

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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### LINES OF INFLUENCE

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We know such an effort as ours is needed, and we know that what we present is eternal Truth itself, the effects of which will go on forever. We are glad to have people “register,” glad for them, and glad for the world’s sake, but not as a favour to *us*. We can rejoice that those interested are able to see their true interest and join themselves to the helpers of humanity. There is much of wrong, of error, of mistaken idea, and these we have to recognize where found, take a lesson from them, and so avoid the pitfalls into which so many have stumbled.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

A RECURRING question students of Theosophy are confronted with is: In view of the non-acceptance of Theosophy by those in positions of power—witness the present condition of the world—does not the task of the Theosophical Movement—as of the U.L.T., which is an integral part of that Movement—seem a hopeless one? That task, it should be noted, is to change the *Manas* and *Buddhi* of the *race*, not merely of the intelligentsia. The fundamental verities of universal unity, of human solidarity, of karma and of reincarnation can be grasped and applied by the simplest mind with transforming and regenerating effect. Whether the student of Theosophy belongs to the intelligentsia or not, he can make a most effectual contribution to that task *by changing his own Manas and*

*Buddhi.*

The work would go forward much faster, of course, if the natural leaders of the masses assimilated and applied the doctrines of Theosophy. The state of the world always reflects the influence wielded by those in power. It is not necessary to prove that the masses of men and women in every country live by the thoughts and ideas suggested to them, unobtrusively and without their cognizance, or imposed upon them with all the weight of skilful propaganda. Those who live by any kind of self-made philosophy, *i.e.*, those who have practised self-knowledge, are men out of the common run. Such there are in every country, but they are only a few; they may be called Geniuses in the making.

Now this psychological phenomenon, namely, the suggestibility and impressionability of the masses, has ever been the instrument of the makers of history. Though it is only half the truth, individuals do make history; but they make it by the power of suggestion, impressing the masses of ordinary men and women. The receptivity of the masses is the other half of the picture. Leaders and followers together make history, just exactly as a writer and his readers together make the success or failure of a book. Even in the highest spiritual life the institution of Guru and Chela represents the functioning of this psychological principle. The power of wisdom and purity possessed by the teacher is imparted to the pupil, first by suggestion and then by impression. The purity of the teacher and the receptivity of the pupil combine to produce success or failure in Chelaship.

From this emerges another great principle. Should the leader who makes history, the author who creates his reading public, the teacher who commands the very heart of the Chela, do so without any reference to the following which the leader affects, the reading public which the author influences, the disciple whom the teacher impresses? Esoteric philosophy and psychology recognize that the power to suggest and to impress others becomes beneficent or maleficent according as he who uses the power is of pure or impure motive. In pure spirituality it is fundamental that the teacher and the leader must not influence the free will of others. A Teacher, if

he is a pure Yogi of the highest type, studiously refrains from coercing the free will of his pupil. Therefore there are pure and impure ways of exerting influence, and both of these operate in the public world. When a great political leader, who is often an orator, suggests plans of campaign he follows them up by legislation which crushes those who will not meekly accept his dicta. This is impure. When a poet sings his message he leaves it to succeed or to fail. It often succeeds in impressing the public some time in the future, generally after the poet's death; this is the pure method.

The U.L.T. would not, if it had the power, impose the truths of Theosophy willy-nilly upon the world by the method of dictator or priest. Its task is not hopeless; the leaven of Theosophy is spreading, slowly but none the less surely. The main object of the U.L.T. is "to sow germs in the hearts of men, which may in time sprout, and under more propitious circumstances lead to a healthy reform, conducive of more happiness *to the masses* than they have hitherto enjoyed." (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 254-55)

The wrong kind and wrong methods of influence have brought the world to the pass in which it finds itself. There is no miracle in nature; the race cannot be reformed overnight or *en masse*, but only gradually and one by one. If individuals wait for their own regeneration till legislators act and society undergoes a change and nations rise in morals and capacity, they will wait in vain. One by one, from the domination of the senses men have freed themselves; one by one, they have taken the Kingdom of Heaven by violence, and have enjoyed freedom of thought, will and action. This is also true of us who are of this day and generation. Neither priest nor politician, neither financial magnate nor social welfare worker, can help us really; but each of us can gain the impetus to move to the region of the righteous. For this, inspiration is needed, and it is to be found in such words as these:

Even if thou wert the greatest of all sinners, thou shalt be able to cross over all sins in the bark of spiritual knowledge.  
(*Bhagavad-Gita*, IV, 36)

Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions; mistrust thy senses, they are false. But

within thy body—the shrine of thy sensations—seek in the Impersonal for the “Eternal Man”; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha....Prepare, and be forewarned in time. If thou hast tried and failed, O dauntless fighter, yet lose not courage: fight on, and to the charge return again and yet again....Remember, thou that fightest for man’s liberation, each failure is success, and each sincere attempt wins its reward in time. (*The Voice of the Silence*, pp. 28-29, 68-69)

Within you is the light of the world—the only light that can be shed upon the Path. If you are unable to perceive it within you, it is useless to look for it elsewhere. (*Light on the Path*, pp. 3-4)

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THEOSOPHY is the only philosophy that can be used in every direction in daily life. It can be used in all directions, high or low, because that use comes from an understanding of the Spirit itself, from acting for that Self and as that Self—for the Self acts only through the creatures. Acting for and as that Self in every direction, all else flows into line. All the destruction that is around us, all the misery that we see, has been brought about through our denial of the Holy Ghost—our denial of the Spirit within us. We deny it when we act as if we are our bodies, or our minds. THAT *will not be denied*. So man, meeting all the results of that denial and seeing them to be evil, learns that this is not the way. Then he seeks for Truth, and finding the truth, obtains all that he can desire—hope, happiness and a better understanding of his and all existence. It was to give to men all they could take in regard to the nature of the soul—that they might come out from this vale of sorrow—that those Beings known as Divine Incarnations have descended here of Their own will. They have carried forward from age to age this knowledge of nature and of man and of the purpose of life, learned through many civilizations of mankind. It is this knowledge which makes Them as gods to us in Their glory and power.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

## MAHATMAS AND CHELAS

THERE has been so much abuse of sacred names and personages that it has become difficult for the Theosophist of the present generation to speak candidly and fully about Gurus or Great Souls. Yet the subject is of such practical importance, of such priceless value, that the very purpose of the Cause we serve would be partly frustrated if the Ideal, at least, were not held up for the enlightenment and guidance of the student and the inquirer. Details of facts are of inspiration only to those who have in some measure realized the reality of the Ideal. Enough for lay people to know that Great Souls, Mahatmas, exist in our day and age. They are Masters of Wisdom, because they are masters of their own mind; they are Lords of Compassion, because they are the rulers in the Kingdom of the Heart.

What is this Ideal which Theosophy puts forward about Living Mahatmas, not Personal Gods, but God-Men, Men who have by self-effort realized their own divinity and who continue to live in material bodies for the service of the human family, for which reason they are called Elder Brothers?

H. P. Blavatsky was the first person who openly spoke in the Western world of the existence of Living Mahatmas, Adepts in knowledge, possessing supernormal powers. In the very first sentence of her very first book, *Isis Unveiled*, she informed the public that what she was chronicling and recording was the result of study under Eastern Adepts with whom she was intimately acquainted. Since then, many claimants have talked of Mahatmas and Masters—till the world laughs and the genuine Theosophist is sick at heart. At the very outset, it is most necessary to make clear one thing—Theosophy recommends that each pronouncement, every book claiming Mahatmic origin, should be judged on its own intrinsic merit. The fundamental to keep in mind is—“from the teaching to the teachers.” Judge Theosophy, and all its tenets and doctrines, by a careful study of what H. P. Blavatsky herself gave out. We are in a cycle when it is easier than ever to pose as a

guru, because on the one hand the real Gurus and Mahatmas, their standing and status, are not known, and on the other there has been loose talk and degradation of the Ideal. Even in India, the true facts about real Gurus have become obscured, with the result that it is said: "At every street-corner you meet a Guru!" Mahatma means "Great Soul," but *what* is a Great Soul, *who* is he, *how* has he become great, *why* does he not come out and proclaim and prove himself? These are questions not studied. In the Seventh Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita* we come across a description, however curtailed, of a soul who becomes great—*Maha*—and the very word Mahatma is used. It is said: "Such a Mahatma (Great Soul) is difficult to meet." (verse 19)

Who are these Mahatmas whom H. P. Blavatsky called her Gurus, or Teachers? People generally progress and evolve in ignorance, without understanding and appreciating the details of the process of growth. Man makes his destiny in ignorance and suffers. He can rule his own stars by knowledge, and experience and express true joy, true bliss. So human evolution takes place because of the Laws of Reincarnation and Karma. The difference between the genius and the savage, between the normal person and the congenital idiot, between the soldier and the saint, is the result of reincarnation. We are made today by what we did yesterday. Next, Theosophy proceeds to draw a logical deduction, one that Prof. Huxley drew in the last century, that there must be beings in the universe whose intelligence is as much beyond ours as ours exceeds that of the black beetle, and who take an active part in the government of the natural order of things. This is indeed so.

While it may be, and *is*, difficult for the ordinary mind to understand the nature, character and powers of such highly evolved Intelligences or Great Souls, it is not difficult to perceive that human evolution must lead to the production of rare Intelligences; as a matter of fact, our history teaches us that Great Souls, though rare, *have* existed. Look at a Krishna, a Buddha, a Shankara, a Jesus. Both tradition and history indicate that these, and there are others, were Great Souls, Mahatmas, the rare efflorescence of a generation

of seekers after Wisdom. If the human soul, by self-effort, gains immortality, then we may naturally conclude that such Immortal Ones *must* exist.

Of such human souls who have gained Immortality, there are two kinds. Theosophy teaches that there are beings who by self-effort have emancipated themselves from the bondage of flesh and the sorrows of embodied existence. Having conquered the round of birth and death, they are enjoyers of soul-freedom, of spiritual liberty, living in the infinitudes of space. They are those who have walked the Path of Liberation mentioned in *The Voice of the Silence*, and are named *Pratyekas*, Buddhas of Selfishness. The second class are also emancipated beings, but they are Lords of Renunciation—*Tyaga-Rajas*, in Sanskrit. They are so called because, having won their spiritual freedom, they renounce it so that they may live and labour for the race from which they evolved. Not only do they renounce the Peace of final liberation; having obtained it, they from the very start of their spiritual careers have walked that Path which is called the Path of Renunciation, the Path of Noble Souls, the Sacrificers, those who don the Robe of Service for eras and ages. The orange robe of the Hindu *sannyasi* and the Buddhist *Bhikkhu* is but a symbol of this Robe of Sacrifice which the Renouncers put on for the benefit of the whole race.

This other class of liberated souls who live with humanity to render soul-service, all belong to a single school, called the Great Fraternity of Adepts. From that School, called *Maha-Shala* in the Upanishads, all light and guidance come, for those who need the light and are seeking for guidance. Next, of the body of those Lords of Renunciation, Theosophy speaks of two types—*Nirmanakayas* and *Buddhas*, in Buddhist terminology; *Videhi-Muktas* and *Rishis*, in Hindu terminology. *Nirmanakayas* or *Videhi-Muktas* are those Great Souls who live and labour for humanity without wearing a physical body of flesh and blood. These Renouncers live in the purified, radiant vestures of subtle matter, called Astral, because that substance shines like the stars. Collectively, they protect and watch over humanity in the mass.

The second class of Renouncers are those who take bodies of

flesh and blood, and to them is given the title of Rishis and Sages, Mahatmas and Adepts. This class of Renouncers has among its missions the task of teaching individual human souls. They are the Real Gurus who accept chelas, to train them for human soul-service. Their knowledge and virtues, their powers and faculties, cannot be fully realized by us, save and except as each of us makes himself or herself consubstantial with them. The best way to get some idea of their grandeur and glory is to begin at our human end and see what chelaship means; for it is the chela who in course of time becomes the Adept.

As one of the important items of the programme and policy of the Fraternity of these Lords of Renunciation is to keep alive in the world the Flame of Knowledge so that those who desire and aspire may learn and ultimately join their ranks, they naturally keep an agent or agents in the public world, through whom the Flame is kept burning. Sometimes these agents and messengers labour in secrecy; at other times, openly and publicly. Of such secret agents, we may name the great Comet St. Germain, Paracelsus, Jacob Boehme, Mesmer and Louis Claude de St. Martin. These agents and messengers are the torch-bearers of Truth and they light a fire for those who aspire, those who are seeking the light so that they may perceive, and are seeking the fire of devotion so that they may warm themselves and throw off their soul-numbness.

Approaching that Flame of Light and Warmth, the seeker and the aspirant learns the first lesson—that within the sanctum of his head is that power which will enable him to produce his own light; that within the chamber of his heart there is fragrant fuel which will enable him to kindle his own fire. And unless he does this twofold work of lighting his mind and heart, he cannot proceed. This is the *first step* towards chelaship. Study of the great philosophy and application of its principles to himself, transform the aspirant and prepare him for further progress. Without proper study, without adequate application, progress is not possible. This initial lesson is the first step on the path of Impersonality. The aspirant does not kindle his own light and fire at the hearth of any

personality, but at the Impersonal Hearth of Wisdom. The true Agents and the true Messengers never claim anything. H. P. Blavatsky always said: “I am but the window through which the light comes.” That is the position, and there is no other for any true Agent or Messenger. He but points to the Wisdom, eternal and constant. So each one of us must take the first step of seeking out that aspect of Wisdom, at which we can light our own light, kindle our own fire.

Naturally, study and application awaken in us the longing to be of the other world—the Occult world. When philosophical and metaphysical facts are grasped and we know what is worthwhile and what is worthless, when we realize that wealth and fame and power over humans and a hundred other things are earthy and ephemeral, then we feel like leaving them, running away from them. We long to abandon the world of mortals and yearn to enter the Occult world.

Our response to this yearning is the *first test* which follows the first step—of study and application. Many fail, by going away from their own sphere of congenial duties. H. P. Blavatsky taught: “The first *duty* taught in Occultism is to do one’s duty unflinchingly by every duty. He who plays truant in one thing will be faithless in another. No real, genuine Master will accept a chela who sacrifices *anyone* except himself to go to that Master.” Why is this? The Masters are Lords of Renunciation and their science and philosophy teaches that none can learn to make the Great Renunciation unless he trains himself from the very start to renounce his own betterment in the service of others. So anyone desiring to be a chela of the real Gurus has to learn not to leave the world but to serve it. At that early stage, service of the world implies performance of duty—to do our duty by every duty. This is the *second step*.

When we take this step of service which is due to others, we find out the meaning of duty, that which is due to others. At this stage arises what is known as the conflict of duties. A hundred things in life cause questioning—this way or that? Each time, in the performance of duties we seek the guidance of the *philosophy* we are studying. The obligation of the student and the aspirant to



his own philosophy, which he is trying to practise, is called the *second test*. No one from outside tests him; it is his response to his own life-problems that tests him several times a day. This second step calls upon him to face the second test; by self-examination, maintaining what is called the chela's life ledger, he must keep watch over himself, pass judgment on himself.

What is the guiding principle of this life of service and duty? In one word, Sacrifice. Does the aspirant perform his *dharma* or duty without bothering about his own comfort, his own position, always bent on helping others to help themselves? This is the test, which if passed develops in him the virtue of dispassion, *Vairagya*. Disinterestedness is learnt; for, in the performance of duty he has always to forget his own self, his own inclinations, his own attractions and aversions. In each instance, at every turn, he has to ascertain what is the right course of action, and in taking that course he learns not only to be unselfish, but to expand his efforts, and see that those who come in his contact do not get from him opportunities to be selfish. This is difficult. A good man sacrifices himself for the sake of those he loves; but the spiritual man has so to sacrifice and so to serve that others, friends or relations, acquaintances or strangers, are not strengthened in their selfishness, their pride and prejudices.

This brings us to the difference between affection and compassion. Affection binds; compassion sets free the soul. Therefore when we act with compassion, we truly help the soul. The aspirant is learning the method of spiritual service—serving the soul; not body-service without mind-service and soul-service, nor mind-service without soul-service, but soul-service which includes both mind and body-service.

This practice of compassion in which self-sacrifice and real discrimination are strengthened and developed, at last brings the aspirant his reward. He has successfully walked the Path of Becoming and has prepared himself “to be made over.” His duties discharged according to knowledge, in sacrifice, and by compassion, have sufficiently enlarged the Flame of his Being, and that Flame attracts the attention of the Great Ones, those

Renouncers who are ever on the watch for approaching pilgrims. Having reached the acme of evolution, they watch, from that supreme height, the dark alley of this earth below. And they never fail to catch the radiance of the flame of knowledge, sacrifice and compassion that any one of us may kindle. Therefore, in occult parlance they are called the Sentinels of Light. By their own Great Light they keep watch and ward over those who are bearers of the little lights in this world of darkness.

The aspirant is rewarded with the gift of an inner feeling which grows into inner perception and flowers into inner conviction or faith that “to be made” is different and superior to “becoming.” This is real Baptism, which purifies the soul from egotism and pride—*ahamkara*. This gift enables him to recognize himself as a mediator, alert and active, handling the forces of virtue and wisdom which belong to the world of the Spirit. Aided by this inner feeling, he learns the method of more efficient service, developing just compassion for all, and patience in everything. He learns how to turn every force of evil to good and to deal with the mind of the race as he finds it. It is at this stage that he is named a “chela on probation.” The state of man in this world is probationary; but the chela on probation knows how and why life is probationary. Not only worldly life, but the Occult world too tests him. That test of the Occult world may be generally described; it is, in reference to the world of form and appearances, very beautiful and attractive, and this glammers the chela. He has to pass the test and learn not only to be unaffected by his senses and desires and fancies, but to see that his psychic and mental faculties, his emotional impulses, do not glamour him. Just as we find out that our eyesight glammers us and that the sun never rises or sets, and we learn by mental understanding how the earth rotates on its axis and revolves round the sun, causing this optical illusion, so also the probationary chela learns that his impulses, his fancies, even his imagination, all belonging to his psychic nature, glamour him. Withdrawing still inwards, behind and beyond his psychic nature, he learns to live more and more in the innermost recesses of his heart, in that which *The Voice of the Silence* calls the Hall of Wisdom. More and more

he separates himself, not from the world, but from the worldly atmosphere; more and more he endeavours to pull his fellows, or rather helps them to pull themselves, to this attitude of detachment and compassion which makes all our actions sacrifices. In that Hall of Wisdom, he at last meets the Guru face to face.

Seek for him who is to give thee birth, in the Hall of Wisdom, the Hall which lies beyond, wherein all shadows are unknown, and where the light of truth shines with unfading glory.

That which is uncreate abides in thee, Disciple, as it abides in that Hall. If thou would'st reach it and blend the two, thou must divest thyself of thy dark garments of illusion. Stifle the voice of flesh, allow no image of the senses to get between its light and thine, that thus the twain may blend in one. (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 8)

In these few words the whole discipline of chelaship, the programme of discipleship, is given. Not only is there a difference of degree between the evolution of the ordinary man and the chela, who is trying to become an “extraordinary” man; there is a difference in kind. The soul of the merchant is in his business; the soul of the statesman is in state affairs; the soul of the mechanic is in his machine; the soul of the housewife is in her home; the soul of the artist is in his picture. But the soul of the chela is not even in his work and in his service of others; it is centred, ever and always, in the Star, who is his Guru and whose ray he is. The Guru is the Star, the chela the ray of the Star.

All Great Gurus are Stars—distant, and yet near, for their light touches the Earth. The Fraternity of Adepts is like unto the starry firmament: there is Lucifer, the herald of a new dawn for the soul; Mars, the great General who instructs us how to fight our passions and prides; Mercury, the Wise Enlightener, very difficult to find; Jupiter, who teaches us how to teach others; the regenerating Sun, who wakes us up and keeps us alive; and Hesperus, the Evening Star, who “points out the ‘Way’—however dimly, and lost among the host—to those who tread their path in darkness.”

Such are they, always watchful to respond to the call of the

earth, to the cry of mortals, to the yearnings of humanity. They are the soul of all knowledge, and their efforts through cycles and millennia make it possible for us to waft over the Way of Light to them who are the Great Lights. We can try, and trying with faith born of knowledge, we cannot but have one success after another, till we ourselves shine with the glory of our destiny fulfilled, and know that we are verily divine. Then we too can live like “the Great and Peaceful Ones who live regenerating the world like the coming of spring.”

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*We are at the bottom of a cycle and evidently in a transitory state.* Plato divides the intellectual progress of the universe during every cycle into fertile and barren periods. In the sublunary regions, the spheres of the various elements remain eternally in perfect harmony with the divine nature, he says; “but their parts,” owing to a too close proximity to earth, and their commingling with the *earthly* (which is matter, and therefore the realm of evil), “are sometimes according, and sometimes contrary to (divine) nature.” When those circulations—which Eliphas Levi calls “currents of the astral light”—in the universal ether which contains in itself every element, take place in harmony with the divine spirit, our earth and everything pertaining to it enjoys a fertile period. The occult powers of plants, animals, and minerals magically sympathize with the “superior natures,” and the divine soul of man is in perfect intelligence with these “inferior” ones. But during the barren periods, the latter lose their magic sympathy, and the spiritual sight of the majority of mankind is so blinded as to lose every notion of the superior powers of its own divine spirit. We are in a barren period...The divine intellect is veiled in man; his animal brain alone *philosophizes*.

—*Isis Unveiled*, I, 247

## ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ENDS

THE majority of people consider that failure spells death and, on the other hand, that success spells all that life signifies. Success can be of different kinds, and so, to know the secret of success we shall have to investigate just what kind of success we mean.

There is social success, with which everyone is familiar. We know that people spend their lives trying to attain a certain prominence and position socially, but when they have attained it, are they really satisfied?

Then there is economic success. From a worldly viewpoint, success is ordinarily associated with material possessions. The more of these a person has, the more successful in life he is supposed to be.

There is another sort of success, that pertaining to professional or artistic lines. This type of success, too, is at the personal level, but a different aspect of the personality is involved. Though ambition enters in here also, it is a different type of ambition. And where the desire is to contribute to one's particular profession or art something of oneself, there is less selfishness in that as a rule than in the mere desire to gain money or possessions. A certain inherent feeling, perhaps a memory of the soul, is revived and expresses itself through art, or through a noble profession of some kind.

Thus there are many kinds of success from a worldly point of view. Everyone, unless he is a dullard or mentally sluggish, desires some kind of success. As the *Bhagavad-Gita* (iv, 12) states: "Those who wish for success to their works in this life sacrifice to the gods; and in this world success from their actions soon cometh to pass."

Would Theosophy state that it is wrong to have this desire for success? It all depends on what kind of success we have in mind. We have to consider the ethical factor and the inner motives, impulses, expectations, etc., of the one desiring success of some kind.

The dictionary defines success as the achievement of a desired

aim, the prosperous conclusion of what is attempted. If we use the word success literally in that sense we cannot help but see that a criminal is successful from his viewpoint. Whether criminal or saint, each one who realizes his ambition along his or her particular line of achievement is a success. But how often we see those who seem to be successful during one phase of their life suffering reverses later on and *vice versa*! And again, success is sometimes attributed to those who least deserve it, those who take credit for the work done by others, which goes to show how dreadfully misinformed we often are, and how falsely we estimate people and are carried along on the wave of what we call popular opinion, without caring to investigate.

We may well ask the secret of success, why it is that certain people seem to have the magical touch. Many of us think that there is an element of luck or chance in the success that people attain. If we use these words in the sense that people achieve that which in some way they have not worked for, have not deserved, then we are wrong. In this universe of law nothing is left to chance or accident. Therefore, we have to get beneath the surface of life, beneath the exterior of man, to discover the subtle and recondite laws which give one the ability to accomplish that which one aims at.

The secret lies in Man himself. Man is the creator and the destroyer. Man makes every circumstance. Man makes every opportunity for himself, and because life is a brotherhood he aids or defeats the purpose of his brother through ignorance as also through the wilful abuse of power and knowledge. We cannot extricate ourselves from the great law of cause and effect; we reap suffering or its reverse on the basis of what we have sown, selfishly or unselfishly, in ignorance or with knowledge.

We need to ask ourselves: What is the purpose of evolution? What is Man? What is the object of earning a living and to what extent should it be carried? What is the fine line between necessity and indulgence, not just according to someone's opinion or religious beliefs, but in fact? All of these questions, if answered truthfully, would reveal that man is not primarily a material being. His physical



body, his personality, does demand a certain amount of care and protection; but what are the real needs of Man? Just clothing our bodies and feeding our stomachs and securing the various acquisitions that pertain to so-called civilized life? That apparently seems to be the logical conclusion of most people, looking at the effort that they put forth for the fulfilment of those needs.

Man's success in any achievement depends upon the energy he puts into it. Desire is energy; energy is desire. Whether criminal or saint, each uses power and energy. The difference is that one uses it destructively and the other constructively. Both reap results. Man in his lower nature is nothing more than an animal, passing through all the material phases of life. Man in his higher and spiritual nature has unlimited power, energy, knowledge. The lower needs the energy of the higher to rise, to acquire discrimination, to achieve true success.

Man in his real essence is not material. He has lived in the past, has generated causes whose effects he is now reaping; therefore, when we find someone attaining outstanding success which is out of all proportion to his present efforts, it merely means that in some past life he has put forth effort in the same direction. We have here a certain aspect of soul memory. Because man does not realize that in his higher nature he has this great reservoir of exhaustless energy, he is ceaselessly deceived, and in living his life and performing his duties he goes round and round, in a weary treadmill of birth and rebirth, none the wiser.

Success—what is it? What is the secret of success? Can we honestly state that the gaining of that which we desire brings us the happiness and satisfaction that we expect? If we are fully satisfied with our wealth, possessions, home, luxuries, we are apt to feel pity for those who have not what we possess, and perhaps to say, "Poor Jack, he could never make any money; he is a total failure!" A failure only according to material standards; as Theosophists we take a different position. If Jack, though not able to make a great deal of money, merely manages to keep body and soul together, and is putting into his honest work all that he is capable of, without desire of reward, spiritually speaking he is

better off than the man who makes a lot of money. It matters not how "menial" one's work may be, as the world understands it. Epictetus, though a chained slave, was yet a great philosopher. In anything that we undertake, let us therefore examine first if the basis is an honest one.

It is said that one of the greatest of sacrifices is to give of oneself. What more could we give than the essence of our aspirations? Until we learn the great law of sacrifice, we shall never be able to eliminate from our minds the idea of getting; we shall never reach contentment or peace.

There is but One Self, one great energizing, beginningless and endless power, call it what you will. Being omnipresent, it is within man, though many, alas, do not realize this. Until we learn that the secret of all success is Man himself, until we know what we are in reality, we cannot call upon the Inner Self to aid us in our endeavours. As long as we turn for help outside ourselves, to particular persons, or to religion, science, political parties or one or another "ism," we have not yet developed the ability to think for ourselves. Rare is the individual who has any conception of how to think. If we have no knowledge, no true basis, how can we really think, or have any higher aspirations or ideals? Until we take the position of the real being, who is indifferent to success or failure, we shall never know that living which as souls we were intended to live.

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FROM strength to strength, from the beauty and perfection of one plane to the greater beauty and perfection of another, with accessions of new glory, of fresh knowledge and power in each cycle, such is the destiny of every Ego, which thus becomes its own Saviour in each world and incarnation.

—*The Key to Theosophy*

## THE PATH OF DISCIPLINE

DISCIPLINE, order, control are considered essential in every aspect of life, in every sphere of activity, in order to live at peace and harmony with oneself and with the world around. All are supposed to observe a particular type of discipline, suited to their own work. The politicians of different parties in each country have their party discipline. A soldier has his particular duties: in time of war, he has to defeat the enemy at all costs, and the whole regiment works as a single unit; in time of peace, too, he has his discipline and his duties. Workers in the fields have their own discipline in the cultivation of land; and those in the factories, in tending machinery. Members of a family have to practise the discipline of good habits, regular hours, unity and tolerance, in order to have happy, harmonious, methodical homes. In a bank or in a business firm, the peon as well as the head have their own discipline. This is the ordinary discipline of ordinary people, practised consciously or mechanically in the daily routine, to suit their convenience. It is partial discipline observed without any correct knowledge of the fundamental principles of life-law-evolution.

Divine discipline consists in the observation of certain rules and principles prescribed by all the Great Teachers. One has to qualify oneself with a particular end in view, a particular task—the spiritual upliftment of the human race. Just as students of science or of the arts, of law or of medicine, have to qualify themselves in order to become practitioners in their particular branch of knowledge, so, too, with divine discipline. Daily practice in the control of the body, the senses, the brain, the mind, the feeling nature, the passions and desires, and in the cultivation of the virtues, all have to be undertaken, not for self-benefit, but for one purpose and one only, to become the better able to help and teach others; and this has to be done regularly and deliberately, not spasmodically.

In order to practise the divine discipline, one must be absolutely convinced of the divinity within him and around him, that the source and the root of all beings is the one divine principle of life and

light. He must also be thoroughly acquainted with the various aspects of that One Life within himself. Man, though apparently a unit, is sevenfold. Seven different principles, emanations from seven different hierarchies, go to make a man. Different forces, intelligences, lives, higher and lower, exist in him. They have all to work in unison and harmony within him, and only the practice of divine discipline can accomplish that task. Therefore it is essential to acquire the knowledge of man's constitution, and to understand that there is in him the immortal triad of Atma-Buddhi-Manas, working in and through a mortal personality made up of the physical body and its foundation, the astral body, in which flow the currents of Prana and Kama.

It is this personal man who is to be trained and controlled. At present there is a constant conflict between the mortal and the personal on the one hand, and the immortal and the divine on the other. The self-conscious thinker in man has to control and train the personality and not be swayed by it. It has to be in close contact with the Higher Self, the Divine Parent, to receive its light and wisdom and shed it through a refined and purified personality. Divine discipline is to be practised to obtain inner illumination, to develop discrimination and foresight, to unfold compassion. This has to be done if one wishes to qualify oneself for the service of human souls. It is only through divine discipline that all the great Teachers of humanity have reached spiritual enlightenment. It gives one great courage and joy to follow in their footsteps and walk the path they have trodden.

Divine discipline is necessary at this stage of evolution because humanity is an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto. That divine heritage is forgotten by most human beings and they get entangled in the meshes of material existence, taking it to be the real. The Immortal Higher Self is unconditionally divine, but it is the human Soul, a ray of the divine triad, that has to win its immortality by a permanent union with its parent source, and that can only be done through divine discipline in daily life.

Four are the avenues of action where discipline is to be observed: thoughts, feelings, words, deeds. Man, though a thinker, does not

think deliberately at the present time; he has made of his mind a playground of the senses, and is always generating thoughts in terms of his sense-inclinations, desires and passions. In the Seventeenth Discourse of the *Gita*, Krishna explains the threefold mortification of body, speech and mind, which, if practised daily, would, indeed, transform these avenues of action and make one a superior man from the spiritual point of view:

Honouring the gods, the brahmans, the teachers, and the wise, purity, rectitude, chastity, and harmlessness are called mortification of the body. Gentle speech which causes no anxiety, which is truthful and friendly, and diligence in the reading of the Scriptures, are said to be austerities of speech. Serenity of mind, mildness of temper, silence, self-restraint, absolute straightforwardness of conduct, are called mortification of the mind.

Honouring those above us is a sign of humility and grace. It is not only a mental but also a bodily discipline, engendered in true recognition of one's own humble position and out of the respect and gratitude one feels for others. Purity and chastity are essential on all planes, inner and outer. Rectitude, or moral uprightness, and non-violence are also qualities to be cultivated. These are the mortifications of the body, which has become a sickly, weak instrument these days. It has to become a proper channel to manifest the divinity within.

Speech is another avenue of human expression which needs to be controlled in our civilization. Not only slander, gossip, criticism and falsehood, but also unnecessary talk, through which a great amount of energy is wasted, are to be avoided. Words are living messengers and they have to be used with care. The right type of speech is truthful, gentle and friendly and is the expression of right thinking. It is deliberate and controlled and does not hurt or harm anyone. Diligence in the reading of the Scriptures is named as an austerity of speech. It is this constant reading of devotional books that impresses the mind and the heart with spiritual precepts, and so thoughts and feelings naturally flow in the right direction—

towards the Higher Self. This takes one away from the ordinary affairs of the world and worldly things, and for however short a period the thinker in us is one with his divine parent. Thus speech is purified through this daily exercise.

Next comes mortification of the mind. Serenity of mind and mildness of temper are essential characteristics for living the spiritual life. If the mind is disturbed, agitated and turbulent, as was the complaint of Arjuna to his teacher Sri Krishna in the Sixth Discourse of the *Gita*, how can any action be performed rightly? Equal-mindedness is Yoga, and is very necessary if one desires to achieve union with the divine. Excitement, haste and hurry is the tempo of our civilization, which is to be changed patiently and perseveringly. Then comes silence. It is prescribed, not as a mortification of speech but of mind, which shows how necessary it is to change the mind first. Control of speech is easier than that of mind. Thoughts are hidden, so even when people abstain from speaking along wrong lines they may continue to indulge in thoughts that are harmful and injurious. Therefore an all-round self-restraint is necessary. Straightforwardness of conduct is also considered a mortification of the mind. A straightforward act is the result of a straightforward mind. Thoughts are the seeds of Karma. It is always the inner that reflects itself in the outer behaviour. This threefold mortification of mind, speech and body can be practised by anyone wishing to bring about a transformation in his character.

In this divine discipline the important idea to bear in mind is to avoid the two extremes and follow the path of moderation—neither self-indulgence nor self-torture. For a harmonious development of the whole character, moderation at every turn is necessary. In the Sixth Discourse of the *Gita*, Krishna instructs Arjuna in the practice of moderation, not only in food and sleep, but also in work and recreation. To go to one or another extreme in anything means to go against the law. So, even in the practice of the divine discipline this principle is to be observed. It certainly does not mean going away from the path or being slack; it means always following the golden mean.

In the Sixteenth Discourse of the *Gita*, a long list of the divine qualities is given. In the Twelfth Discourse, various characteristics of a true devotee or a *bhakta* are mentioned. Each one of them can be taken up for the practice of the divine discipline so that the personal man may become like unto his divine parent and acquire skill in the performance of his work and in the fulfilment of his aim and purpose in evolution.

Both Lord Buddha and Sri Krishna have given the very same teachings about the Divine Self and the personal self:

The Self is the Lord of self; what higher Lord could there be? When a man subdues well his self, he will find a Lord very difficult to find. (*Dhammapada*, verse 160)

He should raise the self by the Self; let him not suffer the Self to be lowered; for Self is the friend of self, and, in like manner, self is its own enemy. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, vi, 5)

So the true and real friend is within each one of us. If it is to be known and realized, if its light is to be expressed in daily actions, then this can only be done through divine discipline.

Divine discipline is to be cheerfully performed, with full understanding that it is our most important work in life. It leads one from the darkness of ignorance to the light of wisdom, and from death to immortality. The way of divine discipline is the only way to establish peace on earth and good-will among men.

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No man can swim unless he enters deep water. No bird can fly unless its wings are grown, and it has space before it and courage to trust itself to the air. A man who will wield a two-edged sword, must be a thorough master of the blunt weapon, if he would not injure himself—or what is worse—others, at the first attempt.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## FOHAT—THE GREAT TRANSFORMER

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FOHAT is a Tibetan term for the energetic or motion aspect of the Supreme Spirit. It is usually considered in its metaphysical aspect, which is rather difficult to understand; therefore, side by side with the metaphysical, the ethical and practical-application aspect should also be understood.

Every form of life is made up of a certain grade of matter expressing a certain degree of intelligence or consciousness, and the connecting link between the two is the vital force of Fohat. It links spirit to matter, subject to object, as explained in the First Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*. It is the “bridge” by which the Eternal Thought in the Eternal Mind is objectivized as universal Nature. The process is from within without. The slumbering energy awakes and a gradual transformation takes place from the spiritual to the ethereal, the semi-ethereal, until gross forms of matter come into existence. Primordial matter is formless and colourless. It is Fohat which translates or rather transforms the universal, archetypal ideas into various forms at various levels and becomes the guiding force. The Laws of Nature exist because of the impression of Divine Ideas on Divine Substance. It is interesting to note that some thinkers have, unconsciously to themselves, admitted the existence of the propelling force of manifestation, as stated by Madame Blavatsky in a footnote on page 649 of Volume II of *The Secret Doctrine*:

The “*principle of perfectibility*” of Nägeli; von de Baer’s “*striving towards the purpose*”; Braun’s “*Divine breath as the inward impulse in the evolutionary history of Nature*”; Professor Owen’s “*tendency to perfectibility*,” etc., are all veiled manifestations of the universal guiding FOHAT, rich with the Divine and Dhyana-Chohanian thought.

Fohat is the constructive power that causes the formation of planetary systems, of earth chains, of nature and of man. In the second verse of the Fifth Stanza from the *Book of Dzryan* it is stated:



“Fohat is the steed and the thought is the rider.” Not only does it serve, like the steed, as a means of transportation from one place to another, from one plane to another, but it also has the power to change and transform that which was subjective into the objective, that which was noumenal into the phenomenal. Thus, an ideal image in the mind of man may be reproduced as a concrete form.

This can be understood by taking a simple illustration—that of a potter and his pot. He may have an image or images of various types of pots in his own mind. He may have the clay, the water and all the necessary ingredients in front of him, but unless and until he *wills* to use his own energy and with his hands moulds and shapes the clay according to the image formed in his mind, there will be no objective formation of an earthen pot. This illustration should enable the student to have a clearer understanding of what Fohat is, and how it functions at various stages of evolution. The Will of man is one aspect of Fohat in the human kingdom, on the plane of mind; the potter’s use of the energetic force to create a pot with his own hands and make of it an objective reality is another aspect of the vital force on another plane.

In Nature, the Fohatic principle is working all the time. A continuous transformation of forms from one state into another is taking place. What transforms water into ice or steam, its two opposite aspects? Heat and cold, rooted in Fohat, the energy of the One Life. What makes vapour gather into clouds in the sky, and the clouds to burst into rain, and the rain to fructify the seeds under the ground and bring about the growth of plants and trees, flowers and fruits, in all their changing forms? The motion aspect of the Divine Life. Motion conquers cold, rest conquers heat. When the body is cold, the mind passive, hands inactive, then motion on all planes is needed. When the body is restless, when the heat of anger rages in the mind and in the heart, a change of polarity becomes necessary to bring about calm and quiet, and this change of polarity is yet another aspect of life.

In *The Theosophical Glossary* Fohat is defined as *Daiviprakriti*, Primordial Light, the essence of Cosmic Electricity, and in the manifested universe it is “the ever-present electrical energy and

ceaseless destructive and formative power.” This indicates how from the one homogeneous substance-principle differentiation takes place and grosser and grosser forms of life come into manifestation through the stairway of the seven worlds or planes. It is the same vital power which creates and destroys, to re-create once more. Fohat is “the universal propelling Vital Force, at once the propeller and the resultant.” Attraction and repulsion, levitation and gravitation, are all caused by this universal propelling force.

What brings atoms and molecules together, what separates them? The opposing forces of cohesion and of dispersion both spring from Fohat. What but the dynamic energy of life turns a germ into a foetus in the mother’s womb, and later on into a baby which becomes a man or a woman? What brings about old age, decay and death? The destructive aspect of that same energetic force. What brings the body daily from the waking to the sleeping state and from the sleeping to the waking state? The unbalance caused by the impact of the universal life-energy upon individual energy. When the equilibrium is restored, it wakes up the individual for another day of work. So all growth and expansion, all decay and destruction, the play of opposing forces through a change of polarity, are brought about through one or another aspect of Fohat—the great Transformer. Thus, naturally, life is looked upon as a drama, a dance, or a song, where each being is expected to play his part, to dance or to sing in tune with the Infinite. This can only be done through a clear understanding of Deity in its triple aspect of Creator-Preserver-Destroyer, or Spirit-Matter with the connecting link of Fohat.

Human beings dissipate their energy in a thousand ways, through the avenues of thought-word-deed, because they are bound down by a hundred cords of desire. Therefore the practical lesson is to conserve one’s energy for the highest work on the physical, mental, moral and spiritual planes, and, instead of following impulses from without, to follow the right principles and act from within. Krishna defines Yoga as equanimity of mind and skill in the performance of action. This can only be achieved through constant vigilance and self-control.



The way winds up-hill all the way, from the valley of mire to the summits of glorious light Nirvanic, and it is necessary to use one's energy in the cultivation of virtues. One of the Paramitas is "VIRYA, the dauntless energy that fights its way to the Supernal TRUTH, out of the mire of lies terrestrial." This will transform man into a god, enabling him not only to enjoy Nirvanic peace and bliss, but also to use his energy on all planes to elevate his fellow pilgrims and relieve their suffering. Thus, to propel life from the unmanifested to manifestation, from the atom to man and man to god, is the work of Fohat, the great Transformer, at first through natural impulse and then through the self-conscious effort of man.

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KARMA may not be acquired like money in a bank; it cannot be deposited; but a store of merit may be laid up to the account of anyone who acts so as to lay it up. If the law is looked at from the selfish side as something that one may lay up for himself, of course it will tend to self-seeking; but it is hardly possible for one to believe in and act under the law and fail at the same time to see that if he does so selfishly he limits his store and sometime will nullify all its effects. It is not good karma to act selfishly; hence he makes bad karma by so acting from a self-seeking of benefit under the law.

Good karma is that act and thought which is pleasing to the Higher Self. Hence sorrow and pain and discipline may be good karma. Bad karma is that act and thought which displeases the Higher Self. Hence all self-seeking acts, no matter how high and outwardly virtuous they are, are bad karma, since the Higher Self desires no such acts for its sake.

—W. Q. JUDGE

## THE ART OF "CARING"

The Theosophical ideas of charity mean *personal* exertion for others; *personal* mercy and kindness; *personal* interest in the welfare of those who suffer; *personal* sympathy, forethought and assistance in their troubles or needs.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

Open your eyes and seek another human being in need of a little time, a little friendliness, a little company, a little work. It may be a lonely, an embittered, a sick or an awkward person for whom you can do something, to whom you can mean something. Perhaps it will be an old person or a child. Or else a good cause that needs voluntary workers. Do not lose heart, even if you must wait a bit before finding the right thing, even if you must make several attempts.

—ALBERT SCHWEITZER

THE rapid tempo and the deafening clamour of modern life do not encourage the development of the heart quality. There is no time and all too little inclination to practise kindness and to cultivate good fellowship. It is bad enough to have giant computers solve our problems and answer our questions, to depend upon mechanical devices for the routine of our daily lives. Too much speed and increasing automation have eliminated the human factor. They now threaten to rob us of our humanity. They are paralysing the human element without which man ceases to be man. Without love and kindness man cannot *live*: he becomes an automaton, a replica of the machine he has created.

This dehumanizing effect of our mechanistic civilization upon men and women is a distressing effect of modern life, and measures to correct it should be taken *before* it is too late!

We go faster and faster and yet have less and less time for the things that really matter. We argue we must hurry, hurry, hurry in order to save time, but have we stopped to think: What are we doing with the time we save? What is all this speed and rush leading to?

We need to be reminded again and again of this central truth

taught by all the Great Ones down the ages: “Love one another.” “Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing.” “Never give to the Sun time to dry a tear before thou hast wiped it.” The Initiate Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians gives a magnificent analysis of love without which the most learned, the most gifted, and the most powerful man is as “nothing.” This is not a mere figure of speech or a metaphor; it is literally true, for he is not man who has no love for his fellow men. And love, as Paul rightly points out, includes many admirable virtues: patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness, sincerity.

We may not intentionally violate the supreme law of love; we may harbour no hate or ill-will in our minds; but we have become too busy to “care” for others. We plead that there is no time and our lives are too crowded, or that there is no one to confide in, no one who will stop long enough to lend a sympathetic ear. Many a heart remains sad for want of a friendly listener.

We must *make* time and regain the art of “caring.” We need to “care” for our own sake as well as for the sake of others. For our own sake, since without love we deprive ourselves of the gifts of the Spirit. We become hard and callous and repellent. If we give love, our own lives will be sweeter and brighter and—better still—we shall discover that latent in each human heart are the seeds of nobility, goodness, and beauty, waiting for the warmth of human love to spring into life. The seeds underground remain invisible until a little rain and a little sunshine perform their magic and lo! we have a plant springing up from its hiding place, a plant which will bear fragrant flowers and nourishing fruits, rejoicing and benefiting the lives of many. There is similar magic in the love we give to another. A smile, a kind word, a friendly gesture—just a *little* caring—and we find the other person responding to the magic touch of our love, and he in turn will spread the sunshine of his sympathy upon other wayfarers.

We have made life difficult and sorrowful enough through our blunders and our follies. We must retrieve our steps, and to begin

with let us brighten the lives of our fellow men by regaining the art of caring—let us practise just a *little* kindness!

The main subject Life teaches us is one that we do not find listed in the curricula of our schools and colleges: it is Brotherhood. The great lesson we are here to learn is to live as brothers, to love one another, and unless that lesson is learnt we are ignorant: for we remain blind to the Light of Truth; we remain deaf to the Voice of Spirit. There is no true progress for man other than spiritual progress. And spiritual progress is only achieved by following the Law of Love, which is that of our own true being. “Altruism is an integral part of self-development,” said H. P. Blavatsky.

Let us endeavour to live in the Great Self and be ever aware of its Presence in our own heart. Let us learn to live in our fellows as they all live in that One Self. Let us hasten to take the first step towards that glorious realization by practising just a *little* “caring.”

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A MAN that stands alone, having decided to obey the truth, may be weak and slip back into his old ways. Therefore, stand ye together, assist one another, and strengthen one another’s efforts.

Be like unto brothers; one in love, one in holiness, and one in your zeal for the truth.

Spread the truth and preach the doctrine in all quarters of the world, so that in the end all living creatures will be citizens of the kingdom of righteousness.

This is the holy brotherhood; this is the church, the congregation of the saints of the Buddha; this is the Sangha that establishes a communion among all those who have taken their refuge in the Buddha.

—GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA  
(*Vide, Mahāvagga, I, 6*)

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Much of the focus of today's journalism is on stories of conflict, violence, death, failure or disaster. In a talk delivered at Cardiff University, UK, noted British journalist Martyn Lewis stressed that the media need to change their vision and consider positive stories as worthy of analysis and reporting as negative ones:

The main criteria for commissioning and including stories should be the extent to which those stories shape and change—or have the potential to shape and change—the country or the world in which they [journalists] live. They are criteria, which will not only allow them to expose the injustices and the tragedies in the world, but also to give proper weight to the successes and triumphs. They need to hold up a fairer image of the world in which explaining and analyzing mankind's achievements should be just as important as chronicling and investigating its failures.

Too often they leave an inaccurate, negative impression of a person, place or organization in the minds of readers and viewers because they have not regarded it as newsworthy to report developments or changes of a positive nature that followed. When there is a disaster, there are people trying to recover from it. Where things go wrong, there are people trying to put them right, and trying to make sure they don't happen again. Too often they choose the negative route....

One journalist was heard to say: "You can photograph violence, but you can't photograph peace." And yet surely staying to chronicle the details of the attempts by affected communities to achieve permanent peace is just as great a journalistic challenge as showing the world the bodies under bloodstained sheets....We need to give people a vision of a better future. If we have no such belief, we should quit journalism.

However, things seem to be moving in the right direction. More and more audience research around the world is increasingly pointing the media towards a more balanced news agenda. In some countries, there is growing realization that reporters are "obliged

to raise, not lower, people's sights." It would help journalism as a whole if editors, proprietors and reporters mandate and follow some reasonable changes, and view stories in a different light.

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As the pace of our lives gets faster and faster, we complain more and more about the paucity of time. An article by B. K. Asha (*Purity*, April 2002) examines where today's "instant culture" is leading us:

Today human beings are in a desperate hurry to beat time. They want to do everything instantly, be it cooking, cleaning, eating, working, in fact, every conceivable activity that could be finished as quickly as possible. In this jet age, speed is efficiency, so we have e-mail, e-commerce, e-shopping, supersonic jets...fast foods, instant photography, instant therapies and a plethora of services that thrive on this craze for instant culture.

But what are we running into? In the race for doing everything faster, we are missing out on what time has to offer. Fast eating, fast working and rushing everything every time has made us insensitive and irreverent to life itself...Our obsession with speed is inherently destructive....

There are many repercussions of this instant culture on the human scale. Today, kids do not know the innocence of growing up. Untimely over-exposure to information has stunted their emotional and creative growth.

The worst fallout of this speed age is that we have lost our patience. We want quick results for everything and if things do not happen as fast as we want them to then we become impatient, angry and frustrated. Our drive for sensual gratification makes us look for variety rather than durability. We get fed up with everything too quickly. So much so that we even treat human beings as disposables. Today people do not want to live long because they know the younger generation would have no time to spare for them.

Our impatience sours relationships with others. Hence we

have so many broken marriages, split families, apathy towards older generation, etc. Worse still, we have forgotten to be ourselves....

When we forget to give respect to time, time gives us warning signals. At present, time is sending its message loud and clear, and that is, to understand the flow of time, to be natural, to respect the laws of nature both outer and inner. When we do that, we will experience joy in every change that time brings.

Every new scientific development today leads in one way or another to saving time, to reducing the hours of work. But where will time saved without knowledge of how to use it wisely lead us? It all boils down to what we want out of life and whether it will satisfy the needs of the inner man and bring real happiness. Leisure has a place in the pattern of life, not as something to be wasted and forgotten, but as something that awakens us to the true joy of living. This can only be if our activities are directed towards an end and there is an aim in life which is beyond mere social aspirations, or material or even intellectual enjoyment.

What we need in our age is education for leisure, so as to enable the rising generation to cope *positively* with the problem of spare time. It implies giving them something worth living for, something enduring that they can cherish throughout life, something that will reveal to them the true meaning and purpose of life and bring real happiness.

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The prehistoric cave paintings of Chauvet in southeastern France show the work of deft hands: Hundreds of animals appear in lifelike poses—standing, stalking, running, or roaming in packs—on surfaces specially scraped to make the sketches stand out. Many archaeologists assumed that such sophistication required thousands of years of cultural development and artistic experimentation. Yet a new, improved dating analysis suggests that the Chauvet paintings were made between 32,000 and 29,000 years ago, placing them

among the most ancient artworks known. (*Discover*, February 2002)

The results confirm that the Chauvet cave paintings are 10,000 to 15,000 years older than those at Lascaux, even though the art in the two locations is similarly fine. The finding implies that prehistoric art did not evolve steadily from crude beginnings to complex representations, as was previously thought, but “in spurts, with lots of apogees and lots of declines,” says archaeologist Jean Clottes, who is in charge of the research at Chauvet.

It is now believed that there may be earlier cycles of artistic development as yet unknown. “I would be very surprised if much older art was not discovered in the next few years, not only in Europe but mostly in Asia, Australia, and Africa,” says Clottes.

Further excavations in different parts of the world will indeed uncover evidences of much older art. Even the Chauvet cave findings, rock art specialists admit, “upset all our thinking about how style evolved. We can no longer argue that the development of art was linear because we see now that it was not just a matter of a crude sort of art first and then a slow improvement.”

In fact, artistic skill can be traced back to the beginning of human history. Early man was not left unaided but had Divine Instructors who taught him all the arts and sciences; and their pupils handed their knowledge from one generation to another.

The artistic skill displayed by the old cave-men renders the hypothesis which regards them as approximations to the “pithecanthropus alalus”—that very mythical Haeckelian monster—an absurdity requiring no Huxley or Schmidt to expose it. We see in their skill in engraving a *gleam* of Atlantean culture *atavistically* reappearing. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 741 fn.)

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For nature-lovers, and for those who know of the intimate relationship between man and nature, the following facts and findings reported in *Sanctuary Asia* will be a cause for concern.

Probably the most comprehensive survey of biodiversity ever



conducted in the United States, by the Nature Conservancy, has documented more than 200,000 species of plants and animals, twice the previous estimate. Nearly one third of these species are threatened. Loss of wild habitats and invasion of exotic species are the leading causes of species decline. The inventory, based on data gathered over the last 25 years by the Conservancy's Natural Heritage Network, suggests that the U.S. contains about 10 per cent of the known species on earth and ranks close to the top among nations in its variety of mammals, freshwater fishes, salamanders, mussels, snails, crayfish and needle-leaved evergreen trees such as pines. However, the U.S. ranking of being among the highest biodiversity nations could be deceptive, simply because many countries in the Third World have not been sufficiently studied. Yet the Nature Conservancy's survey gives an inkling of the threat to the natural world.

Another report, outlining research by Anne Weil, a research associate with Duke University, and James Kirchner, a scientist at the University of California-Berkeley, estimates that the earth will need 10 million years to recover its species diversity following mass extinctions. The best scientific estimates are that, in the absence of policy changes, half of the planet's species will be lost in the next 50 to 100 years. The study underlines the fact that not only will extinctions leave an impoverished and barren planet for future generations, but that the human race itself will be extinct long before any of the vanished species make a comeback. The team found that the time lag between extinction and revival of biodiversity was much longer than previously believed, and was also remarkably consistent. Kirchner said that while the findings are a cause for concern, they do not mean that the earth's species are doomed. "Whether mass extinction happens or not depends on us. We can choose not to let it happen."

Still another report, that on global climate change, by the Pew Centre, has warned that we need to be prepared for a rise in sea levels of over 50 cm., resulting in the submergence of approximately 20,000 sq.km. of land by the year 2100. According to the report's co-author Gary Yohe, even if temperatures were

stabilized immediately, sea level rise would still continue into the next century, due to the momentum gathered by the ocean's expansion.

According to *Bird Life International*, one in eight of the world's birds—which translates into 1,200 species—face extinction in the next 100 years. Seventy four bird species have become extinct since 1800, and 35 species have vanished for ever in the last 100 years.

A scary picture indeed! Yet humans are so obsessed with a sense of their superiority over nature that only a major catastrophe will open their eyes.

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A recent study on "Media Violence and Its Impact on Children," conducted by the Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) in Delhi, with the support of Unicef, Unesco and the Ford Foundation, should be an eye-opener for parents who encourage or connive at their children watching adult TV programmes. The pioneering survey covered 1,350 kids in the age group of six to fourteen years from various socio-economic groups in five cities—Lucknow, Kolkata, Delhi, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad. *The Times of India* reports:

If you think children are hooked to cartoons, action flicks and adventure series you are behind the times. Soap operas are what they are watching—adult family dramas, in particular. They are also keen on horror and crime shows, and this fascination has intensified dramatically since September 11....

Parents might consider family serials "safe" for their kids, with many mothers encouraging their children to watch these alongside their elders. However, such programmes, especially the new crop of daily soaps, are injurious to the psychological health of children, warns the study. CFAR conducted a content analysis of 22 episodes across prime-time television, comprising 11 family dramas, and found that more than 55 per cent of their substance was violence. "Conflict, emotional upheaval,



violence, death and uncertainty come packaged as a family drama,” says the study, adding that this can only “impair impressionable minds.”

“Family soaps are not necessarily happy programmes or merely a celebration of the family, although they are promoted that way,” notes Akhila Sivadas, executive director of CFAR....Their target audience is the adult viewer, hence the topics deal with adult life and its complexities. Domestic discord, adultery and bigamy are common themes. Unfortunately, though, the serials end up being watched by vast numbers of children too. And given that the kids lack the emotional and intellectual maturity to understand what’s really going on, they turn precocious and start acquiring prejudices and preconditioned ideas about relationships....

The researchers were also alarmed by the children’s passion for crime and horror shows....However, many confessed that they got bad dreams after watching such shows.

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If we speak of matter as essentially inanimate or inert, we establish the need for a graded hierarchy of beings: Stones have no experience whatsoever; bacteria have a minimal degree of life; plants have a bit more life, with a rudimentary degree of sensitivity; “lower” animals are more sentient, yet still stuck in their instincts; “higher” animals are more aware; humans alone are really awake and intelligent. In this manner we continually isolate human awareness above, and apart from, the sensuous world. If, however, we view matter as animate (or self-organizing) from the get go, then hierarchies vanish and we are left with a diversely differentiated field of animate beings, each of which has its gifts relative to the others. And we find ourselves not above this living web, but in the very midst of it, our own sentience part and parcel of the sensuous landscape.

—DAVID ABRAM