only during the day, during incarnation, during *Manvantara*. In *Pralaya* as in *Devachan*, as also during the night, there is no new Karma, no new action, for body cannot act in sleep. Similarly, the mind cannot generate new thoughts in *Devachan*; it can only assimilate what it has already generated. So also the soul cannot act and make progress during *Pralaya*; it can only assimilate what it has experienced in the past *Manvantara*. “The night cometh when no man can work,” it is said, and it is a true statement. Therefore, day, incarnation, *Manvantara*, are called periods of preparation; and night, after-death states, and the condition in

*Pralaya* are called periods of assimilation.

Apply this teaching to the most important cycle affecting the human soul. It is the cycle of reincarnation, or successive lives of the soul in a body on earth. The cycle of reincarnation is the cycle of the human soul. That cycle of reincarnation is very long and during it the evolution of the human soul takes place. The soul grows through repeated births or successive lives on earth. This process of reincarnation is dual and is made up, like all other cyclic processes, of two periods—period of activity and period of rest, incarnate and discarnate conditions, life in the body and then life without a body.

Life in the body is like day when we are active; life after death is like night when we rest. When the soul is active in the body it generates Karma, but after death it cannot generate new Karma. It means that when we are living in a body as we do now, we can use our will freely, we can choose any course of thought or action; but once we pass through “the gate of death” we are not able to do that, we are not able to determine our course—because then the aspect of fate predominates. Whatever we have gathered of experience, whatever thoughts and feelings we have generated, are there for us to work with and work upon, but no new cause can be set in motion.

Hence Karma or destiny functions in a twofold manner: The Law of Karma, like the Law of Cycles, has active and passive aspects. Karma is destiny, and the destiny of each one of us has two fundamental aspects: free will and fate. Free will is the active aspect of Karma, fate is the passive aspect. Each one of us possesses the will which is free; we are free to choose, free to determine; but, once having made our choice and our determination, we are no more free; we are bound by our own choice and our own determination. We are free to eat what we like, but having eaten we are bound to digest or face indigestion; we are free to select our own friends, but having selected them we are bound to be affected by them; we are free all the time to sow whatever seeds we choose, but we are bound to reap the harvest of our own sowing.

Thus, the study of the Law of Cycles teaches us that during life,

when we are using the body, we have full freedom to think and to feel, to speak and to act, but we must be prepared to receive the effects and the reactions of all our choices. We can change the course of our actions, we can change our mind, we can change our character during life, not after death. Free will can be used now; after day the night comes and our dreams every night or in the long sleep of death cannot be controlled by our will.

Thus the evolution of the soul takes place by active choice during life and by passive assimilation after death. Therefore we call this life in the body the period of choice.

The greatest choice on the part of the soul is when it chooses to mould and to shape its own fate; when it chooses to think along a particular noble and spiritual line. The lives of most people are purposeless; the lives of some people have a narrow and selfish purpose; only a few souls choose to make their own purpose the Great Purpose. Theosophy teaches that the human cycle of reincarnation which decides the fate of the soul has for its greatest influence the perception by the soul that it, and none else, is the maker of destiny. That conviction is the starting point of success; without it, the soul goes round and round and *Yugas* and *Kalpas* start and end, and the web of Karma holds the soul a prisoner and a slave.

In life, we have the chance to go right or to go wrong. Theosophy gives definite instruction about the use each one of us can make of the Law of Cycles. Useful and practical help can be found in W.Q. Judge's article "Cyclic Impression and Return and Our Evolution" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 24*). He explains how every thought and feeling, every mood and mode of life, arises and subsides. This Law not only works in the mighty expanse of the Universe; it also functions in the small affairs of our daily lives. People who suffer from moods will learn to control them by understanding the Law of Cycles. Just as the lunar cycle affects ebb and tide, the course of many diseases and so on, so also our changing thoughts and passing feelings rise and fall, making their influence felt in many ways.

When we are able to master the small cycles of our own moods, good or bad, of our own elations and depressions, we are able to

understand the mystery of the Great Cycles. The Great Masters are Masters of Cycles, who know the infinite division of time in the small as in the large. We are helped by them to lift ourselves from the dark cycle of *Kali Yuga*, our Iron Age—hard as iron, black as thick smoke. Knowledge comes from those who know that here and now men and women like ourselves can break the evil influence of *Kali Yuga* by choice—choice to learn, choice to apply, choice to serve others to learn and to apply. "Choose what ye will serve," it is said. Let us choose to serve the Path of Purity which Zarathushtra taught, the Path of Love which Jesus taught, the Path of Wisdom which the Buddha taught, the Path of Divine Sacrifice which Krishna taught; and thus choosing aright we shall come to Them—who are Lords of Purity, Love, Wisdom and Sacrifice.

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## THE VISION OF THE HEART

H.P.B.'s mission was a manifold one, yet a unity exists throughout all she said or did. Just as we can unravel the secrets of Nature from one *point* if we know the laws of geometry, and from one *number* if we know the laws of mathematics, so if we know one part of her mission we can appreciate all its other aspects provided we use the law of analogy and apply it with strict logic. In the use of logic the sequence of things leaves no gaps. If a gap is found there is a mistake in our logic, for unity is the basis of all life.

We are told in one place, for instance, that her mission was ethical and moral. Again we are told that she tried to engender a new vision in the heart, to lead the individual to recognize his own divinity. Further, she had to convince him of his spiritual energy. Having done these things, she tried to make him utilize this energy and transform himself into a self-reformer before he tried to become the reformer of others.

With respect to the new vision referred to above, what relation has the heart to visions or to daily life? Vision could here refer to "that on which the heart is set," or the "line of life's meditation," and every one of us knows that we have some kind of an ideal towards which consciously or unconsciously we direct our steps in life. It is to the realizing of this vision that H.P.B.'s efforts were directed. If our vision is that we are animals, born today and dead tomorrow, then our life will be on that pattern and apathy will take the place of energy. It was for this reason that she pointed all the time to man's divinity. Man is the Supreme Brahman; he is "God"; he is Spirit; he is the Ego. Krishna is "the Ego seated in the hearts of all beings," and therefore, logically, everything in the universe is a vehicle of the Divine. Man, she tells us, is indeed the vehicle of the one indivisible and absolute Omniscience. Matter and time are illusory. Though man has heard this through all the ancient philosophies and religions, he has not yet *recognized it as applying to himself*. But at the present state of evolution he is at the point where he can begin to recognize this. The mind of the race is

beginning to see the unity underlying Nature and getting to the point where it is possible, with effort, to grasp that all, save Spirit, is matter, matter-vehicles of that Spirit, at different grades of evolution or emanation.

If we can sense this vision, especially as given in the *Gita*, how shall we next sense our position *in* the vision? How shall we try to recognize our divinity in this respect? There is no other way than by thought, by application, by aspiration. When we turn to the application aspect, we know that we are dealing with energy, for without it nothing can be accomplished. Not having thought of the recognition of divinity and the need to bring the heart vision into being, we have forgotten that energy is ours to use on any plane. On the material plane we are familiar with the fact that we can achieve nothing without energy being used. Now, we have to convince ourselves that we have energy on the other higher spiritual planes and we can use it. With the vision of our divinity, the *recognition* of the vision and the *conviction* that we can bring the vision to actuality, we have the necessary background for our future growth.

The next part of H.P.B.'s mission was to make man *utilize* these energies and not let them lie fallow. To let them lie fallow means apathy, death, destruction. To utilize them is to transform the user and others. But she tells us that we must be self-reformers before we set out to reform others. Only when we know the difficulties of self-reform can we appreciate the difficulties of others in their self-reform and be able to help them.

In our endeavours to reform ourselves we need to understand that the heart in which the new vision is to take shape stands in the physical body, from the point of view of analogy, for the higher nature, and the distinctive quality of the higher nature is universality. Therefore we can think of the vision of the heart as a universal vision, that of Buddhi or of intuition. A universal vision unites the isolated facts given to us by the mind into one Whole so that the Whole is seen as "an immense chain, whose links are all connected" (*S.D.*, I, 604). Separate one of these links, H.P.B. tells us, by



breaking the chain, “and all passes into annihilation” (*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, p. 138). In other words, each “must think of himself as an infinitesimal something, not even as an individual atom, but as a part of the world-atoms as a whole, or become an illusion, a nobody, and vanish like a breath leaving no trace behind.” (*Ibid.*)

The majestic reach of this idea opens the mind to a condition beyond “head-learning.” But without it we can only reach head-learning, great intellect. The function of the mind is to understand “facts”; that of the heart or of soul-wisdom is to see the links between the facts, making each fact a part or portion of the chain of facts which is the Universe. When the mind dwells on a fact or on many facts but forgets these links, it becomes isolated and leads us astray. Hence it is that without soul-wisdom we cannot understand facts rightly or put them in their right place in the chain of the Whole. This is what happens at the destruction of the world. Odd “facts” or beings, unlinked to the Whole, fall apart and are annihilated, just as facts which we learn later are not true facts vanish from our mind with the further knowledge we have gained.

Facts come to us through our senses; and sense-impressions, as *The Voice of the Silence* tells us, we cannot trust. Which shall we believe today, the vision of the heart, man as divine, linked to all, or what we see, an isolated being during life or a dead body with life departed and nothing left? But even in a dead body life is there, for it is present in the atoms of the body, and so the cycle of life in one form or another goes on and on. So it is with intelligence and heart qualities also. That we do not see these still acting is immaterial, for logic tells us that if all is one Whole, then intelligence and heart must function again the vehicles of matter until they are able to blend themselves with the Whole having forged more and more strongly the links between themselves and the Whole. As an English writer, Claude Houghton, has put it: “As parts we must perfect ourselves that, as a reunited whole, we may be perfect.”

Head-learning can become that “great intellect and too much

knowledge” which are a “two-edged weapon in life and instruments for evil as well as for good.” Hence in our own life we have to watch what intellectual facts we recognize without testing them for their universality. No fact given us today by any kind of science should be accepted even as a working hypothesis unless it fits, logically, into those known universal facts that Theosophy offers to us. In practical life, no student of Theosophy who is earnest should accept and live by any ideas that do not have this universal appeal. And universal here means not only all material units but also those units of time which exist in duration. That is to say, universality in respect to time is duration, a knowledge that the time element is only a part of the one Universal Duration, and any fact that is limited to “our” time is not Universal and therefore not correct, however much our reason, unlit by universal intuition, tells us to the contrary.

Our knowledge of reincarnation helps us to view present-day problems in the light of other incarnations and not merely in the light of this one, and it is this continuous vision of the heart that we must not let die or be dimmed by “expediency” in terms of present-day difficulties.

This mental attitude takes root in the attitude we have towards our own reformation. In our own life do we act with a universal background or a one-life background? Do we act as individuals interested in Theosophy or as “pupils” of the Messenger of the Masters, H.P.B.? We need self-reform to bring our ideals into objectivity.

This we can do if we remember that each of us is “an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 214); and if we take to heart the following warning: “Not one of its [Humanity’s] Units can escape its unconscious mission, or get rid of the burden of its co-operative work with nature” (*S.D.*, II, 446). For, the universe is “a whole balanced by the exquisite adjustment of parts.” (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 542)

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## IDEAS OF TIME

If you can look into the seeds of time,  
And say which grain will grow, and which will not...  
—*Macbeth* (Act I, Sc. iii)

THE Theosophical Movement for the 19th-20th century was launched with the three objects set forth by H.P.B. This magazine, too, has the same objects. The third of these objects is the investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man. While such investigations are the constant and continual endeavour of students of Theosophy, scientists inquiring into the mysteries of Nature and its forces often stumble unconsciously upon one or another of these unexplained laws and provide the basis for further research and discovery.

Of late there is a distinct and noticeable trend among scientists to delve into the psychology of the human being by studying his subjective states. One sphere of investigation is how circumstances influence our sense of the passage of time. Like similar inquiries of science, this investigation of modern psychology is based mainly upon man's sensory-motor activity. Ancient psychology, the Science of the Soul, on the other hand, itself served as the basis for physical functionings. It is, therefore, proposed to examine the subject from a philosophical and universal point of view, by the application of the fundamental tenets of Theosophy, so that students might benefit by examining the ever-changing propositions of science in the light of the unvarying fundamentals of the Eternal Verities.

Psychological time is defined by psychologists as “subjective time that for each person is more or less independent of objective time.” To the timepiece of the mind, an hour sometimes seems like a minute, or a minute like an hour. Philosophically, “our ideas on duration and time are all derived from our sensations according to the laws of Association” (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 43-44). The sense of time arises from the unregulated activity of memory, imagination and thought—the attention of Self, the Perceiver, diffused over the

three planes of action. *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 37) further states that “time is only an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists in which the illusion can be produced.” According to Dr. Ivor B. Hart, “In the language of Western mathematics, time is a function of consciousness.”

Psychological time has many aspects, and one is the historical attitude toward time. Men's ideas of time and what it represents have changed through the ages. In antiquity, men regarded time as expressing power, opportunity and plenitude; but later it came to be looked upon as the bearer of misfortune, decay and decrepitude. What is of interest is the philosophical and metaphysical basis for this change of attitude.

To gain the understanding needed, the traditions of ancient Greece and India may be looked into, for the chronology of the ancient Greeks was borrowed from India. Kronos symbolizes “Infinite Time” or endless duration in Greek thought. Indian tradition speaks of infinite time or eternity as *Kala*. According to the Esoteric Philosophy, nothing has true existence save in duration (*S.D.*, I, 36). Here we have the clue to the concept of plenitude, which also implies opportunity and power.

The mutilation of Uranus by his son Kronos is an allegorical representation of Absolute Time or Duration becoming the finite and the conditioned. Kronos cuts down with his scythe even the longest and (to us) seemingly endless cycles, which, commencing with a moment, go to make up the vast astronomical periods, called by the ancient Indians *yugas*, *kalpas*, *manvantaras* and *brahmandas*. These cycles, which are related to the motion of the orbs in the firmament, are influenced by the actions of humanity and result in various other major and minor cycles such as those of the rise and fall of civilizations and cultures. *Kala* is a cycle of time, as also a name given to Yama, the god of the dead and the king of the nether world; he is the embodiment of the race which was the first to be endowed with consciousness (*Manas*), without which there is neither the nether world nor the heavenly world. All this refers not only to the “decay-death” impression regarding time,

but also to the concept of time as a function of consciousness, and to the eternal duality of manifestation.

Biological clocks, or living beings' innate sense of time, are being studied by scientists today. The ability to wake up "at a preappointed time, often just a few moments before the alarm clock goes off," is given as a familiar human illustration of such a mechanism; and an example in animals is the ability to time entry into and emergence from hibernation.

These phenomena are caused by the associative power of memory, and memory is one of the results of time. H. P. Blavatsky states in *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 122) that memory is "simply an innate power in thinking beings, and even in animals, of reproducing past impressions by an association of ideas principally suggested by objective things or by some action on our external sensory organs."

In another place H.P.B. wrote (*Lucifer*, October 1891):

No manifestation...can ever be lost from the *Skandhaic* record of a man's life. Not the smallest sensation, the most trifling action, impulse, thought, impression, or deed, can fade or go out from, or in the Universe. We may think it unregistered by our memory, unperceived by our consciousness, yet it will still be recorded on the tablets of the astral light....There are cells in our brain that receive and convey sensations and impressions, but this once done, their mission is accomplished. These cells of the supposed "organ of memory" are the *receivers* and *conveyers* of all the pictures and impressions of the past, not their *retainers*. Under various conditions and stimuli, they can receive instantaneously the reflection of these astral images back again and this is called *memory, recollection, remembrance*: but they do not preserve them.

This could be linked with what science has discovered about internal biological clocks, which work independently of external factors.

Several investigators have tried to explain the discrepancies between psychological time and clock time by relating inner clocks to the temperature and diseased condition of the body. It is only

natural that during illness there should be a departure from the normal reactions of the consciousness, giving rise to discrepancies between clock time and the private computation of time. Opium, hashish and drugs such as LSD and mescaline produce similar results.

Another aspect of psychological time is the estimation of time intervals by people. On the basis of the work of some scientists, three properties of man's inner clocks have been examined: (1) the length of the brief interval of time that can be judged most accurately; (2) the interval of time during which a series of stimuli may extend and yet be experienced as "unitary"; and (3) the minimum perceptible duration between two excitations.

In regard to the first of these factors, experiments reveal that the apparent duration of a brief interval is influenced by the intensity of the stimuli that delimit it. The more intense the stimuli, such as sounds, the shorter the interval seems to be. When there is a break in the "stream of consciousness," as when one dozes off while travelling, judgment of the time interval becomes very erratic. This is almost the repetition of an occult axiom, for, as stated earlier, time "does not exist where no consciousness exists."

Experiments involving the second property of inner clocks provide the basis for a definition of the "psychological present" and point to the relativity of human sensory powers with respect to any discriminatory experience. On the question of what may be regarded as the "present," *The Secret Doctrine* states:

...the sensation we have of the actuality of the division of "time" known as the present, comes from the blurring of that momentary glimpse, or succession of glimpses, of things that our senses give us, as those things pass from the region of ideals which we call the future, to the region of memories that we name the past. (I, 37)

No less pertinent and provocative are the words of a Sage quoted in the second volume:

O present moment! Knowest thou not that thou hast no

parent, nor canst thou have a child; that thou art ever begetting but thyself?...Thus, are the Past, the Present, and the Future, the ever-living trinity in one—the Mahamaya of the Absolute IS. (II, 446)

In regard to the brief interval of time that can be judged accurately, the commentary of Vyasa and the notes of W. Q. Judge on the 53rd verse of the third book of Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms are most illuminating. The verse reads:

A great and most subtle knowledge springs from the discrimination that follows upon concentration of the mind performed with regard to the relation between moments and their order.

The relevant portions of Vyasa's commentary state:

The time taken by an atom in motion in order to leave one point and reach the next point is a moment...the continuous flow of these is a sequence...days, hours, minutes are combinations of these by a mental process giving a structure which follows as a result of perceptions or of words....The sequence has its essence in an uninterrupted succession of moments. This is called time by experts in time.

W. Q. Judge writes:

Patanjali speaks of ultimate divisions of time which cannot be further divided, and of the order in which they precede and succeed each other. It is asserted that a perception of these minute periods can be acquired, and the result will be that he who discriminates thus goes on to greater and wider perception of principles in nature which are so recondite that modern philosophy does not even know of their existence.

The faculty of knowing the ultimate divisions of time has been acquired by the Elder Brothers of Humanity, who are endowed with power over space, time, mind and matter. Their work is to preserve the true philosophy, and they need the help of companions to rediscover and promulgate it.

Intimately connected with the concept of time is the concept of

the future. The entire psychic life of human beings is permeated with the thoughts of things to come, with premonitions, anticipations and hopes for the future. There is a sense in which one's psychological future mirrors one's subjective past; in this sense, "the further ahead one looks, the more the vision of a millennium resembles the golden age of the mythical past."

The waggish words of Shakespeare's Rosalind (*As You Like It*, Act III, Scene 2) are full of import:

Time travels in divers paces with divers persons. I will tell you who time ambles withal, who time trots withal, who time gallops withal, and who he stands still withal.

She goes on to say that time "trots hard with a young maid between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemnized." Time ambles with a priest "lacking the burden of lean and wasteful learning" and also with a rich man "knowing no burden of heavy tedious penury." Time gallops "with a thief to the gallows," and it stays still "with lawyers in a vacation; for they sleep between term and term, and then they perceive not how time moves." All this pertains to the memory aspect of the function of time.

The perusal of the eternal ideas herein set forth might induce a reader to ask: "What does it matter if Kronos mutilates Uranus, or if Kala leads to Yama; if knowledge and memory and the loss of both come from Krishna; if moments and their sequence produce the illusions of past, present and future? Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Such are really and truly caught in the webs of delusion!

To these we say: "Beware! You are under the great illusion that you are as an individual distinct from others. This attitude of separateness will make of you 'the playground of Samvritti, origin of all the world's delusions.' "

Is there no hope? Yes, there is. And that is the overcoming of the illusions of life, including that of time, by concentrating attention on the "beginningless and endless WHOLE, or that which ever was, is, and will be."



## ATTENTION—CONCENTRATION—MEDITATION

FEW of us dream of reaching perfection in this life, but all of us can get our mental luggage ready, as H.P.B. has said, for future lives. “Luggage” here stands for those faculties, powers, knowledge and character which by their nature will become assets when we are reborn in future births. Of course there is the other aspect to the “luggage,” namely, the “bad” Karma we make, but we are not concerned with that in this article.

One faculty that we shall need more and more as we progress is that of concentration, the power to pay *full* attention to every aspect of our daily life, not merely to our study. Concentration alters our character, and without it neither faculties, powers, knowledge, nor disposition can be improved, for it is the capacity to keep the mind, that is, the attention, on whatever we have decided or desire to do, whether the desire be a lower or a higher one.

In Patanjali’s *Yoga Aphorisms*, that wonderful treatise on how to achieve concentration leading to meditation, we are told that at the early stage we must start *where we are*, with our everyday affairs. We are familiar with the idea that meditation is not only to be practised at set times, for a definite purpose, but is also a special attitude of mind underlying all our daily activities. During the day we gain most of our experience through the sense-organs which convey messages to the brain, and we are faced with the fact that our senses either give us accurate information or wrong information, depending on the degree of attention we have achieved. But this attention is not enough, for Patanjali tells us that to have correct cognition we must have direct perception, followed by inference from the facts noted, and testimony.

We see the necessity for the testimony of others all along the line of our evolution, for in *The Secret Doctrine* we read that even Sages, Adepts, who had all their senses and other aspects of their nature in complete control, checked their findings with the testimony of others. How humble this should make us as to our “opinions”!

Lack of correct cognition gives rise to misconception. Misconceptions can be the result of either lack of accurate perception or fancy; that is, they are based, not on facts, but just on our imagination or desire. Or they might arise because we see everything in terms of our own limited knowledge, experience and understanding.

Apart from misconceptions and fancy, sleep is mentioned, which here means non-use of any of our senses, or passivity, even though we may be awake. And we have memory, which is perhaps one of the worst foes of concentration, for our mind, like a butterfly, flits from memory to memory. To help us, *The Voice of the Silence* has many graphic sentences, such as: “Look not behind or thou art lost”; “Mistrust thy senses, they are false”; “Have mastery o’er thy thoughts.”

We must, therefore, begin by trying to give our full attention to everything we have to do during the day, and to be accurate as far as possible. Of course it will take time before full concentration is achieved, but as this is a universe of Law we cannot but succeed if we go on trying.

We learn that that which hinders us from fixing our attention on anything is our desires which call up pictures or remembrances of pleasurable or painful emotions, to which our mind flies. That is, our attention wanders to the most attractive position. Therefore Patanjali says that not only is constant practice necessary but also dispassion has to be achieved, and he gives us the key to this. Only when we realize that all is for the benefit of the soul can we get rid of the many personal desires we have. Then alone can we desire to concentrate, desire to live as souls, reincarnating beings, responsible beings, divine beings.

Another aspect of this effort to cultivate the faculty of concentration is taken up later on by Patanjali. The phrase “culture of concentration” is interesting in this connection, for it brings to the mind the idea of growth, or of training and improvement. We have to nurture this faculty, to see that the soil in which it is sown is suited for it, to see that it receives the light of our own energy,

and the sustenance of our true desire. This culture of concentration is to be achieved by constant attention, by persistent, daily exercise. Exercise requires that we “sit for concentration,” make a definite, self-induced effort to concentrate, and to do so we need to choose an object, physical or metaphysical, on which to keep our mind fixed. That is, the attention is to be kept on it, and if it wanders, which it will, it must be brought back. Attention is the fixing of the mind; continued holding of the mind in that position is concentration. How is this to be achieved? We need to contemplate on the object chosen, not just look at it, mentally or physically, and this implies that we analyse with the mind all we can see—its colour, form, growth, source, life itself, until we find that we have become so absorbed in it that we are in the state called meditation. We and the object have become one.

If our main desire is to think of all things as existing for the benefit of the soul, then bit by bit we should choose objects which are universal. Krishna says that that which is not manifest or which cannot be visualized in a form is difficult to dwell upon, but we have to learn to go beyond the manifested to the unmanifested. Krishna, the Real, is beyond form, so Patanjali tells us that there is “meditation without a seed,” when the object selected for meditation disappears from the mental plane and there is progressive thought upon the higher plane of abstract ideas.

Mr. Judge tells us that he had a fruitful meditation when he let his mind, that is, attention, dwell first on his friends, then on all human beings, including the wicked and the ignorant, then on all nature and the elemental world, and so on until the whole universe was reached. In time one’s soul will be merged in the ONE SOUL, and there is achieved what Patanjali calls consummation of the aim of the Soul, or “the abiding of the soul united with understanding in its own nature.” Manas becomes one with Atma-Buddhi. When this stage is reached, the Soul is no longer affected by objects, senses, suffering and pleasure, but partakes of the great life of the universe.

## THE GLORY OF THE UNIVERSE

The universe, O Hrishekesha, is justly delighted with thy glory and is filled with zeal for thy service.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, XI, 36

IN these words addressed by Arjuna to Krishna lies the secret of true service. No amount of mental reasoning or calculation of recompense will produce zeal for real service. Service to be of value must be of and from the heart. It is the heart that yearns for and responds to beauty, to orderliness, which appreciates the completeness of anything, and aspires to *realize* that which is full of wonder, that which brings joy and delight.

Such yearning *fills* the heart; there is no place for anything else. This is the secret. Nothing else seems important but the service of that which fills the heart with delight, the passing on to others of the glory perceived. This is fulfilment. The drop returns to the ocean and becomes an indistinguishable part of the ocean. The heart of man and the heart of the universe beat as one; “the universe grows I.” We arrive at the position where, as Plotinus said, we “fold ourselves about divinity, and have no part void of contact with him.”

How long can this vision last? Until the “dust of our illusions” covers it, blurs it, and the eyes no longer bring to the heart the universal glory but perceive instead its dusty broken fragments. These broken fragments must unite again into one perfect whole. To achieve this union the “dust” that makes them appear separate to our sight must be removed. This “dust” comes from our own heart which, losing the vision of the whole, tries to split up that whole by thinking and feeling in terms of isolation. Then no longer “the universe grows I”; instead, one begins to think in terms of “I and the universe.”

Only by thinking constantly of the oneness showing through the seemingly separate manifestations of life can our heart continue to be filled with delight. We must pierce through the colours and the beauty of the sunset to that which shows itself in those colours

and beauty. We must pierce through the tree and the flower and see both as representing the glory of the universe of which they are a part. We must pierce through the perfection of the human form and see the glory of the One, overcast, maybe, but there all the same if we would but look for it. We must see through the animal forms and perceive the wonder of Nature as it expresses the glory of the One. We must see through the plants, the earth, the minerals, and learn to appreciate the wonder of the fact that all these go into the making of man. We must see through religions and philosophies until we sense that their purpose is to turn man away from the “dust” that covers his true being and make him perceive the glory of the heart filled with universal love or compassion, which is the expression of the “desire” that first arose in the One Life.

Whether we think of this One Life in abstract terms or as embodied in the form of Krishna, we must repeat constantly the words of Sanjaya at the close of the *Bhagavad-Gita* if we would gain, as a permanent part of our consciousness, the vision of the Divine Form as including all forms:

As I again and again remember, O mighty king, this wonderful sacred dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, I am delighted again and again. Also, as I recall to my memory the wonderful form of Hari, the Lord, my astonishment is great, O king, and I rejoice again and again. Wherever Krishna, the supreme Master of devotion, and wherever the son of Pritha, the mighty archer, may be, there with certainty are fortune, victory, wealth, and wise action; this is my belief.

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CIVILIZATION is a movement and not a condition, a voyage and not a harbour.

—ARNOLD TOYNBEE

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Universes appear and disappear in an endless cycle of birth and death and rebirth. There is no beginning; there is no end. It is an old idea now getting fresh attention, writes Marcus Chown in his article “Cycles of Creation.” (*New Scientist*, March 16):

What happened before the big bang? According to two cosmologists, before the big bang there was another big bang. And, before that, another. “If we’re right,” says Neil Turok of the University of Cambridge, “the big bang is but one in an infinite series of big bangs stretching back into the eternal past.” And into the eternal future....

If both expanding and re-collapsing universes are permitted, it’s a simple step to imagine the one changing seamlessly into the other. From the big crunch the Universe would bounce or rebound in a new big bang and the whole cycle would begin again....

Stars, galaxies and life may therefore have existed in previous cycles of the Universe. But, if the cycles are all identical, wouldn’t such endless repetition be mind-numbingly dull? Turok and Steinhardt [of Princeton University] think not, because random events will change the details each time. You won’t get the same galaxies, planets and people each cycle. “Just because the cycles repeat does not mean the events in each cycle are identical,” says Turok... “The laws of physics could change from cycle to cycle.”

Many speculations have been made by present-day investigators about the age of the Universe and of our own Earth; yet the truth of the matter has been known to the Orientals for untold thousands of years. Modern astronomers are invited to check up their own data with the astronomical and other computations given by Manu and the ancient Hindu Puranas, which are almost identical with those taught in Esoteric Philosophy. They are summarized and reproduced in *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, pages 68-70. As stated by H.P.B., the ages prior to the farthest date to which documentary record extends

are “prehistoric” to the naked eye of matter only. To the spiritual eagle eye of the seer and the prophet of every race, Ariadne’s thread stretches beyond that “historic period” without break or flaw, surely and steadily, into the very night of time; and the hand which holds it is too mighty to drop it, or even let it break. Records exist, although they may be rejected as fanciful by the profane; though many of them are tacitly accepted by philosophers and men of great learning, and meet with an unvarying refusal only from the official and collective body of *orthodox science*.

The idea that the universe is a continuous creation bears out *The Secret Doctrine* assertion, made way back in 1888, regarding “the Eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane; periodically ‘the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing.’ ...”

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Recent developments in science have brought about a dramatic change in our understanding of the cosmic landscape. It is now realized that the Universe is constantly unfolding. Against this backdrop, religion seems to be pitted against science, writes T. K. Datta (*The Times of India*, June 15):

In fact, it appears that science has made religion intellectually implausible. Many feel that science rules out the existence of a personal God. Others think that the theory of evolution makes the entire idea of divine providence implausible.

Is religion really opposed to science? The answer, perhaps, lies in how one perceives the relationship between the two....According to an American theology professor, J. F. Haught, there are four different ways of describing this relationship. The first way is the belief that science and religion are fundamentally opposed to each other....The second way is that of contrast....The third is the contact approach. It tries to establish meaningful interaction and dialogue between the

two....The fourth way is the confirmation approach. The advocates of this approach propose that religion is supportive of the entire scientific enterprise....Science, no less than religion, is a quest for unified knowledge.

Religion, taken as a confirmation of the trust in limitless rationality of the real, will not obstruct; it will only promote the work of science.

The two divine abstractions, true religion and true science, Theosophy insists, are and must be one. They are mutually complementary. The irrational and the irrelevant in religion are of course bound to be weakened by the impact of the scientific spirit. At the same time, science is certainly less materialistic today than it used to be. The dogmatism of a few generations ago, both of scientists and theologians, is giving way to a more liberal spirit; and all who are searching earnestly for truth are considered to be worshippers at the same shrine.

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R. Chidambaram’s views on “The Culture of the Indian Scientist” are published in *Bhavan’s Journal* for May 15. An eminent Indian scientist, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, and Adviser to the Prime Minister, Chidambaram addresses the question: What makes a great scientist?

The distributed belief in the validity among scientists from all parts of the world gives rise, in fact, to a kind of Universal Consciousness, not usually found among the practitioners of social sciences like economics or politics. The concepts of the wave-particle duality introduced by Quantum Mechanics and of the conversion of mass into energy and *vice versa* by the Special Theory of Relativity, both introduced in the early part of the 20th century, had also deep philosophical implications.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: “Whatever inspires you as radiantly beautiful and mightily and truly powerful, recognize it as an aspect of my splendour.”

In most scientists, this statement strikes a resonant chord.



For many of them, the stability of Nature's laws, and the manifestation of these laws in various natural phenomena (many of which are still not understood), is an expression of God. Beyond that, religious perceptions (or the absence of them) vary with the individual and the cultural environment he or she is brought up in....

Einstein once said: "Most people think that it is the intellect which makes a great scientist. They are wrong, it is the character." This, of course, does not mean that anyone can do great science. High intellect is necessary but not sufficient; character is more important. The definition of character is, however, not easy. Character means integrity; it means pursuit of excellence within the individual's limitations, of course; it means perseverance in the face of adversity; it means commitment to national and social causes; and it means also a commitment to justice and social equity....

A true scientist has to be a *Sthithaprajnya*. He is an individual with an open mind, unaffected by personal inclinations. He accepts results (of experimental observations or theoretical calculations) as they come, pleasant or unpleasant. He is not swayed by emotions of elation or disappointment. He stays steadfast and uncompromising in his search for truth.

What of the scientist's responsibility to society? Cannot scientists themselves control the purposes to which their discoveries are put? This is a basic question. The scientist is also a citizen; his oft-repeated declaration that science is socially and politically neutral does not absolve him from social responsibility. But the suggestion is raised only to be dismissed. The scientist may be a citizen, but he is a powerless citizen. For one thing he has no qualifications for social interference and management. For another, if he had them, his fellow-citizens would not allow him to exercise them. Science does not change human desires or alter human purposes; it only makes it easier for men to gratify the desires they already have, to further the purposes that already seem good to them. Nor, until there is a science of human nature, will scientists as such be capable of directing these desires or of dictating these purposes.

Theosophy asserts that there is a science of human nature, which teaches "the common man" what it is that he has to control, and how he himself can and should assume responsibility for controlling the effects of science upon his life.

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Four leading thinkers participated in a debate on man's relationship with nature, co-hosted by Greenpeace and *New Scientist*. What is "natural"? Are humans part of nature or have we risen above it? The debate raised questions about everything from the ethics of genetic engineering to whether humans can rise above the evolutionary laws. A summary of what the panelists had to say is given in *New Scientist* for April 27. A few excerpts follow:

PATRICK HOLDEN: I have a deep fear of deductionism and the idea that we can improve on nature with technical fixes without knowing the consequences. We are part of nature, and with that relationship should go respect, humility, and above all responsibility. In the past we've waited for evidence of harm before we've acted. That is no longer good enough. In making decisions we need to take into account the role of intuition, emotional influences, even spiritual influences—things we might not yet understand.

AUBREY MANNING: I've ended up with an absolutist position that *everything* is natural...I don't think you can draw the line. The tragedy of the present imbalance between human numbers and the demand for resources is that so often human beings are put in direct conflict with the rest of the natural world. Unless we can achieve a balance again, we're not going to get anywhere. We are unique in the sense that we have that ability to be responsible. That doesn't make us unnatural.

RICHARD DAWKINS: Popular views of nature often regard it as benign and self-preserving until man comes along with his unnatural greed and ruins it. But this disagreeable quality of ours is not new, is not peculiar to us. This doesn't make it good. On the contrary, it's something to be fought against. All animals look after their short-term interests. *Homo sapiens* is

the only species that can rebel against the otherwise universally selfish Darwinian impulse. We are Earth's last best hope. Our brains follow their own rules, which can rise above the rules of natural selection.

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What is peace? Is it just a situation in which there is no war between nations? People in general, as also most world leaders and international organizations, seem to think so; but this is a negative attitude, writes B.K. Ashima Sachdeva (*Purity*, June 2002):

By defining light as the “absence of darkness” or, life as the “absence of death,” we assign greater importance to the powers of darkness and death, or in the case of peace, to war, rather than peace....The challenge today is in creating peace, and not in appreciating peace as a concept. And this cannot be done if we keep concentrating on destruction.

It's time now to literally construct peace. But, peace is intangible. Peace is not just a feeling or a state of being. It is not just something that one would achieve only during long hours of prayers or meditation. And it is certainly not end-of-war alone. So, what is it?

Peace is life itself. It is our original religion. It is like an eternal spring within us....Peace is a natural instinct and if we wish to construct a peaceful world, then all we've got to do, is to let it manifest in our lives....

If the mind has been conditioned to think positively and peacefully, it will have a similar effect on its connections with others. This explains the tangibility of peace in an individual's life....

To achieve peace, three things have to be borne in mind: that peace is our natural religion; that all that we do affects those who surround us; and that to recharge our pure energies, we need to connect to the Supreme Source.

A life operating on these three laws of peace will tangibly transform everything to a peaceful state and recreate the one culture that we all wish to re-establish in the world—that is, the culture of peace.

Peace is a positive condition of individual and social consciousness which is conducive to healthy, joyful and progressive activities, leading to a life which is more and more human and less and less beastly, and to the establishment of the law of truth and non-violence as the basis of life.

Peace can come only after a long and intense striving for a total change, change in our ideas of culture, change of social institutions and of man himself; in other words, a change from the law of violence and competition to the law of non-violence and mutual aid. It is a change necessary for the prevention and solution of conflicts in future and the establishment of a new creative order where the good of all and not the greatest good of the greatest number will be the goal.

In the words of Spinoza: “Peace is not an absence of war; it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice.”

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The biblical saying, “Man shall not live by bread alone,” might seem like a hackneyed *cliché* to some, yet it is profoundly true.

The Dalai Lama's views on love as the foundation of human existence contain food for thought. (*Sunday Times of India*, June 16):

The reason why love and compassion bring the greatest happiness is simply because our nature cherishes them above all else. They result from the profound interdependence we all share with one another. However capable and skilful an individual may be, left alone, he or she will not survive. However vigorous and independent one may feel during the most prosperous periods of life, when one is sick or very young or very old, one must depend on the support of others.

Interdependence, of course, is a fundamental law of nature. Not only higher forms of life but also many of the smallest insects are social beings which, without any religion, law or education, survive by mutual co-operation based on an innate

recognition of their interconnectedness. The most subtle level of material phenomena is also governed by interdependence....

We have to consider what we human beings really are....Since we are not solely material creatures, it is a mistake to place all our hopes for happiness on external development alone. Instead, we should consider our origins and nature to discover what we require....From the least to the most important event, the affection and respect of others is vital for our happiness.

I recall meeting scientists in America who said that the rate of mental illness in their country was quite high—around 12 percent of the population. It became clear during our discussion that the main cause of depression was not lack of material necessities but deprivation of the affection of others.

I believe that no one is born free from the need for love. And this demonstrates that—although some modern schools of thought seek to do so—human beings cannot be defined as solely physical. No material object, however beautiful or valuable, can make us feel loved, because our deeper identity and true character lie in the subjective nature of the mind.

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EVERY thought leaves a seed in the mind or manas of the thinker, no matter how fugitive the thought was. The whole sum of such small seeds will go to make up a larger seed for thought, and thus constitute a man of this, that, or the other general character. Thoughts, then, are highly important, for, as the Buddha said, we are made up of thought and built of thought; as we think, so we act and will act, and as we act and think so will we suffer or rejoice, and the whole world with us.

—W. Q. JUDGE