

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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FROM BLIND BELIEF TO ENLIGHTENED FAITH

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“With faith all things are possible.” The sceptical laugh at faith and pride themselves on its absence from their own minds. The truth is that faith is a great engine, an enormous power, which in fact can accomplish all things. For it is the covenant or engagement between man’s divine part and his lesser self.

—*Light on the Path*

MAN is more important than any organization or belief and is responsible for any use he makes of either. “Believe nothing unless it conforms with reason and common sense,” is one of the most important teachings ever given. It throws the whole responsibility on man, and it destroys all idea of infallibility.

Exclusive claims made by individuals and bodies of individuals, on their own behalf or on behalf of others, all arise from—belief. No real Sage ever claimed a unique position for himself, for his knowledge and insight tell him that Nature is uniform and universal and that there are no unique, solitary phenomena in any of her kingdoms. If a claim is made on behalf of any religion that its prophet or its position is unique, that claim carries its condemnation within itself. Any calm thinker cannot but come to this conclusion, as also see the absurdity of the belief held and the claim made by many that their own race, or political ideology, or social customs and way of life, are the best. These and other beliefs are held because people do not use the light of their intelligence in examining them.

Beliefs are blind, and the blind have no breadth of vision, no liberality of view.

The progress of human consciousness takes this course—blind belief, reasoned knowledge, enlightened faith. When a person applies the light of his mind to his own beliefs, he finds out which among them are false and which can be justified at the bar of reason and knowledge. If anyone says that to matters of belief the test of reason and the light of knowledge should not be applied, then he falsifies the entire experience of history.

Blind belief is not to be mistaken for faith, and the latter is superior to reason. Faith may be defined as the instinct of the Soul; it is born of intuition and the latter is the power of the soul, direct perception, which impresses the consciousness from above, beyond or within, and which brings into manifestation some expression of one or more innate ideas native to the Soul. But, unless instinctive faith or intuition receives the support of reason, the faith remains unenlightened. Unenlightened faith is akin to blind belief. Loss of faith occurs through faulty reasoning and false knowledge. Enlightened faith arises in the mind freed from passion and prejudices and engaged in the consideration of true, ennobling ideas. When the mind is impressed with sense-data, and desires and passions press it into their service, it lends them its own power of reasoning. In our scientific civilization, which takes sense-data as the foundation for all knowledge and regards the soul as the ephemeral product of brain-processes, logic and reason are enthroned in the highest seats of judgment. It is well known that when the faith remains unenlightened, it is likely to fall prey to the machinations of reason.

In these days when head-learning is so much in demand and soul-wisdom at a discount, it is necessary for each to take precautions to distinguish between blind belief and faith and take measures to enlighten his faith. Men and women need some study of great ideas which widen the mental horizon and deepen human insight. Mental food is as necessary as bread and milk for the body, if not more so. There is a great deal of false knowledge abroad, in the domain of sciences as of religions, and some of it is highly

dangerous.

Two difficulties beset men and women in the acquiring of knowledge. The first arises from their own mental laziness: how many would willingly take the trouble to question their own beliefs, to gather evidence, *pro* and *con*; to sit like an impartial judge and not to plead like a barrister for the side he is defending?

The second difficulty arises because we do not persist in pursuing our inquiry into our beliefs. Again and again man has freed himself from one set of beliefs, from one organization or another, only to find himself in the grip of others. Although in many countries the individual has freed himself greatly from the power of organized religion, has also freed himself to a certain extent in the realm of politics, he is becoming fast bound by the idea of the infallibility of science. He is giving his life over to science as his forefathers gave theirs over to the witch doctor or the Church or the State. Many an individual has abandoned reason and failed to apply the test of intelligence to so-called scientific facts.

Dogmatism about scientific theories is as great an evil as the dogmatism of religious beliefs. For instance, the evolution of man from the animals and the negation of soul, scientifically put forward, form the basis of the ordinary person's understanding of life and make him live rather like an evolving animal than as an unfolding god. That aspect of science which affects us most today is the medical, and how many use the results of scientific methods without studying the common-sense attitude towards body and disease! How many young men and women have been fooled by their own blindness about, for instance, the abomination of contraceptives and artificial birth prevention! They may have freed themselves from religious superstitions, but only to be caught in the trap of scientific ones!

Blind belief passing through the fire of reason emerges as enlightened faith, casting off the ashes of exclusiveness, fanaticism and bigotry. If a man of religious belief passed from blind belief to real knowledge and practised the ethics of his own creed, he would soon be forced to discard the exclusiveness of that creed and to

embody its universal aspects. Thus enlightened faith comes to birth. In the words of Robert Crosbie:

If one places his faith on any *externality*, whatever it may be—gods or men, religions or systems of thought—he has placed it upon a broken reed; he has limited the very power of his own spirit to expand itself beyond the limitations of his ideal. When, for instance, we accept the idea that nothing is real but that which we can see or hear or taste or smell or touch, we have placed our faith on a very low basis. There is some reason for our falsity of thought and action, when we have assumed the present moment to be the only moment, the outward terrestrial world and this one existence to be the only life, from which we go, we know not where, nor to what purpose it all has been. To look on all beings according to one's own limitation of mind and range of perception, and to see only their externalities of speech or action in accordance, is not seeing them as they really are. An outside God, or an outside devil, an outside Law, an outside atonement for sins, the idea of sin being other than a denial of our own spiritual nature (the unpardonable sin), are all external faiths of the nature of *tamas*, or ignorance. Ignorance always leads to superstition. Superstition leads to false belief, and false belief to false faith.

We are all in constant conflict with each other because of false bases of faith, for the very reason that faith fixed on *anything* will bring results, and men are blinded to real and true faith by the results of even false faith. Yet so long as we have a false faith shall we continue to create for ourselves lives of misery. The results flowing from a false faith in a selfish ideal must bring us bad effects in wrong conditions. They are the very limitations we have imposed upon ourselves by external faiths in other lives, and we must come again and again into bodies until we have rid ourselves of the defects in our nature which those external faiths have engendered. We have to get a better basis for thought and action than the false faith of the likes and dislikes we have obtained by heredity. We have produced the effects we see, but we need not go on repeating the same mistakes life after life, if we will but change our ideals. We have to find a true basis of faith. We have to place our faith

upon that which is not external, but *internal*. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 354-55)

Let each one look at himself and determine his own place on the ladder of evolution: Is he sunk in the mire of disbelief, acting for his own sense-pleasure according to what he calls his own principles, devoid of virtue—a blind man yet too conceited to follow anyone or anything? Is he standing on the rung of blind belief, acting without knowledge, groping in the dark after his own blind leader and yet satisfied with himself? Is he using his reason by obtaining knowledge, going so far and no further, or is he forging ahead, slowly but steadily, purifying his mind, practising virtue, controlling his senses and organs, developing the spirit in the cave of his own heart? Is he one who has found peace and contentment born of conviction and enlightened faith? Does he know why he should not have angry thoughts but should possess a gentle mind and thus be capable of exercising that mind; why he should have a pure heart free from the complexities which egotism brings in its train and so be able to exercise the simplicity of that heart? Does he understand that generosity in the small, plain duties of life will surely kill all selfishness, and is he therefore performing those duties in the right way?

How few are the men of enlightened faith in our midst! No wonder there is so much of strife and unrest in the world today! The man of true faith, who is of gracious mind and pure heart, is on his way to the haven of Peace that passeth understanding, of Bliss beyond compare.

MEN and parties, sects and schools are but the mere ephemera of the world's day. TRUTH, high-seated upon its rock of adamant, is alone eternal and supreme.

—*Isis Unveiled*, Preface

THE UNFOLDMENT OF PSYCHIC POWERS

THE words “psychic” and “psychism” are derived from the Greek *psyche*. To the ancient Greeks, the term *psyche* meant a very definite thing; but nowadays it is used very loosely to denote every kind of mental phenomenon, *e.g.*, mediumship and the higher sensitiveness, hypnotic receptivity and inspired prophecy, simple clairvoyance and true divine seership. In short, the word covers every phase and manifestation of the powers and potencies of the animal-human, as well as the human-divine, soul. Neither physiology nor psychology understands the vast range of phenomena that are called abnormal. The hallucinations of the drunkard, of the drug-addict, of the medium, are put in the same category of the abnormal as the clear sight and prophetic vision of the Adept and the Sage. Just as it is said that genius is allied to lunacy, so it is also inferred that the hallucinated medium and the clear-sighted Adept are intimately related. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Incidents and experiences of the abnormal are often brought to life in the print media. There is a general interest, and it is spreading widely, in the super-physical and abnormal phases of mental activity. Medical science is up against mental ailments which it dubs neurasthenia and hallucination, but which it is unable to remedy because it lacks knowledge and understanding. The spiritist revels in phenomena and the psychical researcher catalogues them; they have been doing this for years and years, but neither of them is able to explain because neither understands what actually happens. To brush aside these phenomena as frauds, as some do, is arrogant foolishness, for they do take place. The Earth *was* round when people thought it flat, and it *was* rotating on its axis and going round the Sun when people thought it was at the centre of the Universe. Our ignorance of natural phenomena does not stop their occurrence. In the ancient East, physio-psychology was studied as one composite science: there were not two sciences—physiology and psychology; there was one science—physio-psychology. There were and are two schools of thought among psycho-physiologists, one of *Hatha Yoga* which emphasizes the

physiological aspect of man as more important than the psychological, and therefore uses psychology in the service of physiology. The other, the *Raja-Yoga* school, considers psychology as of primary importance and physiology as subservient to it. In our civilization today, more and more scientists are beginning to recognize that knowledge of physiology and psychology ought to go together.

The knowledge available in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky is most helpful in understanding theoretically all the abnormal phenomena that are taking place around us. Further, that knowledge can be used to make applications to one’s own condition and for the purposes of right soul-development. H.P.B. was a *Raja-Yogi*, one of the best in modern times. Her *Isis Unveiled* is full of information and instruction; and particularly may be recommended the small volume of articles entitled *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*. For daily practice, there is no safer and more reliable guide than *The Voice of the Silence*, “dedicated to the Few” who aspire to live the Higher Life and to walk the Noble Path.

For the study of our subject, it is necessary to understand what *psyche* is, what psychic powers are, and what the psychic state or condition. The Greeks used the term *psyche* for the animal, terrestrial soul in man, in contradistinction to *nous*, which was with them the human divine soul. Therefore they attributed to man two sets of faculties and powers—psychic and noetic. Psychic faculties and powers were terrestrial and animal in origin and evil or maleficent in effect, while noetic faculties and powers were celestial and divine in origin and good and beneficent in effect. Both *psyche* and *nous* were connected to the physical corpus. Just as the physical body has its senses and organs, so also the *psyche* has its powers and faculties, and *nous* has its own.

All of us know that, from the moral and ethical point of view, each man, each woman, is dual—part good, part evil. But how we came to be that, from where and how we derived this dual nature of ours, is not generally inquired into. Many ruin their bodily and mental health by dangerous practices like becoming mediums and mediumistically inclined, without knowing that mediumship is a

dire disease. Many more, without true knowledge, fall prey to credulity and superstition. So, if for nothing else than for theoretical understanding, people should know what is taking place, say, at a spiritualistic séance, or with a hallucinated mind, or with a hypnotized subject, or what the influence of suggestion and auto-suggestion is, and a score of other phenomena.

There is another reason: there is a genuine desire in a growing number of people to practise sense-control, to give to their own lives a right direction; and there are hundreds who have gone astray by practising without understanding. Theosophy teaches that an individual can and should take his evolution in his own hands, and guide and direct it with the help of soul-knowledge which is available.

The very first step is to perceive, not vaguely but clearly, that two sets of energies function in us—the divine and the demoniac. These are the terms used in the *Gita*. Each of us is dual, and therefore can choose between two modes of action; each can behave in a divine or demoniac way. When by constant behavioural habits our actions pile up in one class or another, we become divine beings or demoniac beings. The *Gita* says that “light and darkness are the world’s eternal ways.” In great Nature herself the law of light and darkness operates. We are a part of Nature, and so in us too the law of duality is at work. There is the combination of Spirit and Matter in us, and as a result we have within us two sets of forces or two natures. In ethical language we call them good and evil, but these terms are so loosely used that it would be necessary to define them with some precision.

In Theosophy, we speak of the two natures of man as lower and higher; the lower is the psychic nature, the higher is the noetic nature. In this, Theosophy but follows the ancient Greeks. The psychic or lower is called the demoniac or *asuric* nature in the *Gita*; the noetic or higher is the divine or *suric* nature. The *psyche* is the lower soul; *nous*, the higher soul. Further analysis brings us to a more definite terminology: *Nous* is the higher mind, called in Sanskrit *Buddhi-Manas*; *psyche* is the lower mind, called *Kama-Manas*. But the word mind is very differently used by different

people.

Because of our dual nature, each one of us can behave psychically or noetically. Most of us are part psychic or evil and part noetic or good; but there are people in whom the psychic nature has come to predominate because of past actions and behaviour, and there are others in whom the noetic nature has become predominant, also through their past efforts. Theosophy teaches that the end of evolution is dual; men and women will ultimately develop into Lords of Light or Lords of Darkness. Each one of us determines for himself, by his daily attitude and behaviour, his own direction. For most, at the present moment, life is a battlefield and the choice is not made, but it is being made. The Day of Judgment is not some one specific day for all; we shall come, if we have not already done so, to our own Day of Judgment when the predominance of good over evil, or of evil over good, is so strong that our future course gets determined. The battle between the lower and the higher in us is still going on, and we ourselves as free-willed beings can tip the scales one way or the other. Theologians and priests have distorted the concept of the Day of Judgment: the believer is going to be safe, the non-believer is to be damned, and so forth. The truth is that each one of us, by his mental attitude and his daily actions, determines his own fate—near and distant.

That brings us to another practical idea: When we know that two natures war within us and that the result of the battle is still in the balance, we ask: “What can I do to defeat the lower in me, to bring victory to the higher?” Theosophy answers: Acquire knowledge of the laws that function in the dual nature of man.

Just as a field of battle is occupied by the opposing armies, so also our *psyche* and our *nous* encounter each other on a common territory. This common territory or battlefield is what we call our mind. The two natures are waging a war for the sole possession of the human mind. The *psyche* is called *Kama-Manas*, passion-mind; the *nous* is called *Buddhi-Manas*, intuitive mind. The first is energized by desires which are personal, separative and selfish; the second or intuitive mind is energized by aspirations which are

impersonal, unifying and altruistic. Mind is the field of battle on which lower desires and higher aspirations are waging a war, for the final and complete possession of the field—the mind.

Anyone who is desirous of understanding the problems of his own dual nature and who aspires to give the right direction to his own life has to recognize the primary fact that the fight is in the mind—not in the bodily senses or the brain, nor in the blood and the flesh, but in the mind, part of which has been conquered by Kama-passion. But if Kama-passion has taken possession of a part of the mind, the remaining portion of Manas is connected with Buddhi. If Kama is passion, Buddhi is compassion. If Kama produces egotism, Buddhi produces altruism. If Kama is defiled reason, Buddhi is pure reason. In each of these pairs there is a common factor. The task before us is to free the mind from the dominance and influence of Kama-passion and to bring it under the guidance and control of Buddhi-compassion; to free it from the lower, analytical reasoning with which all worldly knowledge is obtained, and bring it under the guidance of the higher, synthetical pure reason which is intuition. The intuitive faculty is not developed in most people, while in a few it has developed very partially. The development of intuition has to be undertaken by those who aspire to tread the path which leads to enlightenment and peace.

So, the fight is in the mind. Theosophy teaches that the first step on the spiritual path is a mental step. What food is to the physical body, that ideation is to the mind. The mind is shaped and moulded by our ideation. It is nowadays recognized by all that “as a man thinks, so he becomes.” But by what process is not understood, nor is it deemed very important. People do not watch their own thoughts, do not examine the nature of their own ideation. They allow their minds to follow the dictates of their own desires and passions, and to go in the direction of things they like, and away from things they dislike. Even those who aspire to a high and noble living make the mistake, because they do not know what to do with the mind, how to handle it.

Theosophy recommends two definite exercises or practices to the beginner: one may be called negative; the other, positive. The

first is to give up the lower passivity of the mind; the second is to develop the higher receptivity of the mind. The minds of most people are passive in their functioning and wander from object to object, subject to subject. Our desires and passions, loves and lusts, likes and dislikes, attractions and aversions, possess the mind, just as the spook possesses the medium at a spiritistic séance. When a person is very angry, or full of hatred or malice or jealousy, we say, “He is as one possessed.” That is not just a figurative saying; it is a literal truth of occultism. His mind *is* possessed and controlled by his anger or jealousy. So the first exercise is to get over the mediumistic tendency of the mind. When we undertake this task, we find that the human mind is possessed not only by personal inclinations, personal tastes and attractions, but also by all kinds of notions, superstitions and beliefs. When through several lives the habit of passivity is developed, the person becomes a medium, who cannot control his own bodily organism. A medium is a diseased person and the name of the ailment is passivity. In that condition the human mind abrogates its own right, and the medium is an easy and unfortunate prey to forces of passivity, evil and darkness.

To remove the passive tendency of our own mind, let us control the motion of the mind as it wanders in this direction and that. Very soon we shall find that the impelling power which moves the mind is within ourselves. The energy of ignorance has to be replaced by the energy of knowledge, which study brings. Just as to know a particular subject we must study it, so also to free the mind from passivity we must know the right subject that must be presented to the mind. The passive mind is personal, separative and selfish. Give to that mind food of the opposite kind; present to it impersonal ideas, universal ideas, altruistic ideas. We must set apart at least half-an-hour every day to give the necessary medicine to the passive mind; to give it metaphysical and philosophical ideas, which are not related to our personality, our likes and dislikes. As the mind is freed, even for a while, from the possessing entities, it gains strength.

Next, to develop the higher receptivity of the mind, it has to be

made receptive to the flow of wisdom and compassion, *i.e.*, of Buddhi. Only when Buddhi fecundates Manas, intuition results. If study of Theosophy frees the mind from passivity, practice-application will bring that mind to receive the radiance of Buddhi. What kind of practice or application? The practising of the *paramitas*, the virtues, says the Buddha; practising *dana*, *tapas* and *yagna*, says the *Gita*; practising the Beatitudes, says the Christian mystic. The human constitution, as it is today, needs a more direct answer.

The Voice of the Silence says: “Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.” To become a creator of Nature is to become its transmuter. Nature in Sanskrit is *Prakriti* or matter. We have to learn to practise the transmutation of matter—not turning base metals into gold, which the alchemist claims to do, but transmuting the base metal of passion and passivity into the gold of compassion and altruistic activity. This transmutation is the very purpose of human evolution. Through the process of reincarnation, slowly but surely, we are transmuting gross matter into subtle matter, we are raising all the beings in the lower kingdoms one step higher. As we ourselves rise, we raise others. This task of transmutation or creation must be according to the laws which operate in Nature. What these laws are, how they operate, how man can use them and work with them, is taught in Theosophy. The result: Nature makes obeisance to man.

Freeing ourselves from the lower *psyche*, we shall help humanity to do so; becoming worthy channels, however humble, of the divine *nous*, we shall help the race to rise in the scale of evolution. Doing the double task, we shall come nearer to the mighty company of those Masters who are the creators to whom Nature herself makes obeisance.

TRUE religion is real living: living with all one's soul.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

THE MIDDLE PORTAL

WE have learnt to become indifferent to the pairs of opposites; we have gained love, harmony and patience, and now stand at the middle point of the Paramita Path. We have worked so far with the instruments of action, and emotion, and life, but just as the guiding force has been love immortal, so the agent used throughout has been the mind. It is the mind that has been taught to express love in charity, to speak and act in harmony, to get rid of the impatience of our desires and to learn to wait, patiently, actively.

Now we take a further step: mind has now to come into its own and has to learn how to use, instead of being used by, the lower instruments. Freed from these instruments and their pull, the mind can use them for its own purpose. It is free from the senses and sense-organs, the turbulent emotions and uncontrolled speech and instinctive actions; but it is still full of illusions, and at this stage the truth behind all things thought of by the mind has to be sought. What lies beyond the Gate just passed? Before we can see clearly we need a mind wiped clean of preconceived ideas and prejudices as well as of memories. These have been created by ourselves. Recognizing this, we can begin to create new mental pictures.

These new pictures must be “harmless,” based on *Dana* and *Shila*. But do we really know what is harmless? Hence we are told that the way to create harmless thoughts is to study “the voidness of the seeming full, the fulness of the seeming void.” The voidness of all that we see and know of, we have already experienced, in part; but we have not yet seen the fulness of that which seems so empty when we have freed ourselves from the life that we had lived before. To reach this stage, we have to search for the Self, the Reality behind the shadows that we look upon as real.

We are approaching in mind that higher state when we begin to sense the “steady light” shining “upon the pure white walls of Soul.” That is our immediate goal. Towards that light we struggle on, realizing that “the lightest breeze of passion or desire” disturbs that light. The great pull of the army of the thought sensations that we have subdued, or remembrances of lower pleasures, or the

slightest regret for what has been left behind, even though we know it is of the nature of illusion, will disturb that steady light.

Can a fleeting memory stop our progress? It can. Why is this so? If we do not here and now seek the *cause* of this, and struggle only with the effects, we shall fail, because effects keep changing. “Change is thy great foe,” the struggling neophyte is warned. He has to learn that “the ETERNAL KNOWS NO CHANGE.”

Once again we are back to fundamentals. Love immortal must have become a part of ourselves, and now we have to saturate ourselves with “pure Alaya.” As for the mind, it must become “as one with Nature’s Soul-Thought.” If we have truly learnt how to “live and breathe in all” as all that we perceive breathes in IT, then we have become, to some extent at least, one with ALL, and as such invincible. The Warrior cannot fail. Such an inspiring thought alone can help us in times of trial. Whatever can be destroyed is not real and immortal. All forms, whether of thought, of feelings or of actions, must die; their ensouling essence alone is immortal.

Our mind, or thought creations, must, therefore, be centred on “the pure bright essence of Alaya.” Each one of us is its “crystal ray.” The bright essence is not *without* us, not something afar off, towards which we struggle. It is *within* this form of clay material that we call man. It is there, and must become our life-guide, and if we pay attention to its behests it becomes for us our own true Self, the Watcher within. When we behave and think in terms of our body of illusion, this true Self becomes the victim of the lower self. To prevent this from happening we must realize that it is the body that errs and has to be controlled and mastered. On the One Pure Light we have to fix our Soul-gaze. Our mind and Soul have to be mastered if this pure Light, free from affection, is to aid us in crossing the middle portal.

We are told that we have now “crossed the moat that circles round the gate of human passions”; we have conquered illusion—“Mara and his furious host.” We have cleaned our heart of impure desires, but our task is still not over.

FIXITY OF PURPOSE

Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the Rajah of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion....

When to himself his form appears unreal, as do on waking all the forms he sees in dreams;

When he has ceased to hear the many, he may discern the ONE—the inner sound which kills the outer....

Before the Soul can comprehend and may remember, she must unto the Silent Speaker be united....

For then the Soul will hear, and will remember.

And then to the inner ear will speak—

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

IT is round these few lines that the student of Theosophy must build his resolve, his course of conduct and his daily spiritual exercise. His efforts have to be concentrated towards one objective only—that he may discern the ONE—the inner sound which kills the outer. If this were beyond the capacity of the aspirant, the instruction would not have been worded in the manner in which it stands today. In fact, unless the few directions contained in these verses are followed, the rest of the book will have hardly anything to offer. It is only to those who try to become indifferent to objects of perception and who persist in the endeavour as year piles upon year that the message of the spiritual life comes loud and clear.

Before meditation can be thought of, the aspirant has to achieve some degree of concentration. At all times, before he enters upon his sacred hour dedicated to the spiritual, he has to immunize himself against all earthly reactions and stabilize himself by becoming indifferent to outer as well as to inner sights and sounds that project objects of perception on to his mind. His preliminary endeavour must be to render the emotions powerless to disturb his serenity at least for the hour. The smarting under a wrong; the indignation and the shame of being the target of calumny; the feeling of being ostracized by the very persons from whom love

and tolerance are due—these are but a few circumstances which life throws up and which, if rightly approached, become the training media for achieving the higher indifference. It is circumstances such as these which teach the disciple to go through the foul atmosphere of personal existence. Then, there are days of gloom when nothing seems to go right and sitting for concentration arouses only greater oscillations. There come moments when undesirable images come trooping in, unbidden, devilish and full of terror. Matter has these tendencies, but the Soul of man is stronger than any compulsion which these may impose. There also come days when, squirming under the tyranny of others, he wonders whether brotherhood does exist and is the key to emancipation. Such are the events which try men's souls and which by their very virulence arouse the soul's strength to stand up and conquer.

A person is said to be concentrated when he makes his entire consciousness (body, desires, mind) converge to a focal point of attention. At such times, he brings the entire force of his thoughts to rest upon a single point, so that there is no straying away, no relaxation of effort during the time that concentration is practised. The energy thus fixed on any subject or object is intense and produces results the magnitude of which surpasses the achievements of what the world calls brilliant minds. In such a state of concentrated effort, there can be no deviation of attention, no lessening of the compact oneness of the effort. Fixity of purpose, one-pointedness, the refusal to be drawn away from the desired objective, and the shutting off of all channels that can bring in outside disturbing elements, are requisites for its practice. The health of the body is as vital to its practice as is the peace of mind and serenity of temperament. As a practice conducive to an awakening of the Soul, it demands an exclusive devotion that discriminates between sights, sounds, emotions and acts, and divides them into those favourable and those inimical to its development. Of this, Krishna speaks:

This divine discipline is not to be attained by the man who eateth more than enough or too little, nor by him who has a

habit of sleeping much, nor by him who is given to overwatching. The meditation which destroyeth pain is produced in him who is moderate in eating and in recreation, of moderate exertion in his actions, and regulated in sleeping and waking. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, VI, 16-17)

He then goes on to advise that such a person should centre his heart in the true Self and be exempt from attachment to all desires. He alone should adopt the practice who is prepared to centre his heart in the true Self which is the Self of all creatures. He who practises concentration for ends other than these is no devotee of the Highest and but makes the effort to possess the higher force for lesser and even non-spiritual ends.

If Krishna's words of wisdom are given their due importance, it will be found that they demand an active awareness of the entire daily life of the aspirant, no moment excluded. In such context, the trivia of a day may for the higher life be stumbling-blocks, the ordinary modes of society inimical, rivalry in business and the pursuit of "innocent" pleasures a deterrent and a bar to progress. "Concentration" is the act, conscious and cautious, of trying to find an emplacement of the Soul in the Highest. No light task this, for, as late as in the Eleventh Chapter of the *Gita*, Arjuna confesses that during his walk in life he had forgotten who Krishna was and had therefore been guilty of not paying due reverence to the ubiquitous presence that is Krishna. Even though a disciple of Krishna, he had failed to discriminate between the mortal and the Krishna-aspect of things. It is in this wide context that Arjuna's words have to be placed. Says he: "Having been ignorant of thy majesty, I took thee for a friend, and have called thee 'O Krishna, O son of Yadu, O friend'; and blinded by my affection and presumption, I have at times treated thee without respect in sport, in recreation, in repose, in thy chair, and at thy meals, in private and in public." It is such loss of memory of the highest which has to be guarded against; for, without this ever-present memory the soul will not be able to rest upon the spirit in every moment of leisure.

The concentration which the disciple must seek is totally different from that which is made to go under that name in recent times. The quacks are a-plenty and the market of ambitious learners is rapidly expanding. Concentration is but the use of a force which like any other can be drawn upon for good or evil ends. There is a craze to acquire it to secure personal advancement and to obtain dominance over the destinies of other men. The student of Theosophy is warned against practising concentration for ignoble and for personal ends. As one who tries to put the interests of others above his own, he is expected to acquire steadiness of mind and accumulate reserves of power. These he must acquire so that he becomes the better equipped to serve humanity. His efforts at concentration must revolve round the desire to make Theosophy a living power which can work through his life force. In concentration, he must find that potency which will enable him to build up a vast brotherly love which cuts across the barriers of race, caste, creed and colour. He has to gather in himself vast stores of energy which will ultimately give him the strength to bestow labour unselfishly upon humanity, upon all men, whether good or bad. To attain such a high objective, he has to convert himself from the man ravaged by desires into an impersonal force for good. He trains himself to use his senses and organs of action for such efforts as shall benefit humanity in the mass. It therefore follows that when such an aspirant sits for the practice of concentration he strives to make himself completely forgetful of his personal self. So doing, he becomes the better equipped to saturate himself with that sincere quality of altruism that knows no barriers and is free from all limits.

Granted that the student has this noble objective, how does he plan to proceed, what knowledge does he seek, what powers does he covet?

Concentration has to become a way of life, an intimate attribute of the waking man. Yet, for him who would like to be inducted into it gradually, the best exercise is that of reviewing the walk of himself as a personal man throughout the preceding twenty-four hours. Did Theosophy walk with him the thorny paths of discipline? Did it form the backdrop to his plans, his successes and his failures?

Picking up each event, he has to scrutinize it as though from the throne of the Most High. Did the ideal of a universal brotherhood of humanity peep through his dealings with others? Did he show indifference to his own sufferings and bear his soul in peace even when personal injustice was meted out to him by cruel hands? Did he seek out him who sat starving for the word of wisdom and give to him the benign protection of a living LAW? Was he charitable to the weaknesses of others? Did he attend to his duties—not at all, indifferently, or with assiduity born of devotion? Did he help lame dogs over stiles? Did he step aside so that thus the advance of another was assured? Each event has to be seen in retrospect and from each has to be extracted its lesson for the living of the life.

To each act, for each reaction, the following five norms could be applied: Did it evoke in me that charity which is the manifestation of love immortal? Did it synthesize the unity of thought, word and act? Did it go to build up reserves of that calmness which would remain unshaken through all experiences? Was boldness to the fore—the boldness that comes of an awakened soul? Was a divine indifference to pleasure and to pain effectively maintained at all levels? And, whether the answer be “yes” or “no”, the effort of concentration builds up in memory the images of what should have been the ideal movement of the soul at the time when it stands allied to its parent.

All this in the retrospect—the casting up of credits and debits, the assimilation of experience, the generation of a knowledge to meet similar situations in the future. The exercise marks the closing of a twenty-four hour day. But there is yet another exercise where imagination is called upon to play a very important part in the life of the individual. The Soul has, at the start of the day, to cast its vision forth on flesh, to foresee and to plan its mind-painted images for the morrow. What duties have to be performed? What shall be his attitude at performance time? Whom is he likely to meet? Is there a possibility of his having to listen to slander? If so, how will he comport himself? Can he bring someone on to the right path? If there is a chance that another will be unjustly attacked in his presence, how shall he go to his defence and yet preserve the image

of respectability, decency and good behaviour? If calamitous circumstances are likely to arise, how will he control his reactions, how turn the circumstance so as to trample a vice or help a merit grow—in himself and in others? A half-hour dedicated to such work tends to grow and grow till each moment of leisure comes to be spent in the close nearness of the man's personality to his inner light.

Like a good artisan, the man of concentration selects and arranges his tools for the effort to be undertaken. The sculptor, the painter and the artist invoke their muse; why not therefore he who sculpts and paints with life for his creations? This is exactly what he is expected to do with the power of concentration after centring himself in the true Self. His is the privilege and the responsibility to create and project on to this plane the images that his soul builds—pictures of deeds well done and of days and nights spent in holy striving.

IF theosophical doctrines are to be of any benefit to the race, then they must be for all classes, poor and rich, cultured and uncultured, young and old....As to understanding the doctrines, it is my opinion that this is as easy for the uneducated as for the educated. Indeed, in some cases, over-education has been a bar, and deep intellectual study of Theosophy has led to a want of comprehension of the principle of Brotherhood and to a violation of it. The purpose and aim of Theosophy in the world is not the advancement of a few in the intellectual plane, but the amelioration of all human affairs through the practice of Brotherhood. The theosophical doctrines show what Brotherhood is and how it is to be practised, and if we cannot succeed in the practice of it then we are *failures*. Brotherhood is more likely to arise in the ranks below than to spring from those above.

—W. Q. JUDGE

“THE ETERNAL VERITIES”

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MR. JUDGE says of Theosophy on the opening page of *The Ocean of Theosophy* that, though it is unfathomable in its deepest parts, yet, being “shallow enough at its shores, it will not overwhelm the understanding of a child.” This statement could apply equally to *The Eternal Verities*, which is generally thought of as a book meant only for children, or for Theosophy School use. In many respects this is correct, but if an adult took the time to study it, or even to read it through, he would find that though it is indeed “shallow enough at its shores,” it also can be “unfathomable in its deepest parts.”

The dedication, which makes it clear that it is meant for all, young and old, reads:

To the beloved Teacher and Friendly Philosopher, Robert Crosbie, who taught what H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge had taught before him—pure and simple....What is in this book is what was learned from him. It is dedicated to him, and to all—or young or old—who seek the Truth, that they may help as he did.

It would be worth our while to consider some of the ideas presented, and see how closely they follow those H.P.B. presented in the Three Fundamental Propositions of the Secret Doctrine.

Just as Mr. Judge drew attention, in the first chapter of *The Ocean of Theosophy*, to the existence of a system of philosophy at once both scientific and religious, and to those great Elder Brothers who were the Custodians of that Wisdom, so also *The Eternal Verities* draws attention first to the meaning of the word Theosophy:

Theosophy is the wisdom of those who once were like ourselves...who followed the Path that other Wise Ones had pointed out to them....It includes the science of mathematics, of astronomy, of music, of architecture, of engineering. It is the soul of great literature and art. It is the true source of education. On it alone will the true government be founded...

And of the Great Ones we are told:

The Knowers of this real Knowledge are living Men, whose only concern is that all men may likewise come to have wisdom. They are called Masters of Wisdom.

At the outset, therefore, the basis is laid for all that follows in the book, at once setting the mind of the reader straight on what Theosophy is and where it has come from.

The book takes us next to a consideration of the Three Fundamentals, or, as they are called, the Three Truths. H.P.B. introduces the Fundamentals in *The Secret Doctrine* by saying that “it is absolutely necessary that the reader should be made acquainted with the few fundamental conceptions which underlie and pervade the entire system of thought...and on their clear comprehension depends the understanding of all that follows”; and following that pattern *The Eternal Verities* sets out by saying: “However great may seem to us now the mystery of many things, a real understanding of The Three Truths will bring us an understanding of them, and of all things else.”

Four chapters are devoted to the First Truth, following the Theosophical method of proceeding from universals to particulars. We are given the idea of THAT, which is “the cause and origin of the universe and of ourselves....It is the Real—the One Reality....It is Life—Spirit—Consciousness.” To understand it better we are given the concept of space, which is greater than any being, and, no matter how far we may stretch our minds, there is still other space beyond and beyond. We can only say “It is”; it cannot be seen or touched or heard.

From this universal One Reality we are led by means of a Memory Verse to consider that “Life is not born nor dies. All is Life. Life is invisible, yet is in all things visible”; and, further, that “countless myriads of ‘lives’ surround us all the time.” They all belong to the same One Life, though some have one part to play and some another. It is these same lives that make up our body, and which at death separate and destroy the body. The “lives” are still Life, and cannot get “out” of Life. Therefore death is simply a separation which never

touches the Real “I” in us, for that “I” is not our body.

This Real “I” in us comes from the One Life; we are as much a part of it as are the sunbeams that come from the Sun. Just as there could be no sunbeams without the Sun, so there could be no living beings without the One Life. This is the real basis of brotherhood—the fact that the same Life is in us as in all beings, whether they be men, animals, plants or stones. All are alive; all are expressions of different degrees of consciousness. It is only human beings who are Self-conscious Knowers, Perceivers, Thinkers. This “I” never changes through all the changes of our body and of our thoughts and feelings, for it is the One who dwells in the body, the One who thinks, the One who feels. It is always there, no matter how often we forget it; it cannot be seen, for it is the Seer; it has no appearance, for it is “the *Real* of us.”

It is our task to become conscious of this Real “I,” for the only way one can know anything is by being conscious of it. It is the Consciousness which is the Seer, the Knower and also the Chooser. This last is important, because our journey to Self-Knowledge depends on the choices we make, and by choosing rightly or wrongly we either shorten or lengthen our journey.

The above are only a few ideas on the First Truth culled from *The Eternal Verities*, but enough has been said to show how much food for thought there is, and how important it is for children and adults alike to understand this First Fundamental which forms the basis of all their thought and consequent actions and choices.

The book next leads us to the consideration that though there is One Truth, yet it has three faces, or views, and we could not have the other two Truths without the First. The minute we speak or think of the First Truth in action, we are considering the Second Truth.

The Changelessness of the First Truth is eternal, ceaseless Motion Itself. What we *see* is motions, not the Source of all motions. In the Changeless is the Power to change, the Power to act, the Power to think, the Power to build, the Power to destroy, and all Powers whatsoever. It is when these Powers come into use, when beings begin to act, when manifold motions start in the universe that we speak of the Second

Truth—for this is the Truth which has to do with action....

We are, therefore, brought from a consideration of the unmanifested universe, which cannot be seen, to the manifested one, which can be described, compared and seen.

With this as a basis, *The Eternal Verities* goes on to consider “the three fingers on the hand of law”: Karma, Cycles, and Reincarnation. As we are choosers, and therefore responsible for our thoughts, which are “the seeds of Karma,” we can choose to obey or disobey the Law; but whatever we choose, the Law alters not its course and goes on unceasingly. A very practical thought is given in the following quotation to illustrate this point:

Are we going to complain, then, of our disappointments? Shall we talk about someone else’s “good luck” or our own “bad luck,” when we know that everything comes about according to Law, or Karma; when we perceive that nothing ever just “happens” to us, but has really grown out of the seeds of causes that we ourselves planted?

It is cycles that mark the time aspect of Karma. “Cycles are the clock of Karma,” says the Memory Verse. The importance for us of understanding the law of cycles cannot be too much stressed, because cycles work in our day-to-day life, in our very existence as human beings; all that we are and that we do is governed by them. Our bodies have their spring, summer, autumn and winter; our heart beats in cycles; our blood has its path or cycle through our body. There are thought cycles and feeling cycles, and our habits which, if persisted in, ultimately form our characters, are the result of cycles.

Cycles, if heeded, can be a help to us, for with their regular return comes the return of impressions, and it is at this time that we can break a bad habit. When we find ourselves in an angry or lazy mood, then is the time to start another and better cycle.

Cycles also determine, according to our Karma, when it is time for us to reincarnate (*re*—again; *in*—into; *carne*—flesh). The very word conveys at once that if we are in bodies now, we have been in other bodies before. It is our Karma that has brought us into the

kind of body we have; our characters and disposition, our happiness and sorrows, our affinities and antipathies, the family, race and nation we are born into, can all be explained on the basis of Reincarnation.

Reincarnation is called the doctrine of hope, for understanding it, we make for ourselves better characters; and when we drop our bodies we do not leave behind us bad dispositions and characters to be picked up again in other incarnations.

The argument against reincarnation that is often raised is that people do not remember having lived before. How could they? It is not strange that we do not remember, when we pause to consider that the brain we are trying to remember with came new with our present body, and is filled with the memories of this life. As a matter of fact, we do not remember even half the experiences of the present life; we do not remember the day we were born, or our infancy, but we do not doubt our having lived when we were infants.

There is, however, a way of remembering which is dependent, not on the brain, but on feeling. True remembering is the *feeling* which some sight or occurrence arouses. Also, how often we find even very young children having aptitudes or talents for certain things, which cannot be explained except on the basis of reincarnation!

Through all the cycles, from body to body, it is the same individuality, the same Ego, the same “I” that has stored up all the knowledge of the past. That “I” has various coverings, or instruments which it uses. One of these is called Prana, the breath of life. Then there is a finer body within the physical, called the astral or the *pattern* body, which causes a person to keep the same general appearance. We have the lower mind, which is conjoined with our desires, our *Kama* nature; but there is also the higher Mind or *Manas*, the sentient reincarnating principle. When conjoined with *Buddhi*, Intuition, it becomes the spiritual Soul.

The real Ego or reincarnating principle waits between lives in what is called *Devachan*; but it needs must come back to earth where there is so much to learn that one life is hardly sufficient for the purpose, and where there are Karmic debts to be settled. This cycle of compulsory rebirth must go on until the goal of perfection

is reached.

The Eternal Verities then brings us to the Third Truth. It needs to be recalled that the Three Truths are dependent on one another, for all three come from the One Truth. We cannot fully understand any one Truth unless we understand the other two. Knowing them fully, and proving them to ourselves as we live and think and act, we shall know all that needs to be known.

The Third Truth, springing as it does from the First Truth, points to the identity of all beings with the One Life, One Spirit, One Consciousness, and therefore with one another. The three classes of beings—men, those less than men, and those who have risen beyond the human stage—as also worlds and systems of worlds, all come from the Self of All. This coming forth of worlds with beings in it is all for one purpose—to learn. From the lowest to the highest, all have something to learn; all have their place on the Ladder of Being, and the lower serve the higher as the higher serve the lower—for the sake of the Self of All.

We are next introduced to the word Monad, which comes from the Greek word *monas*, meaning One, or Unity. Monad is one of many names that means the One Life, itself changeless, as it dwells in various ever changing forms. It is the soul in everything, from an atom to a man. Every Monad is a centre of life or of force, a self-moving unit.

At the dawn of manifestation, when the universe wakes up, all the mineral, vegetable, animal and human Monads gradually emerge from the inactivity of sleep, and find their place in the new universe. Of the four kingdoms of Nature, the mineral kingdom is the least evolved, and the monadic essence passes through it very slowly. The monadic essence next works its way into the vegetable kingdom, and then into the animal and human kingdoms, developing with each stage greater awareness and more specialized modes of intelligence. When the man stage is reached, the monadic essence separates into individual units.

The human form combines in itself the mineral, vegetable and animal life-essence, and is altogether a superior form to that of the animals, but mere form does not make a man. The Real Man, the

God in the making, was not a product of evolution from the lower kingdoms. To become a complete sevenfold being, man needed the light of mind, and this he got from the Shining Lives, the Higher Intelligences who came down the Ladder of Being to enter the human form and light it with their Light—their Fire of Intelligence or of Self-consciousness. Thus man became a chooser and thinker, and since he combines in himself the Shining side and the shadow side, there goes on in him a struggle between these two.

In the process of growth and unfoldment, man uses the lower kingdoms of Nature and the elemental “lives.” In all this, he needs more than Manas; he needs heart light as well. It is only when he becomes a real teacher and helper in the world, only when his greatest desire is to *help* Humanity, that the light of the Gods will be his.

The consideration of the Third Truth in *The Eternal Verities* culminates fittingly in a chapter on “The Elder Brothers.” These Elder Brothers are given the name *Mahatmas*; They are also called *Masters*, for They are Masters of *all* Wisdom, having reached the top of the Ladder of Being. They come from age to age to remind men of what they once knew of the Three Truths, and to rekindle in them the light of Mind that has become dim as a result of engrossment in the world of senses and appearances. They have paid all their Karmic debts on earth, but They *choose* to take earthly bodies that They may be the better able to help and teach men on earth. As *The Eternal Verities* states:

Some day, it may be, we shall always think and feel and choose as Elder Brothers do. The Eternal Verities are what They think and do. Some day, it may be, we shall learn, and know ourselves and Them!

From all this we can see how important the ideas in *The Eternal Verities* are, and how the book can help us in developing the understanding. It serves the purpose of arousing interest in and laying a foundation for further Theosophical study.

A TRINITY FOR DAILY LIVING

IN ancient Greece, the trinity of truth, goodness and beauty was the fundamental, basic idea of life, physical, mental and moral. In art and sculpture, in music and literature, in fact in all the activities of life, the underlying thread of this divine trinity could be seen. On the metaphysical plane, it touches the very root and source of life. It is the equivalent of *Sat-Chit-Ananda* of the Indian philosophy. God is Truth, *Sat*, the one reality back of all manifestation, and is closely connected and interlinked with the other two, goodness and beauty. Real goodness is compassion, harmonious relationship with all beings and with the whole of Nature. It is the Law of laws, Alaya's Self. It is quite different from sentimental goodness. It is the application of truth in daily life, and beauty is the expression in grace of both truth and goodness. It is the beauty of thought, word and deed manifested in the beauty of character, the high altitude of morals and divine virtues. Keats rightly tells us: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." Markham states in his poem on "Brotherhood":

The crest and crowning of all good,
Life's final star, is Brotherhood.

Beauty manifests itself in one's own behaviour. The pure mind full of noble ideas will have its expression in kind words and unselfish deeds. It means integration on all planes. In the *Sermon on the Mount* we are told: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." So it is inner beauty that really counts. The realization of truth, even to some extent, demands self-purification, therefore there is a dual aspect to the teachings given by all the great Teachers. As Jesus said to his disciples: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables."

What is Truth? That which is changeless and is the same for all people, at all times, in all places. There is only one true answer in

mathematics, but there may be countless incorrect ones. Similarly, Truth is one, but it has many points of view, many facets, all incomplete. There are six schools of Indian philosophy, each representing one point of view, but the seventh, the source and synthesis of them all, is the Esoteric Philosophy. Thus, the absolute and ultimate Truth has to be realized within one's own heart; it cannot be conveyed from one unto another. Gradually, as a person purifies himself, as he reaches up to the higher states of consciousness, so he comes nearer and nearer the One Reality back of all manifestation. "Polarity is universal, but the polarizer lies in our own consciousness," says H.P.B. Light and darkness are the world's eternal ways, but it is man alone who attracts to himself one or the other. He becomes the focal point for either the forces of light or the forces of darkness to work through him. So let the polarizer within be in harmony with the highest within us, and it will manifest itself through a truer realization of the Self and a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood, as stated in the Declaration of the U.L.T.

The Theosophy School Poem states, "We have come in search of Truth," so even children in their purity and innocence can know something of the real life within themselves. They are old souls in new bodies, so naturally this cannot be difficult for them. With our finite minds it is impossible to realize the Truth; it has to be sought behind the commonplace. "There is no Religion higher than Truth" was the motto of those who launched the Theosophical Movement in the last quarter of the last century. And H.P.B. states in the closing portion of *The Key to Theosophy* that "Theosophy is synonymous with EVERLASTING TRUTH." So it has always existed and will always exist, but one has to seek it behind the commonplace things of life, behind and within the material existence.

Men and parties, sects and schools are but the mere
ephemera of the world's day. TRUTH, high-seated upon its rock
of adamant, is alone eternal and supreme. (*Isis Unveiled*,
Preface, p. v)

There is no end to kindness and goodness of heart. Each day

there is an opportunity for the expression of gentle words and loving deeds. One by one the duties, seemingly high or low, await us, but each has to be performed with the strength of our mind and heart and with true understanding so that it becomes a consecrated duty. Then it is no longer monotonous, no longer drudgery, but a joyful experience. Each day affords us fresh opportunities to welcome joys and sorrows with an equal mind and to learn the lessons they can teach us. Thus the good becomes better and best, the circle of goodness is ever enlarged and the manifestation of goodness is ever deepened. The true and the good become beautiful. People usually look aloft for truth; they await some extraordinary event to show their goodness, to give their gold in princely sums, neglecting to give small coins when needed, and thus lose their opportunities of being helpful. If our heart's best treasure is given without thinking of a return, then with a double bounty it is replenished. The rivers flow to the ocean continually, but the hidden springs are always there to keep them flowing; so too the springs of life will always fill us with divine wisdom and love.

There are beauty-spots on earth, the mountain lakes, the waterfalls, the lovely flowers, the singing birds, all of which bring us joy; but they cannot be compared to the inner beauty and inner joy of the divine world. Not only beauty but also strength and courage, peace and power reign supreme there. Man so clings to his physical environment that he is unable to perceive the divine heights and depths within him, how high he can soar, how deep he can delve. The beauty of Theosophy is that it can be applied, it can be lived in our daily life. It is not meant for special occasions, it is not meant for platform discussions only, but as we perform our daily duties its various principles should be remembered and followed diligently. All for each, and each for all, would become the order of the day. A reflection upon the trinity of truth-goodness-beauty would lead us to something higher, holier, diviner than what we are accustomed to experiencing. It would change the whole being and make life worth living, with a definite purpose and definite goal.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Interest in life on Mars has revived since definite evidence was found by NASA's Odyssey probe that there is water there. Water is considered essential for life, though it is not the only prerequisite. Earlier theories that water must have existed on the Red Planet were based more on scientific conjecture than on conclusive evidence; but the data Odyssey has been sending back reveals that water lies frozen in the Martian soil and that it once ran freely on the surface. The news, announced in the *Journal Science*, puts the solar system in a new light, say the scientists.

The question that is now being probed is whether life first appeared on Mars and from there was transferred to Earth by a big asteroid impact. The notion that life began on one planet and spread to others—the panspermia theory—is gaining currency among scientists. According to Michael Meyer, a NASA exobiologist who is investigating the possibility of extraterrestrial life in the solar system, "Mars and Earth have been exchanging materials for quite some time. If you get one planet in our solar system that has life, it's reasonable to imagine that you could infect all the other planets that are habitable."

In view of these new revelations, some of the prevalent scientific notions about our origin and destiny will have to be radically revised. Further probes might reveal more about the Martian atmosphere, but the first clear evidence of extra-terrestrial life will not come as a surprise to many who have always held that life is a cosmic principle and a property of matter which induces it to become organized and complexified, at the same time strictly observing the laws of evolution.

The Secret Doctrine states:

It is quite correct that Mars is in a state of obscurity at present (I, 165). Theosophists will remember that, according to Occult teaching, Cyclic pralayas so-called are but *obscurations*, during which periods Nature, *i.e.*, everything visible and *invisible* on a resting planet—remains *in statu quo*.

Nature rests and slumbers, no work of destruction going on on the globe even if no active work is done. All forms, as well as their astral types, remain as they were at the last moment of its activity. The “night” of a planet has hardly any twilight preceding it. It is caught like a huge mammoth by an avalanche, and remains slumbering and frozen till the next dawn of its new day—a very short one indeed in comparison to the “Day of Brahma.” (II, 660)

In many countries, the race is on to stop human cloning. The UN General Assembly met in New York recently to set out the broad areas to be covered by a proposed treaty banning human cloning. The treaty is expected to be formally drafted soon.

Almost everyone agrees that cloning for reproductive purposes—producing cloned babies, in other words—should be outlawed. But opinion is sharply divided over therapeutic cloning, where an embryo is used solely for the purpose of extracting cells to treat a matching patient. Some countries are pressing for a ban to cover this kind of cloning too. “It’s a race against time,” says a source close to the negotiations.

New Scientist comments:

Those who want to outlaw therapeutic cloning argue that an early embryo consisting of little more than a ball of cells is still a living human being, even if it is never introduced into a womb and would normally stand no chance of survival. To sacrifice it to provide stem cells for treatment or to change it into tissue for transplant is no different from killing an adult, they say.

Because such views are usually based on religious principles, the arguments for and against therapeutic cloning could quickly become bogged down. So the best strategy might be to concentrate first on a ban on reproductive cloning, leaving more time to reach an agreement on therapeutic cloning.

For further comments on this highly debatable issue of human cloning, readers are referred to “In the Light of Theosophy” for

March and May 2002. Human cloning is like a Pandora’s box which, once opened, can lead to unforeseen disastrous consequences. Man is more than his body, and scientists might well end up creating not humans, but a race of soulless beings—Frankenstein’s monsters.

New studies in animal behaviour reveal that they have intelligence and skills unthought of before. New Caledonian crows, for instance, are experts at toolmaking. Their tool kit includes stick probes, hooks and pandanus leaf tools which they use mainly to flush out prey. These secretive forest birds’ talents come to them naturally. The crows are said to show a keener understanding of form and function than even chimps. “Their skills do challenge current ideas about how early humans became master toolmakers,” writes Stephanie Pain in *New Scientist*. (17 August 2002)

“Maybe when we’ve got to the bottom of what makes crows such skilled toolmakers we’ll have to think again about how toolmaking evolved in humans,” says Russell Gray, an evolutionary biologist....The crows habitually use a range of tools that they make themselves. “The whole species relies on tools to get food,” says Alex Kacelnik, an expert on animal behaviour at Oxford University. In the wild, they use the same tools repeatedly and carry them around from place to place. Gavin Hunt, a biologist at the University of Auckland, has been watching wild crows for the past decade, and he has collected an entire tool kit of stick-like probes, nifty hooks and long, barbed tapers....

The way crows manufacture and manipulate stick tools is clever, but biologists are more impressed by what they can do with hooks....Even children don’t realize what a hook can do until they are two or three years old....

The diversity of the tools in the wild crows’ tool kit does suggest they might use different implements for different purposes....Their ability to select an appropriate tool on their

first exposure to a novel task is impressive. It tells us they understand something of the functional properties of the tool.

The question of what's going on in a crow's mind will take time and a lot more experiments to answer. What is clear is that they can construct sophisticated tools without large brains or symbolic language.

Such advanced toolmaking is very rare. How did New Caledonian crows acquire this skill? This triumph of instinct, inexplicable to the naturalists who observe it, can never be understood along purely materialistic lines. Animal instinct is a form of psychic clairvoyance. It exists even in the acephalous animals as well as in those with heads, and its manifestations run the gamut from so-called reflex or automatic actions to the intuitional powers of man, "which are the crown and ultimatum of instinct," and "the unerring guide of the seer" (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 425, 433). Of its manifestation in the animal kingdom H.P.B. says:

This instinct of the animals, which act from the moment of their birth each in the confines prescribed to them by nature, and which know how, save in accident proceeding from a higher instinct than their own, to take care of themselves unerringly—this instinct may, for the sake of exact definition, be termed automatic; but it must have either within the animal which possesses it or *without*, something's or someone's *intelligence* to guide it. (*Ibid.*, I, 425)

It is a reflection on man's inhumanity to his "younger brothers" that primates, who are genetically the closest to humans, are among the most threatened species. Apes and monkeys have been declining in population for years, and the latest survey by Conservation International confirms the worst. Since January 2000 the number of threatened species has swelled from 120 to 195; 55 are on the verge of extinction. Many of the newest names on the list live in Asia, where efforts to fight forest destruction and poaching have made little headway. It is estimated that one in three primates is

headed for extinction. (*Newsweek*, October 21, 2002)

To students of Theosophy who know about the ancestry of the higher apes especially, their ill treatment and decimation by man seems most revolting. How long will it be before science considers the Theosophical teaching that "the ape is...the transformation of species most directly connected with that of the human family—a bastard branch engrafted on their own stock before the final perfection of the latter"?

The pithecooids, the orang-outang, the gorilla, and the chimpanzee *can*, and, as the Occult Sciences teach, *do*, descend from an animalized Fourth human Root-Race, being the product of man and an extinct species of mammal—whose *remote* ancestors were themselves the product of Lemurian bestiality—which lived in the Miocene age. The ancestry of this semi-human monster is explained in the Stanzas as originating in the sin of the "Mind-less" races of the middle Third Race period. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 683)

The controversy in India over the mass conversion of Dalits to Christianity has evoked concern about the beliefs, practices and objectives of the Indian Church. Christianity arrived in India even before it reached Rome, yet only 2.32 per cent of Indians are Christians, according to a 1991 census. Why did Christianity fail so spectacularly in getting Indian followers? Tony Joseph, an editor associated with the *Anand Bazaar Patrika* group, writes in *The Sunday Express* for October 20:

In recent centuries, missionaries from all over the world, and all kinds of sects, were warmly welcomed into India's bosom, and allowed to preach their religion. Not many civilizations can claim such confidence, such generosity of spirit....Nor have Christian churches spared either money or men in their efforts to spread the word of Christ. Still, despite all this, Christianity has failed to grow on Indian soil....

Could it be that compared to the rich intellectual fare that Indian civilization offers, the Christian fare is bland, and no

amount of missionary zeal can make up for it? That the intellectual framework of Indian philosophy is broader and stronger than what Christianity has to offer and, therefore, India looks at Christianity as just another particular method of worship which can be accommodated within that framework rather than as the stand-alone, one-and-only-true-path to God?

Christianity's problem in India is not that Indian philosophy rejects its essential message; it is that it accepts it so naturally and unself-consciously that it feels no necessity for it! In other words, while the Indian mind is at home with the message of Christ, it wholeheartedly and intuitively rejects the vessel that message comes in: the vessel of exclusivity, the one-prophet-one-book-one-way mindset, the corporeal structure of the church with its rigid, official hierarchy....

It would be a nice gesture if the church put a voluntary ban on all conversions into Christianity for a period of time....Pro-active conversion of people from one religion to another, based on the unshakable belief that there is only one road to God, is an outdated idea. Irrespective of its success or failure, it increases social tension, threatens other people's cultures and is, generally, a rude way of social behaviour....If the Church absorbs new ideas from the Indian civilization, it might even rediscover its relevance in the Western world, where it has been on the downward slope in recent centuries.

The word "Christianity" itself needs to be redefined. Christianity can never hope to be understood, H.P.B. wrote, "until every trace of dogmatism is swept away from it, and the dead letter sacrificed to the eternal Spirit of Truth, which is Horus, which is Crishna, which is Buddha, as much as it is the Gnostic Christos and the true Christ of Paul." The growth of the Christian Church from the few first followers of spiritual life as taught by Jesus into the rich body of today, a mass of dogmas and doctrines, ritual and ceremonies, is sad to contemplate. Until all dogmas and doctrines are tossed overboard and the true teachings of Jesus restored, Christianity will remain what it is—a way of life the very antithesis of that advocated by Jesus.

The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the Philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF, a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.