

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THEOSOPHICAL WORK

“HUMANITY sins, sorrows, suffers and dies a thousand deaths; because of what? Just IGNORANCE,” writes Mr. Crosbie. Misery is an inseparable part of human existence, in spite of the efforts of individuals and organisations to better the human condition, by working to provide basic necessities of life and by fighting injustice, corruption and inequalities. Two-thirds of world’s evil is due to man’s inhumanity to man. The real source of evil is the reasoning man who dissociates himself from Nature; God or Deity which is synonymous with nature. It is our wrong and separative ideas or thoughts which are the main cause of suffering in the world, because they form the basis of our speech and action. The remedy lies in correct understanding of nature of man, and recognizing divine element in everything. “Theosophy teaches the animal-man to become a human-man; and when people have learned to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice and generosity will be done spontaneously by all,” writes H.P.B. (*Five Messages*, p. 9). This stupendous task can be accomplished by study, practice and spread of the philosophy of Theosophy and confronting “partially true” and positively erroneous ideas. To work for Theosophy means to understand the philosophy of Theosophy and strive to reach it to as many people as possible, in a simple manner.

Theosophy is that ocean of knowledge which is shallow enough at its shores so that even a child can understand, but at the same

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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THEOSOPHY COMPANY (INDIA) PRIVATE LTD.

40 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400 020, India
email: ultmumbai@mtnl.net.in ♦ Phone : 22039024
website: www.ultindia.org

time it is deep enough to stimulate and interest the greatest minds. Therefore, a student-worker has to keep in mind the receptive capacity of the enquirer while sharing the teachings. It calls for discretion and prudence. A Master of Wisdom cautions: "...we cannot consent to over-flood the world at the risk of drowning them with a doctrine that has to be cautiously given out, and bit by bit like a too powerful tonic which can kill as well as cure." The first great challenge is to realize and accept that ordinary human beings are neither scholars nor metaphysicians; they are those, who seek answers to problems in daily life.

The need of the hour is an emphasis on ethics because the crisis of character has set in due to the erosion of morality. The incentive for practice of ethics can come only when the basis of the doctrines of Karma and Re-birth has been provided. We have in the law of Karma an expression of Justice, when it says, "As you sow, so shall you also reap," which is also the law of responsibility. We reap what we have sown. Since we do not act in isolation, but are connected on the inner planes of our being, we are constantly affecting each other, and are responsible for individual and collective happiness and suffering. It will save us and others a lot of heartache, once we accept the responsibility and turn to Karma and the God within for help. "An outside God, or an outside devil, an outside Law, an outside atonement for sins...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 have to place our faith upon that which is not external, but *internal*," says Mr. Crosbie.

People will not complain of Theosophy being difficult if student-workers are always vigilant to simplify the teachings without diluting them. "We should do as Buddha taught his disciples, preach, practise, promulgate, and illustrate our doctrines." *The Dhammapada* shows how effectively the Buddha drives home profound truths by use of similes and metaphors. For instance, the Buddha beautifully conveys the idea of true detachment, by saying that a true Brahmana is the

one whose desires drop off like water from a lotus leaf, or mustard seed on the point of an awl. There is no struggle. It happens spontaneously. The similes clearly convey to us that state of inner relinquishment that enables him to give up his desires effortlessly.

Also, effective promulgation requires us to have "mastered" the fundamental and practical aspects of Theosophy. That mastery can result from attentive reading, followed by deep reflection and application, culminating in assimilation. Vedanta teaches that the seed of knowledge is sown by the Teacher in the mind of the disciple, who should tend to that seed by the process of *Shravana* (listening), *Manana* (reflection) and *Nididhyasana* (living the truth). There are two kinds of listening: One, that done with the mind and the other with the heart. When our mind is in attunement with the written or spoken word, we get the meaning at the intellectual level. But when both our mind and heart are attuned to the speaker or the writer, we are able to go beyond the "letter," and grasp the very spirit of the teaching. There seems to take place invisible osmosis. The process of reflection involves reasoning as well as intuition. *Nididhyasana* means constantly keeping the truths or ideas at the back of our minds, so that there is spontaneous application in day to day life. Application of the ideas have twofold advantage: (1) It helps to present the philosophy as practicable and (2) it goes beyond mere theoretical and intellectual exposition, which goes a long way in touching the hearts of the listeners. It goes without saying that the force that can hold any enquirer and draw him to the teachings is the inner development of the student himself and that in turn is determined by the extent to which the student has been striving to *apply* the teachings in his or her own life, combined with sound knowledge of the doctrines and ability to present them in a simple way. Inevitably, people judge Theosophy by its students and exponents, and our actions and our attitudes speak louder than our words.

A certain amount of humility and pleasant manner are *sine qua non* conditions for effective promulgation. "A teacher...has to have not only a pleasant manner on the outside but must have a purely

pleasant and sweet feeling inside...When the outside is pleasant but the inside is false, then it is a hollow shell and all the good magnetism is cut off. When the outside is rough but the inside wishes to be right, there is sincerity; then the magnetism is not cut off, but a current in opposition is often raised which engenders error and misconception and makes a big obstacle, though many friends arise who overlook it.” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, pp. 176-77)

We have to always keep in mind that every effort made by an individual or group of individuals to serve humanity, through Theosophy, is governed by certain laws, says Mr. Judge. What are these laws? Firstly, the law of Karma and the law of Cycles. We know that everything happens under Karma. Even when we have made the best efforts, it may not bear fruit, because there is some other karma obstructing it; or that very failure has a lesson to teach. It may not be fruitful because the motive is not right or the action was performed with pride or without devotion. It is also true that the effort has a good chance of success, when it is a sacrificial action, performed whole-heartedly, known as widow’s mite.

According to a story in the Bible, Jesus was observing people making offering of money in a temple, and he saw that all wealthy people put large sums of money in the donation box, and then a very poor widow came and put a mite, the smallest currency in Judea at that time, like our one paise or a penny. Jesus said that her contribution was the highest and worth more than all the contributions made by other people because they had given out of their surplus, while she had given *all that she had*. It is the attitude of mind and heart which counts. “He who does the best he knows how and that he can do, does enough for us,” writes a Master of Wisdom. Can the student-worker say, like Walt Whitman, “I do not give lectures or a little charity, when I give, I give myself”?

We know that if the cycle has been going down, no matter how much effort is made, it will not bear fruit. There is rise and fall of nations, civilisations and also institutions. The same applies to a Theosophical centre. No matter how much effort is made, with good

heart and mind, yet it will not bear fruit, because the cycle for that centre is on the downward arc. Then, there is the occult law of mind and heart, called the law of resignation. Much has been given in our literature about resignation. It not only means performing actions by renouncing desire and attachment for fruits, knowing that it is Masters’ work we are carrying out, but also readiness to become a mere channel, or instrument through which the Master can work.

There is also the occult law that nothing will bear fruit unless the force from the Masters is directed towards the person or group of persons. That force will back our efforts when two conditions are satisfied: One, we should have unshakable faith in and devotion to the Masters, and two, student-workers must be united in mind and heart like fingers of a hand. To a body of students that is not united Masters cannot give any help, and then our efforts will not bear fruit. On the other hand, if we practise what we preach and are united, then “by our unity the smallest effort made by us will have tenfold the power of any obstacle before us or any opposition offered by the world,” says Mr. Judge.

If people do not respond, are we going to get them at any cost? *Or*, are we going to steadfastly hold on to the *original* lines and *original* teachings? A centre of Theosophy might be passing through a transition period, witnessing dwindling audiences. But that should be taken by student-workers as a test of devotion and faith in the Law and the Masters. “Let the Society flourish on its moral worth, and not by phenomena made so degrading,” wrote a Master of Wisdom. The words are relevant to the present situation. Let us not be tempted to cater to the preferences of modern man, and arrange lectures on Aura-reading, Aura-cleansing, Kundalini, Chakra-balancing, and so on, knowing well that the Teachers of Theosophy have maintained strict silence on these topics, emphasizing instead the mental and moral purity. Nor would it be profitable to expend efforts to interest any particular individual or individuals, such as, intellectuals, scientists or celebrities. “Theosophy was restored to the world for the sake of those who are looking for light, not for those who are satisfied with things as they are and life as they find it. So, to try to interest special persons is not worth the effort

expended. The very effort made prevents by arousing either opposition or erroneous notions. To let as many as possible know about Theosophy, but to seek no one in particular, is the wiser course," advises Mr. Crosbie. All efforts are to be made keeping ever in mind that "no one was ever converted into Theosophy. Each one who really comes into it does so because it is only an extension of previous beliefs."

Taking advantage of the fact that we are connected with others on the mental plane, and that we impress other minds around us with our thoughts, if we *think* Theosophy and say to ourselves, sincerely, with the wish that just as we have benefited from Theosophy, let others be also benefited, then it would be like whispering into the ears of others who are in our vicinity, "Theosophy, help and hope for thee." Such an attitude combined with sincere efforts at promulgation can have a miraculous effect. To *think Theosophy* means to *constantly aspire* towards it day and night. In other words, each one of us must inquire, where do my thoughts turn *naturally*, when I do not have anything pressing to think or do? Like children having finished their homework run towards their base, *i.e.*, playground, have we made Theosophy such a base?

The Theosophical Movement has been called by H.P.B. the most serious movement of the age, and it needs reliable and devoted workers. To work for Theosophy is a great privilege and a grave responsibility. No one is obscure or unimportant. Each student-worker is a potency in himself, who can work as a lever, a simple machine that can lift heavy loads, by taking every opportunity to introduce theosophical ideas in conversation or by carrying and distributing Theosophical literature wherever interest in that direction is discerned, and thus help human souls in their spiritual progress. "Remember that you can work and are doing real work to help the cause by being strong in heart, in trust, and in devotion. In this way, you help to keep the centre of the whole movement strong." (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 171)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

FRANKENSTEIN

FRANKENSTEIN: "The Modern Prometheus" is a tragic story by Mary Shelley, first published in 1818, later considered a masterpiece and also the mother of science fiction. It was written when she was just nineteen years old. It is the story about a gifted scientist Victor Frankenstein, who is driven by an ambition to explore and reveal the mysteries of nature, life and death. He is particularly fascinated by the idea of discovering how to create life. From a young age Victor is interested in science and philosophy. He is attracted to writings of ancient Greek philosophers, metaphysicians, and alchemists—those who sought to turn base metals into gold. These writings showed the possibility of acquiring every power in the universe through proper study and training.

Having lost his mother, who died of scarlet fever, before he left for the University in Germany, Victor knows the pain of loss. He is determined to use his knowledge to free human beings from the suffering caused by the inevitability of death. He says, "I entered with the greatest diligence into search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life; but the latter soon obtained my undivided attention. Wealth was an inferior object; but what glory would attend the discovery, if I could banish disease from the human frame, and render men invulnerable to any but violent death!"

However, when he enters the University of Ingolstadt in Germany, he meets there two professors, full of praise for the modern scientists and their achievements. Victor decides, "I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation." He wondered, "whence did the principle of life proceed?" He diligently studied the science of anatomy, but that was not sufficient, so he also observed the natural decay and corruption of the human body.

After several years of research, he becomes convinced that he has discovered the secret of life. For many months he struggles to

create a creature out of old body parts. Though he sets out to create a perfect human being, one night, he ends up creating a gigantic creature, produced by putting together pieces from various corpses he has picked up from graveyards and mortuaries. He succeeds in bringing this creature to life, but the sight of the monstrous creature horrifies him. He leaves the monster and wanders through the streets in remorse, hoping that the monster will die a natural death from neglect. When he returns to his apartment, he finds that the monster has gone. Victor decides to return back to his family in Geneva, but before he leaves Germany, he receives a letter from his father informing him that his youngest brother William has been murdered. On arriving in Geneva, while passing through the woods, Victor spots the monster at the site where his brother William was murdered, and is convinced that his brother was murdered by the monster. But his family is ignorant of this and accuses their servant-girl of murder, who is tried and executed. Thus, two people became victim of Victor's ambition. Victor feels guilty.

Later, when he goes into the Alps, he meets the monster, who admits to having murdered William, because he was feeling lonely and was shunned by others. So he killed Victor's brother to hurt him, who was his cruel creator. Victor is surprised to find that the monster has the power of language. The monster tells him that he learnt the language secretly, when it was being taught by a family to their foreign visitor, and had also learnt about history, geography, religion and culture. The monster says that Victor was responsible for his misery and loneliness, and begs him to create a female companion to be his partner through life. To save his family from monster's revenge, Victor agrees to make a companion, but in the end does not keep his promise. The monster is furious and promises Victor that on the night of his wedding he will return. Next, he murders Victor's friend.

After returning to Geneva, he marries his childhood sweetheart, Elizabeth. They go for a honeymoon. Victor remembers the monster's threat, and has been expecting the monster to attack and

kill him, but he murders instead Elizabeth. When Victor's father comes to know about it, he dies of grief, a short time later. Victor decides to take revenge. He sets out in pursuit of the monster. In his quest, Victor arrives in the Arctic, and eventually dies of exhaustion and from exposure to the cold. Later, the monster is found crying near the body of Victor, full of sorrow for the death and destruction he has caused. Now that his creator has died, he decides to end his suffering. He leaps back onto the ice and disappears into the Arctic night, intent on killing himself.

Frankenstein did not receive much attention when it was published. Later, however, it was regarded as a novel that alluded to the dangers of scientific knowledge. The most important theme is desire to play God. In the end, before he dies, Victor realizes that his ambition was huge and made him a Satan, "like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in an eternal hell.... Despondency rarely visited my heart; a high destiny seemed to bear me on until I fell, never, never again to rise." There are legends in Jewish and Christian traditions associated with Lucifer as a fallen angel. Some legends describe Lucifer as an angel of light, while others depict him as an archangel or even as son of God. Lucifer's fall is ascribed to his pride and ambition, as he tried to take the place of God himself.

It appears that Victor was inspired by the power produced by a bolt of lightning, to construct a new human being from body parts of dead persons. He says, "Before this I was not unacquainted with the more obvious laws of electricity. On this occasion a man of great research in natural philosophy was with us, and, excited by this catastrophe, he entered on the explanation of a theory which he had formed on the subject of electricity and galvanism, which was at once new and astonishing to me." The author, Mary Shelley was inspired by the concept of galvanism, *i.e.*, electricity could be used to stimulate or restart life. In the preface to 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, she wrote, "Perhaps a corpse would be reanimated, galvanism had given token of such things." In the late eighteenth

century, Luigi Galvani, a physician and a professor of anatomy at the University of Bologna, accidentally introduced a current from his scalpel to the muscle in the dead dog, causing the leg to twitch, as if alive. Though controversial, many believed that electricity can reanimate dead tissue, and may be, even restore life.

Some critics are of the opinion that at the heart of the story is a conflict and contrast between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is power, but wisdom is needed in knowing how to use it. Hence, reckless pursuit of knowledge, without wisdom could prove disastrous.

An article that appeared in *The Atlantic* (April 20, 2017) seems to suggest that *Frankenstein* reflects hopes and fears of every scientific era. “It is too often suggested...that *Frankenstein* is a warning about a hubristic, overreaching science that unleashes forces it cannot control.” Could the reproductive and biomedical technologies of our age, such as assisted conception, tissue engineering, stem-cell research, cloning, genetic manipulation, be included in that category?

In his book, *Life of Paracelsus*, Franz Hartmann defines *homunculi* as “artificially made human beings, generated from the sperm without the assistance of the female organism.” *Homunculus* means a little man. We are given a complete method of creating a *homunculus*. Thus: “If the sperma, enclosed in a hermetically sealed glass, is buried in horse manure for forty days, and properly magnetized, it begins to live and move. After such a time it bears the form and resemblance of a human being, but it will be transparent and without a body. If it is now artificially fed with the *Arcanum sanguinis hominis* until it is about forty weeks old, and if allowed to remain during that time in horse manure in a continually equal temperature, it will grow into a human child, with all its members developed like any other child, such as could have been borne by a woman; only it will be much smaller. We call such a being a *homunculus*, and it may be raised and educated like any other child, until it grows older and obtains reason and intellect, and is able to

take care of itself. This is one of the greatest secrets, and it ought to remain a secret until the days approach when all secrets will be known.” Hartmann observes that it is quite likely that Paracelsus does not suggest that such things should be taken literally, but rather great spiritual truths were hidden behind allegories that could be understood by those who possessed the key.

There is an illuminating passage in the *Secret Doctrine* which throws more light on *homunculi* and Frankenstein. Thus: “The *Homunculi* of Paracelsus are a fact in Alchemy, and will become one in Chemistry very likely, and then Mrs. Shelley’s Frankenstein will have to be regarded as a prophecy. But no chemist, or Alchemist either, will ever endow such a ‘Frankenstein’s Monster’ with more than animal instinct, unless indeed he does that which the ‘Progenitors’ are credited with, namely, if he leaves his own physical body, and incarnates in the ‘empty form.’ But even this would be an *artificial*, not a natural man, for our ‘Progenitors’ had, in the course of eternal evolution, to become *gods* before they became men.” (II, 349)

In other words, physical nature, when left to herself, can produce mineral, vegetable and lower animals, but for producing man, help of independent, spiritual and intelligent powers is necessary, because something more than physical material is necessary for building human personality, else, he will remain even below any “Frankenstein” animal. The history of evolution on our earth shows that when time came to evolve human form, “Nature unaided failed.” In her first attempt to create man, monsters, half-animal and half-man were generated. The account goes on to say that these forms were destroyed. Only when the astral model was perfected did we get material bodies. This astral model or *chhaya* is the gift of Lunar Pitris, but they could not give man the sacred spark (light of mind), or self-reflective consciousness that distinguishes man from animals, and this was left to the class of divine beings symbolized by Prometheus, also known as *Kumaras*, *Manasputras* or *Agnishwatta pitris*. (*S.D.*, II, 52-56)

JUDGMENT DAY

A BELIEF that our created world will one day come to an end, and that every individual who had been on earth, from the day of creation to the day of doom, will be judged by God, is found in all religions of the world, with some variations in details. It is called Judgment Day or Last Judgment in the Abrahamic religions. The latter originating from one common root and claiming descent from one common first patriarch, staunchly believe in it. Their belief is more or less the same save in some details. Common features among the three faiths of Abrahamism may be recounted, as also the accounts of other religions.

Belief of the Abrahamic faiths are somewhat on the following lines. The world, which was created by God, will in a future day come to an end. Various portentous signs would manifest signalling the dissolution of the world. It is followed by the sound of blowing of a trumpet when all mankind would rise from the grave in new bodies and assemble before the throne of the Almighty God who will then review the records of the deeds of every individual, and pronounce his judgment: decreeing the believers and those of righteous conduct to enter the eternal bliss of paradise, and the non-believers and of sinful deeds to be cast into hell fire to be eternally tormented therein.

The Hebrew Bible is the source of the belief in the end of days in Judaism. The tenets are to be found in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel of the Old Testament. There are many views among the Rabbis as to details but the general common belief is as follows. It is prophesied that God will redeem the Jewish people from captivity, which began during Babylonian exile, through a new Exodus, and restore them their promised land—the Land of Israel. It is said that God restores the House of David and the Temple of Jerusalem. A Messiah of the Davidic line would lead the Jewish people and the world and usher in an age of justice and peace. The dead would be resurrected and a new heaven and a new earth would be created. It will be “New

Jerusalem” where truth, justice and peace will reign.

Islam lays much stress on the believers to live a virtuous life and to practice the religious injunction prescribed in the holy book and accumulate much merit in one short life span on earth to qualify themselves to be ushered, after death, into the bliss of God’s eternal heaven, and avoid falling into hell fire by indulgence in sinful life. Islam casts entire responsibility on the individual for his or her own salvation, there being no possibility of saving any soul through intercession of any being or angel whatsoever on its behalf. It teaches that the only intercessor of every soul on the day of the Judgment is its genuine faith and its own good deeds on earth as taught in the Holy Quran.

The Christian eschatological scheme is based on the apocalyptic vision of St. John of Patmos given in the Book of Revelation, and in the account of “second coming” of Christ at the “end of time” believed to be hinted at by Jesus (*Matthew*, Chapters 24 and 25). It is prophesied in the latter that near the “end of days” iniquity would abound in the world and false prophets would be around misleading the unwary. The Gospel account shows Jesus profusely illustrating by parables, the “Son of Man coming in clouds of heaven with power and great glory;” the signs and the manner of saving of the righteous to life eternal and casting away of the unrighteous to everlasting punishment.

The Book of Revelation seems to speak of renovation of the world every thousand years attended by a terrible strife between good and evil, in which evil is thrust back and kingdom of righteousness is established by the new Messiah who will reign over the renewed world. The renewal at the hand of a Messiah is called the Second Coming of Christ or the Second Advent. The Saviour is depicted as appearing on a white horse with heavenly hosts following him on white horses, who would smite the nations of unrighteousness with his sword, establish the kingdom of God on earth and rule with the rod of iron.

Beliefs vary within various Christian sects. Some believe that

the second coming of Christ would be the final and infinite judgement by God of peoples of every nation after resurrection of the dead. It is believed that the deeds of every mortal is recorded in the “Book of Life” which would be opened on the Judgment Day and read before the resurrected souls and judgment passed on them, according to their deeds and faith, either to new heaven and a new earth—”New Jerusalem”—or to torment in the lake of fire and brimstone (*The Revelation of St. John*, 20:11-12). Some sects distinguish between Particular Judgment and the Last Judgment, the former occurring at the time of death of every individual, and the latter, when the world comes to an end when all the dead would be raised and judged. According to Christian theology salvation is obtained only through Christ and his Church, and that the fate of those outside its fold is dependent on mercy of God.

Zoroastrianism believes in the final renovation of the world—*frashokereti*—when *Saoshiyant* (*Sosiosh*), “One who brings benefit,” the Saviour, would appear, mounted on a white horse, cause resurrection of the dead, and under whose command evil would be destroyed and all that is good would be restored in perfect unity with God (Ahura Mazda).

According to Buddhist tradition, after five thousand years, counting from the date of Sakyamuni Buddha attaining Nirvana, the knowledge of Dharma would disappear in the world, human society would suffer degeneration with widespread evil. At that period there will arise an Exalted One named Maitreya, fully awakened, abounding in wisdom, who will re-establish timeless teaching of Dharma and restore the true path to Enlightenment.

The Hindu tradition, however, speaks of spiritual and intellectual evolution and progress of worlds and humanity taking place in greater and smaller cycles of time. Limiting the discussion to the smaller cycles of Yugas for our present purpose, rising to highest point in spiritual, moral and intellectual cultivation, called *Satya Yuga* (Golden Age), mankind gradually falls lower and lower through three ages of deteriorating purity, viz., *Treta* (Silver Age), *Dvapara*

(Bronze Age), culminating in the *Kali Yuga* (Iron Age) wherein reign spiritual darkness and the consequent rise of materialism, injustice and immorality. At the end of the Dark Age a Saviour will come and restore *Dharma* and usher in again the Golden Age. Thus rising and falling, each time rising to a point higher than the highest reached in the previous cycle, and the lowest point reached in the downward cycle being somewhat higher than the lowest reached previously, the race evolves in an ascending arc.

The length of the Kali Age is said to be 432,000 years, having begun 5000 years ago with the death of Sri Krishna at the culmination of *Dvapara* age. Thus, in the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita* Sri Krishna states that whenever there is decline of virtue and insurrection of vice and injustice in the world he would incarnate on earth from age to age to thrust back evil, save the pious, restore Moral Order, and inaugurate the age of Truth and purity. The scriptures teach that at the end of the Kali Age a great Avatar, called *Kalki*, would incarnate on earth, riding on a white horse, swing his sword over his head, destroy the evil doers, and re-establish truth and virtues of the golden age. We read in the *Vishnu Purana*: “When the close of the Kali age shall be nigh, a portion of that divine being which exists, of its own spiritual nature...shall descend on Earth...(Kalki Avatar) endowed with the eight superhuman faculties....He will re-establish righteousness on earth, and minds of those who live at the end of Kali Yuga shall be awakened and become as pellucid as crystal. The men who are thus changed....*shall be the seeds of human beings*, and shall give birth to a race who shall follow the law of *Krita* age, the age of purity.” (*S.D.*, I, 378)

Esoteric philosophy teaches that the evolution of the race by cycles of Yugas do not affect all mankind at once but differ from race to race or nation to nation, and that at present Kali Yuga reigns supreme in India and in the Western nations. Intellectual, moral and spiritual nature, capacity and quality of people change in each of the four Yugas, according to the collective Karma of the race, and the law of spiritual development.

In the Hindu belief there is no first creation nor is there a last and

final destruction of the universe, as Abrahamic religions seem to suggest. Rather, it is an endless series of cycles of evolution and dissolution of worlds under cyclic and Karmic Law, in each of which beings, emanating from the Universal World Soul, which is itself an aspect of the Unknown Absolute Principle, evolve higher and to greater perfection in each great period of manifestation, ever approaching the Unknown but never reaching Absolute and Infinite perfection.

A comparative study of world myths about the end of the world and the last judgment reveal striking common features and symbols. The Hindu tradition being much older and much more comprehensive in philosophy and chronology than Abrahamic accounts it is evident to the student of Esoteric philosophy that the latter are derived from, and echoes a few bits of the tenets of, the former. The account of the advent of the Zoroastrian saviour, *Saoshiyant*, on a white horse to thrust back evil that had spread over the world and restore the age of purity is clearly but “a later *permutation* of the Hindu Vishnu” (*Isis*, II, 237). This is faithfully copied in *Revelation* (19:11-14). *Kalki* is depicted as appearing mounted on white horse, waving over his head the sword of destruction with one hand and a discus, made up of rings encircled in one another, which is “an emblem of revolving cycles or great ages” (*ibid*). Vishnu is thus shown to appear at the end of Kali Yuga. Says the *Revelation* (19:12 and 15) of the second advent of Christ, “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword...on his head were many crowns.” Vishnu is often represented with several crowns superposed on his head. (*ibid*)

Similarities in the religious myths about the end of the world and Last Judgment point to two facts. Firstly, the Hindu mythical account, being the oldest and more extensive in chronology and philosophy, is the prototype on which those of other later religions are based, though varying in details and in conception; and, Secondly, the myth of Last Judgment, though incredulous when taken in its dead-letter sense, has nevertheless a profound Occult Science and Philosophy concealed in its symbolism, a knowledge of the physical, intellectual and spiritual evolution of humanity under Cyclic and Karmic Law.

(To be concluded)

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

LETTERS OF PERSONAL COUNSEL—III

[These extracts were originally published in *The Theosophical Movement* magazine during the years 1954-1965 under the title “Extracts from Unpublished Letters.” In these extracts, student-aspirants are likely to find practical suggestions and hints in applying Theosophy in their daily lives. “The experience of one student is, on the whole, the experience of all. Details differ, however.”]

YOU MUST learn to live within your heart’s bright shrine. Ideation and Imagination will cut a canal for the future. Leave that to Those you are serving with sincerity. No one likes isolation. Even a false pietist of bewildered soul seeks companionship. On the other hand, the Masters are of a Fraternity. We may speculate and conjecture, but Karma has its own way to strike and to uplift. Karma never downs us; but we men and women have the capacity to down ourselves to *Avitchi*. There is loneliness there if anywhere.

Do not let things upset you. Remain cool, collected, calm—three C’s produce the fourth, Conquest. We conquer error, decay, disease and even death by the three C’s. Remember that. Best not to enter into discussion; keep still; look on and smile. Much unpleasantness and evil are avoided that way. Another factor: never hasten; take your time. Time always manages; it is often a master manager. May our Great Ideas, the memory of our Great Teachers, and your own Inner Ruler guide and protect you!

Ever avoid impulsive action; take everything calmly; there is time always and what is done deliberately need not be demolished. What is not done today can be done tomorrow; what is impulsively done today may have to be undone tomorrow.

Make it a rule never to act in a hasty or rashy manner. There is time enough. Always think, and think leisurely, before you act. Your *Chief* need is calmness within. Avoid unnecessary and uncalled for acts. Give yourself time. Take time. Make time. You can if you calmly ask—“Necessary?” Do not act till you have asked that, thought over that and

got your answer on that. You ought to be able to do all with ease and without rush. Do not hasten to finish but aim at gracious thoroughness. Do things one at a time and with dispassion and discernment.

Preserve your energy for real work and save yourself from small things. Go easy and you will be able to do more and better work. Do not rush. If you remain calm and do your duties in calmness, bodily health will follow.

I myself desire that you should grow spiritually, but as I have pointed out so often, emotionalism is not spirituality: rest, repose, calmness, silence, softness and sweetness, these are the marks of spirituality, but these are to proceed from within to any thing and to all people, not to some things and some particular people. You do not live within; mainly the difficulty with you is that you want to do, to do. Reading, reflection, silent brooding, etc., are inner practices. You do not give yourself a chance. You must learn to restore yourself inwardly. This cannot be done if your attitude is—I must be busy doing things from 9 to 9. You spend forces unwisely and in consequence not only do you suffer, but the work also suffers. I do hope you will take all I am saying in the helpful spirit in which I am writing. I do want to help you, but like a doctor I have to prescribe treatment which is often not pleasant to the patient.

Those who live in their personal emotions cannot see clearly, and without sight how can action be? Well, you may receive other opportunities, but these will come when you are least expecting them and from quarters unsuspected by you. Are you at all calm? Even for two or three hours a day? I don't mean happy, I mean *calm*. Keep your mind and heart calm and affectionate and your work for the day will go as it should.

Without calmness nothing, *nothing* you do will be good, let alone perfect. You may be worried about——; that will not help you and will certainly hinder her. It is a hard saying of Jesus—“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me”; but from the Occult point of view it is 100 per cent right. I do not say you should not feel love and tenderness for——, but your upset astral is *no* help to her. You

are adding to her burden while worsening your Karma. So give yourself time for study and meditation; every morning read and reflect about calmness, from which come accuracy, etc.

May great success and prosperity come to you in the forthcoming examination! In these last days before you sit for the examination you will need inner calm and courage. If in your Heart you are detached from the mundane and so attached to the Inner Guide, the great Triad, you cannot but succeed. He is on the side of Wisdom, of Masters, and for the triumph of the Great Cause; and so He will bring you perception and strength. Further, as you have dedicated yourself to the greatest of all services, treading the Path of Probation and serving through the channel of the U.L.T., the Masters and H.P.B. are on your side. Confidence in Them means confidence in the Inner Ruler. With this dual Force ready at hand, make adequate use of it. You must succeed. During these days do not think of anything else but your study and the success it must give you. Take care of your bodily health. Sleep well and sleep sweet. Throw all care, all concern, away and breathe in from *Akasha* that dauntless energy which finds its way to triumph in this your noble endeavour. Think of the Blessed Holy Ones. Where thought can pass they can come. May Their Blessings be upon you!

If you eat well, sleep soundly, and be calm, Work will not only protect you but also energize and strengthen you. You derive but little benefit for your own soul from your labour of love, and that is bad, from the inner point of view. Pennies saved in rest and leisure yield pounds of time! Work will go smoothly if energy is conserved, both in speech and in body motions and movements.

You know how it is said: “Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.” The message is to cultivate higher resignation; to be carefree but to possess deeply a sense of responsibility.

One must develop more and more the Higher Resignation and let the Lords of Nature who are Karma direct our deeds. At times this looks most difficult; the personal nature accustomed to go its way assumes direction and goes astray. The suave nature brings us suavity if we are truly resigned.

Do not regret about the past but plan in the present for the future. In

doing so, forget your own self; think and consider only the Great Movement. Courage and Patience make a pair, but without sufficient Detachment you will not be able to express Patience and the dauntless Energy for comprehending and speaking the truth will not evolve. Do not mistake weakness for kindness or compassion; nor bravado for strength and courage. You have created handicaps out of your opportunities; now turn round and take the opportunity that every hindrance brings. You lack calmness, and without knowledge and meditation you will not have it. This sounds like preaching; it is not; but suppose it is—what is right or wrong with and in it? So dear—, think.

Turn within; purify yourself; gain some mental devotion and steadfastness, and your life will be a blessing to the Movement. May the year bring you inner satisfaction because in the Inner Soul you have stored Truth and Attention and Bliss!

(To be continued)

NO ONE who strives to tread the path is left unhelped; the Great Ones see his “light,” and he is given what is needed for his better development. That light is not mere poetical imagery, but is actual, and its character denotes one’s spiritual condition; there are no veils on that plane of seeing. The help must be of that nature which leaves perfect freedom of thought and action; otherwise, the lessons would not be learned. Mistakes will occur, perhaps many of them, but, as is said, “twenty failures are not irremediable if followed by as many undaunted struggles upward.” The help will come for the most part in ordinary ways and from one or another of the companions with whom you were possibly connected in other lives, and whom your soul will recognize....They, Themselves, have written, “Ingratitude is not one of our vices”; and while we may not claim gratitude from Them, yet we may be sure that compassion absolute is there, and with it the understanding of the nature and needs of each aspirant.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

GLAMOUR AND ILLUSION

GLAMOUR is defined as the impression of attraction or fascination created by a particularly luxurious or elegant appearance, and which tends to intensify reality. Thus, a person, place, clothes, or a product can be glamorous. It is often described as charm on the eyes making a person see things as fairer than they are. We might say glamour is illusory perception. The merits of a product are enhanced by the glamour produced, when that product is praised, endorsed or recommended by a celebrity, such as an actor, a model or a sports personality. When we see an advertisement, where a beautiful girl in silk gown recommends buying soap or toothpaste of a particular brand, we are induced to buy it. Aldous Huxley observes that while watching such advertisements, children should be taught that there is no earthly connection between the merits of the toothpaste and the beautiful girl in the silk gown advertising it. The power of glamour could be used in giving prominence to moral principles and altruism. A celebrity can “glamourise” the masses by performing and supporting small acts of kindness, honesty, humility, and induce them to imitate the same.

There is glamour associated with beauty. Being blinded by one quality, beauty, say, of complexion, figure, etc., colours one’s perception of other traits. This is called the “Halo effect.” The halo effect is perceptual bias. Thus, if we think someone is beautiful, we assume that person to possess socially-desirable personality traits. We are so glamourised by beauty that we are reluctant to associate any negative trait with that person. Actor-director Makrand Deshpande puts it simply, “When someone gives you a beautiful flower and tells you not to smell it because it is poisonous, you will doubt the person. You will wonder how something so stunning can be so dangerous. It is the same thing with [good looking] people....Their looks mesmerise us and incapacitate us of rational thought.”

However, “glamour” originally referred to a magic spell, or an

illusion cast by the witches. Thus, glamour may be defined as, “witchery or a charm on the eyes, making them see things differently from what they really are,” or making them see things which are not there, or making things disappear. The concept of glamour was explained away by science on the basis of defective training of the senses, a few years ago. However, in our days, modern science has come closer to accepting the possibility of making objects invisible. For instance, the radar antenna sends out a burst of radio energy, which is reflected back by any object it may encounter. The aircrafts are easily detected and tracked with radar equipment, as the radar signals are reflected very well by the metal body of an aircraft. The goal of Stealth Technology is to make the aircraft invisible to radar. This can be achieved by either covering the aircraft in materials that *absorb radar energy* instead of reflecting it, or by changing the shape of the aircraft. Most conventional aircrafts have a rounded shape, and as a result, no matter where the radar signal hits the aircraft, some of the signal gets reflected. In stealth technology, the aircraft is made up of completely flat surfaces and very sharp edges. When a radar signal hits the aircraft, it reflects away *at an angle*, so as not to reach the radar and therefore the aircraft remains invisible.

There are myths and folk-lore in India and elsewhere, carrying tales of glamour produced by men, gods and elementals. Often sages appear before some people in different guises, by means of a glamour. Scriptures abound with the stories of gods and *devas* changing forms, for various purposes, good and bad. The variety of gods and goddesses are personification of various powers and forces of nature. The forms into which sages or gods transform themselves are often symbolic. There is the incident in the life of the Buddha. When the courtiers could not settle the issue of the hurt swan, a great ascetic appeared and decided the issue in favour of the Buddha. When the King wanted to make a present to him, he was nowhere to be seen, instead he saw a snake gliding away. The poet writes: “And someone saw a hooded snake glide forth—The gods come oftentimes thus!” A full initiate [a wise man] is called a “Naga,” a “Serpent” and a

“Dragon” in esoteric philosophy.

There are stories of gods changing shape to deceitfully obtain something, or for the purpose of destruction. For instance, Vishnu took the form of a beautiful *apsara*, Mohini, an enchantress, to trick and beguile demons. In the myth of the churning of the ocean, the pot containing *Amrita* (the nectar of immortality) was stolen from gods by the demons. Vishnu gets back for the gods, the pot from the demons, by taking the form of Mohini and deluding them.

There are accounts of trained persons who have been able to glamourise people to see an elephant, snake, man, tree, pot or any other object where there was only empty space. A juggler is able to do it with the help of the elementals. In the article, “Elementals,” H.P.B. mentions some of the important Elemental Spirits which help in various tricks performed by the jugglers. *Shudala-Madan* is a half-fire, half-water demon which helps in transforming one form into another. When a juggler makes his audience see things such as a snake, or any other object, which actually does not exist, he sometimes makes use of these elementals.

However, when a hypnotizer makes a person see the picture of an object on a blank card, the hypnotizer puts the subject in an abnormal state, by means of a force or auric fluid, passed on or transmitted, either by direct gaze or by making passes. Further, in hypnotism, there is withdrawal of the nervous fluid from the capillary nerves, which act as sentries that keep the doors of our senses open, and as these are anaesthetized under hypnotic condition, it leads to closing of the doors (*Lucifer*, June, 1890). In other words, since outer eyes and ears are paralyzed for the time, the brain reports what is seen and heard by the inner, astral senses. Mr. Judge explains that when the subject therefore sees on a blank card the picture of an object, it is because, whatever picture the hypnotizer has thought and imagined to be there on the blank card gets impressed on the astral light or the sphere surrounding the card, as astral light is everywhere. This picture in the astral is seen as an objective picture on the blank card by the astral senses of the hypnotized subject. A

wonder-worker in the east makes his audience see a snake, where there is no snake, because he was asked to see a snake before his mind's eye, right from his childhood, so that the image he forms of the snake is so strong that everyone in the audience has to see it.

There are tales in which a person sees houses, persons, etc. which are actually not there. Also, there are stories in which a man or woman is changed into the appearance of an animal or bird, but is changed back to its original form when touched with a magic rod. That is because, in such cases, what appears to be a change is not really so, but only the glamour or illusive perception. Such phenomena connected with *glamour* have been partly referred to in Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms*, and Aphorism 21 in Book III explains the power of disappearance. It declares that in order to be able to see an object not only it is necessary for rays of light to proceed from the object to the eye, but also light must proceed from the eye towards the object. If the light from eye, falling on the object, is *cut off*, then the object disappears. But when the character of the luminousness of the light coming from the eye is *altered*, then the object is altered in shape or colour for the perceiver. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 85)

We get a further explanation in the incident narrated in *Letters That Have Helped Me*, wherein a certain student was supposed to meet Mr. Judge in his office at a particular time in the afternoon. However, when he reaches there, he does not find him. Later, when they meet, Mr. Judge insists that he was in his room, which he never left, and the student reiterates that he did not see him. The explanation offered is that since Mr. Judge was reading some private letters that related to high themes in occultism, he strongly desired and willed that these letters should not be seen by the student when he came. We are told that Adepts possess the power of becoming invisible at will, by using the power of mesmerism. But here, that method was not used. Since Mr. Judge was reading matter related to high themes, his psychic perception was intensified, so that his inner self raised a note of alarm when the student reached his office. Since the will to

remain unseen was so intense that unknown to his mind, his soul emitted the vibrations that set up an akasic disturbance. As a result, the vibrations which should have reached the optic nerve of the observer did not reach, so the student could not see Mr. Judge. In other words, we might say that the light from the object did not reach the eye of the observer. (pp. 141-42)

The Chicago Tribune for August 8, 1890, carried an article that narrated the rope trick witnessed by two Yale graduates on their visit to India. A street fakir tossed the ball of grey twine up into the air, holding its loose end in his teeth. The ball unrolled until the other end was out of sight. Then a small boy climbed the twine, but vanished at the height of 30 or 40 feet in the air. The artist made the sketch and the photographer took the snapshots of the event. However, when the photos were developed, they showed no twine, no boy, only the fakir sitting on the ground. The reporter concluded, "Mr. Fakir had simply hypnotized the entire crowd, but couldn't hypnotize the camera." H.P.B. writes: "'It is *only* Hypnotism,' you say. Then those who say so, do not know the difference between hypnotism...and real mesmerism, let alone *mahamaya* or even the *guptamaya* of ancient and modern India.... We say *yes*; it is *glamour*, fascination, psychology, call it what you will, but it is not 'hypnotism.'...[It is] collective and instantaneous *fascination* produced on hundreds by one passing gaze of the ' juggler,' even though the gaze did 'take in every man' 'from sole to crown.'" (*Lucifer*, September 1890)

Adepts make use of the power of glamour quite frequently when they need to appear among us without being recognized. "They are often among us from day to day appearing in a guise we do not recognize, and are dropping ideas into men's minds about the spiritual world and the true life of soul as well as inciting men and women to good acts," and even trying and testing student-aspirants without their knowledge. We may be entertaining now and then angels unawares! (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 88)

APHORISMS ON KARMA—SOME REFLECTIONS

XVIII

APHORISM 29: “*Race-Karma influences each unit in the race through the law of Distribution. National Karma operates on the members of the nation by the same law more concentrated. Family Karma governs only with a nation where families have been kept pure and distinct; for in any nation where there is a mixture of family—as obtains in each Kaliyuga period—family Karma is in general distributed over a nation. But even at such periods some families remain coherent for long periods and then the members feel the sway of family Karma. The word ‘family’ may include several smaller families.*”

It is evident that even among people in whom belief in the law of Karma is prevalent, little is known about the law of Distribution referred to in the aphorism above. Generally, Karma is looked upon as applying to individuals and their action, and also of nations. But the fact of the effect of Karma of individuals being distributed over the nation to which the individual belongs, the moral responsibility it entails on individuals, is not well known. The fundamental unity of all life and the consequent interdependence of the units of human family is the basis of the law governing Distributive Karma.

Real Man is the Eternal Thinker, and thought is the basis of action. Mr. Judge shows in *The Ocean of Theosophy* that thoughts are lodged in *Manas* and linked by subtle but powerful magnetic threads that enmesh the solar system. Owing to this enmeshment of human mind and thought with the web of life, which constitute the solar universe, individual Karma is intertwined with the Karma of the world, just as every atom is subject to the general law governing the whole body to which it belongs.

Hence, conditions and circumstances of life of individuals are not solely due to the causes produced by them in past lives, but are also due to the working of the distributive Karma. The aggregate of individual Karma becomes the National Karma, and sum of the

latter becomes the Karma of the world as a whole. This is evident in the fact that the defects and shortcomings of human nature are pervasive, and are shared by all nations and individuals of every nation. Hence not only are individuals affected and bound by Karma of the nation to which they belong, as well as by the Karma of the world, but Karma of the individuals also have an effect on the destiny of nations and of the world. It means that individual happiness and wellbeing is infrangibly bound with well-being of the whole, and individual action has an effect on the destiny of the world. Unless, therefore, every individual labours for the good of all, he can never find happiness; and search for solution to the terrible collective suffering and misery which plague every society will for ever evade nations. Of this profound law of Distributive Karma, and the moral responsibility which devolves on every individual because of it, it is said in *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 201, Indian ed.): “It is an occult law, moreover, that no man can rise superior to his individual failings, without lifting, be it ever so little, the whole body of which he is an integral part. In the same way, no one can sin, nor suffer the effects of sin, alone. In reality, there is no such thing as ‘Separateness’; and the nearest approach to that selfish state, which the laws of life permit, is in the intent or motive.”

A philanthropist may do great works of charity, or a religious person may live his whole life in religious austerities, to the admiration of the world, but the outcome of the efforts of both will be vitiated if there is any selfish intent in their action. It is such action with selfish motive which causes severe infraction of the progressive order of universal harmony and results in individual unhappiness, social iniquity and injustice. A Master of Wisdom says: “Let not the fruit of good Karma be your motive; for your Karma, good or bad, being one and the common property of all mankind, nothing good or bad can happen to you that is not shared by many others. Hence your motive, being selfish, can only generate a double effect, good and bad, and will either nullify your good action, or turn it into another man’s profit.... There is no happiness for one who is ever thinking

of Self and forgetting all other Selves. (*Five Messages*, p. 19)

Leaders of nations seek in vain to redress by political action the awful spectacle of islands of illusive prosperity and luxury in which one section of the society is immersed in the sea of wretchedness and impoverishment of the oppressed millions. The very remedy they prescribe, taking no account of the moral cause of the ills, contains the seeds of proliferation of the malady which is sought to be redressed. Hence, Theosophists see the supreme importance of spread of a general knowledge of the law of Distributive Karma, as thought and action based on that understanding alone make for collective and inclusive happiness and harmonious progress of all.

One of the principal factors, among others, governing the Ego seeking rebirth to choose the family in which to be born is similarity, more or less, of its nature, character and proclivities, its Karmic inheritance, with those of the family. In days of old when spiritual knowledge was widely prevalent, and individuals and families well understood the laws of Karma and Reincarnation, they lived a life of higher purpose and duty for the good of the world and for their own higher evolution. They attached paramount importance to maintaining virtues of higher life in the family stock (*Kula Dharma*) in order to provide a suitable environment for Egos with similar virtues, or, advanced Egos from higher spheres, to be reincarnated in the family for the benefit of humanity. Ancient history of India is replete with instances of families thus maintaining their own distinct lineages running for many centuries with strong spiritual leanings and endowed with soul virtues and powers.

With the loss of spiritual knowledge, as is inevitable, under cyclic law governing the world's progress, a "dark age" sets in—as at the present time—giving rise to superstition and materialism. In such dark periods, called Kali Yuga, *Kula Dharma* being vitiated, lineages of pure family disappear, and mixing of families follow. Bad children are born in good families, and virtuous or high-minded souls are hampered by having to incarnate in conditions unsuited for expression and further development of their inner potentialities. This is called

the "confusion of castes"; by "caste" is not meant the unjust and artificial social division, a social evil, as prevalent at the present time in India; but a mismatch between inner character and capacities of persons, and the conditions and circumstances of their outer life. In Sanskrit, this is called *Varna sankara*—*Varna* meaning qualities and character of the Inner Man. Mr. Judge describes it as, "the frequent cases of unfitness of environment around individuals, so sore as to embitter disposition, hamper aspiration, and paralyse endeavour; the violent antithesis between character and condition." (*Epitome of Theosophy*)

It is said in the aphorism that even in such periods of spiritual darkness certain families with characteristics unique to it—though not necessarily spiritual—run for several generations, and that this may include several branches of the principal family stock. For instance, scholarship in classical languages and learning, or musical talent, or some peculiar tendencies, etc., are sometime seen to persist in some families successively for a few generations. Business acumen in families are seen to last for several generations. The lineage of the royal family stock of Russia from which Madam H. P. Blavatsky came is traced to several generations going back to the founders of the great Russian Republic. These are exceptions, mixture of families being the general rule during descending cycles when races and families become mixed. Orderly evolution of races is hindered in dark cycles due to such mixing up, at the end of which, when the new higher cycle begins, "the sacred tribe of heroes," who watch over world's progress, once more aid in putting the house in order, and re-establish orderly evolutionary progress.

Egos who share in common certain qualities, tendencies, capacities, character by their collective Karma go to form races and nations unique to them and clearly distinguishable from others. Each individual is bound by his individual Karma with the collective Karma of his race and nation, and strongly feels the race influence. For instance, though Europeans as a race exhibit characteristics and capacities distinguishable from other races yet each of the several

nations which constitute it has its own unique character and quality. Similarly, do nations of other races on different continents exhibit their distinct individual qualities, due to their racial and national Karma. Every individual strongly feels the influence of the race and nation to which he belongs, and, in his turn, affects, for good or ill, by his actions, the Karma of his nation, because of the law of Distributive Karma. Knowledge of the doctrine of racial influence is a powerful factor in the progress of individuals and nations. Mr. Judge teaches: “Race influences are insidious and powerful. For instance, my race has its peculiarities deeply seated and inherited from an extraordinary past. I must be under their influence in this body as a necessary part of my experience. In another life I might have been a prosaic Hottentot, or an Englishman, and in a succeeding one I might be under the influence of other race peculiarities. Those influences are, then, guiding me every moment, and each thought I have adds to them now, for either my own future use or for some other person who will come under the power of part of the force generated now by me.” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 5)

The character, thoughts and will of individuals are markedly influenced by the Karma of Race and the nation to which they belong. An individual cannot escape the general destiny in the current of which he is inescapably borne along. Therefore, Teachers warn individuals who aspire to a life of usefulness and higher purpose pointed out by the Wise Ones to discriminate and strike a line of thought and action of their own indicated by dictates of divine conscience distinct from and opposed to popular vices, prejudices and questionable ways of the social milieu. Such independent thinkers and aspirants to Truth are benefactors of the race as their sacrifices and the power of their higher thought and action will have a significant influence in raising the general level of racial and national consciousness tending towards a higher destiny, even if it is in a small measure.

(To be concluded)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

It appears that everything in the expanding universe started evolving since the Big Bang, some ten or twenty billion years ago. According to some, evolution has purpose, plan and goal. Charles Darwin and others maintain that millions of species came into existence, gradually, by natural selection. Man has much larger brain than any other living organism and has many and better mental capacities like perception, conception, imagination, innovation, memory and consciousness. At a certain point in his evolution, man emphasized laws of science more than laws of nature, and classified things as animate and inanimate, while moral and spiritual values took back seat, and organised religions had upper hand. The Universe is not seen as an organic and interdependent whole, and this led to increase in divisions, differences, selfishness, arrogance, hatred and fanaticism. This in turn gave rise to some groups, communities, religions and nations with a superiority complex who now rule the masses. Everything related to man’s behaviour and values of life and lifestyle are ever-changing. Thus, for instance, the most basic instincts and needs of a living organism, namely, eating, drinking, self-protection and procreation started getting evolved. There has been evolution from animal hunting to consuming wild vegetation to agriculture to variety of food, as far as eating is concerned. In the realm of procreation, man has moved from natural biological instinct to aphrodisiacs to contraceptives to abortion.

Unlike other living organisms, man now exhibits a variety of emotions, desires, feelings, likes and dislikes, biases and prejudices, as also, learned and acquired behaviour. We notice evolution in economical, educational and cultural norms. However, it is apparent that basic nature, characteristics and behaviour of man have not changed much. No lessons are learnt from history, and hence, there are still wars, violence, suppression and greed. Progress and evolution in science and technology have not created more peace, happiness and prosperity for majority on the earth. In short, humans

have failed to evolve into super humans. “Thus, for peace, health and happiness for majority on earth, evolution of better human values and monitoring of only beneficial effects of science and technology are required,” writes Bhupendra Madhiwalla. (*Bhavan’s Journal*, September 15, 2020)

Charles Darwin proposed the theory that life is a result of blind, purposeless natural processes—a *series of natural forces working blindly—without aim and without design*. The evolutionary theory put forward by Theosophy admits of both intelligence and design. The whole Kosmos is guided, controlled and animated by conscious Divine Powers who adjust and control evolution. The modern Intelligent Design theory also admits of intelligence and design.

Occult philosophy teaches that nothing can be evolved, unless it has first been involved. Thus, there is first, involution—involvement or descent of spirit into matter—and then evolution, which consists in expression or actualisation of what is potential, through perfection of forms. In this process the divine spark passes through mineral, vegetable and animal forms, evolution in these kingdoms is by natural impulse, by working in harmony with nature, unfolding according to the plan or design. But once the human stage is reached, further evolution is by self-induced and self-devised ways and means, checked by Karma. Man, endowed with mind and hence the power to think and choose, can go against the Law and harmony of the universe. But he could also become a Buddha, actualizing his potentialities, and raising the whole of manifestation to a higher level, ever so little.

Theosophy teaches that we are at the point in evolution where *Kama* or desire principle is predominant. We are being told by the Teachers that the race as a whole is behind schedule in its development. We ought to show greater development of mind and lesser involvement with our desires and passions, by now. Instead we find that there is too much preoccupation with the development of personality; too much importance is being given to physical appearance, and acquiring of name, fame, position and power. In

all the modes of living, gratification of senses is esteemed the highest good. But at the same time, the race mind is changing by enlargement, as dogmatism is being replaced by the “age of inquiry.” These inquiries will grow louder year after year and the answers will be required to satisfy the mind as it grows, until at last all dogmatism will end, and those who will overcome the animal nature will attain to perfection.

In her book, *X + Y: A Mathematician’s Manifesto for Rethinking Gender*, Eugenia Cheng uses abstract mathematics, to get an insight into situations involving gender and considering certain character traits as being inherent in male and not female, or *vice versa*. She observes that when desirable traits are found to be inherent in male, then females are expected to develop them and act more like men, in order to be successful and respected. When they do so, they are labelled “masculine.” There are people who do not wish to imitate typically masculine behaviour, and more importantly, such behaviour need not be essential for achieving success. Probably, there is a need to re-examine our ideas of success, ambition, gender differences and *assimilationist thinking, i.e.*, the disadvantaged group can gain favour by acting like the privilege group.

In the category theory of abstract mathematics, things are described not by their inherent characteristics, but by the roles they play. The same can be applied to the situation of gender inequality, wherein, instead of focusing on inherent characteristics associated with a gender, we must emphasize the roles played by certain behaviours in various aspects of the society. This can help us to bring gender equality by basing our treatment of a person on how that person behaves and relates to others. For that purpose, behaviour may be divided into two categories: ingressive and congressive. The term ingressive behaviour must be applied to actions that involve “focussing on oneself over society and community, imposing on people more than taking others into account, emphasizing independence and individualism, [being] more competitive

and adversarial than collaborative [and] tending toward selective or single-track thought processes.” On the other hand, congressive behaviours involve “focussing on society and community over self, taking others into account more than imposing on them, emphasizing interdependence and interconnectedness, [being] more collaborative and cooperative than competitive, [and] tending toward circumspect thought processes.” Though ingressive behaviour is associated with men, and congressive with women, especially in the United States, the author feels that focussing on behaviour rather than gender may be more helpful in achieving greater gender equality. In her review of the book, Adriana Salerno expresses the need to move away from individualism and focus on the collective good, and that emphasis on congressive behaviour will better serve all cultures and ethnicities. (*American Scientist*, November-December 2020)

Theosophy says that man is a soul. In *Letters That Have Helped Me*, we read that there is no sex at the level of Spirit. There, all men are women and all women are men, two coalesced into one. We say that soul has no sex. However, in psychic consciousness there are still distinctions between man and woman. Thus, for instance, the female character is, *per se*, concrete, *i.e.*, its tendency in thought, speech, and act is toward the concrete, while the male character seems to be *per se* abstract. Concrete may also mean precise and definite, practical and realistic as against theoretical and idealistic. There could be exceptions in both the sexes, but that does not invalidate the claim, and we are easily able to recognize a woman who has man’s character or a man who has a woman’s character, writes Mr. Judge.

Ultimately, to become spiritually whole, one has to fuse two polarities, male and female, which means synthesizing the noble characteristics in each gender. Hermes coupled with Aphrodite and their son was Hermaphrodite. In Greek mythology, we read that Hermes was loved by Salmacis, a water nymph. He tried to avoid her, but when he dived into the spring in which she lived, she embraced him until they became fused. He prayed as he died that

all who entered the spring should also acquire both male and female attributes: hence the English word “hermaphrodite.” We may view it philosophically. Mind caught up in lower desires is called *Kama-manas*. When desire-nature is purified or, when mind is made free from the grasp of lower desires, it is able to reflect the light of *Buddhi* or Divine Soul. When there is temporary conjunction of *Manas* with *Buddhi* there are flashes of intuition. However, in a spiritually perfect man, when the individual consciousness is turned inward, there is *permanent* conjunction of *Buddhi* with *Manas*, endowing him with wisdom and compassion.

What would be life without religion? It appears that there is a need in us to believe in someone or something, as conveyed by the allegory. Many thousands of years ago, cave-dwellers gathered around a pond and saw their reflections on the placid surface of the pond. When a predator leapt from behind them, they got frightened and jumped into the pond. The allegory goes on to say that the next day, one of the members of the group, tall and with sharp eyes, convinced them to move away from the pond to a safer place, somewhere higher. All followed him, except one, and they found later that his body was torn apart by the beast. All the dwellers believed that Sharp Eyes could protect them from hidden danger, and that very moment man’s first religious leader stepped upon the stage of human history. Subsequently, as thousands upon thousands of years passed, variety of religious leaders and their followers came into being and vanished.

Nearer home, in the twenty-first century, we see that future humanity might reject our religious ideas and consider them as “comforting myths conjured by some simple-minded uninformed creatures, grasping for meaning beyond reach,” as we tend to regard ideas of our predecessors. It is an interesting thought that should we discover that there is no permanence in all beliefs that are taught as permanent, and also that all the major and minor world’s religions are not what we imagined them to be, then would we collectively

agree to cease practicing them and return to being pre-religious man? In the absence of religious perspective, how would we assess reality, ourselves and each other? Would we be happier without religion, feel more secure without it, less afraid of death and afterlife consequence?

There is a deep-seated urge in all human beings to believe in something. Hence, it is safe to conclude that after many thousand years also, we will believe in something, whether it leads to harmony or discord. “Personally, I cannot comprehend human life without religion, but I can, as a mental exercise, imagine a future when religion, as we know it, will no longer exist,” writes Thomas Easley. (*The Speaking Tree*, August 14, 2020)

Theosophy teaches that all the religions and religious sects are but branches and twigs grown from the same trunk, called the WISDOM RELIGION, which was one in antiquity. We find that teachings of every religion remained pure as long as the prophet-reformer or the Teacher was on the scene. In most cases, these teachings were transmitted orally and were reduced to writing only after the death of the Teacher. It is at this stage that there is found to be conscious as well as unconscious corruption of the original teachings, with gradual shift from the study and application of ethics to rites, rituals and ceremonies. One of the reasons why religion continues to play an important role in the world is because in human beings there is will to meaning, and many of us turn to religion to find the meaning of existence. For some others, religious ceremonies and rituals provide the crutch they need to lean on in times of trouble and despair.

“True religion must give us a basis for thinking, and consequently, a basis for acting; it must give us an understanding of nature, of ourselves and of other beings. Religion is a bond uniting men together—not a particular set of dogmas or beliefs— binding not only all Men, but also all Beings and all things in the entire Universe, into one grand whole,” writes Mr. Crosbie. True religion must seek to replace blind belief by reasoned, and then intuitive faith.