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# THEOSOPHIA

A LIVING PHILOSOPHY FOR HUMANITY

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HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY

(Photograph taken approximately between 1875-78)

## A LIVING PHILOSOPHY FOR HUMANITY

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### Objectives:

- To disseminate the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom.
- To uphold and promote the Original Principles of the modern Theosophical Movement, as set forth by H. P. Blavatsky and her Teachers.
- To challenge bigotry and superstition in every form.
- To foster mutual understanding and co-operation among all students of Theosophy, irrespective of their affiliation.

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### THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

"Do you know what it is to resist without resistance?"

"That means, among other things, that too great an expenditure of strength, of 'fortitude,' is not wise. If one fights, one is drawn into the swirl of events and thoughts, instead of leaning back on the great ocean of the Self which is never moved. Now you see that. So, lean back and look on at the ebb and flow of life that washes to our feet and away again many things that are not easy to lose or pleasant to welcome. Yet they all belong to Life, to the Self. The wise man has no personal possessions . . . ."

"The plan of quiet passive resistance, or rather, laying under the wind, is good and ought to work in all attacks. Retreat within your own heart and there keep firmly still. Resist without resisting. It is possible and should be attained."

—W. Q. JUDGE.

"The fact that we are born in this kind of a place and time shows that that is our karma and it is our duty to make the most of it for if we win to any extent in such difficult circumstances then we have acquired more actual strength than if it had been our fortune to be born in a nation or time which to our short sight seems a better fortune. But it is a mistake for a man to ever suppose that any sort of fortune than the one that is now his is a better one; that which is now ours is the best because it is the only one that by any possibility could be ours, and if we long for any other we commit a grave error and give ourselves trouble in the future, for we set up certain tendencies that MUST at some time be overcome. By working out our duty with a single heart we unconsciously acquire a large degree of concentration . . . ."

—Wm. Quan Judge, in a letter dated September 26, 1888. See *Practical Occultism*, pp. 121-22.

## THE PERENNIAL CHALLENGE

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

Crises in human history are a challenge to the Ideals of man. They are a test of our faith in the inherent decency of our fellow-beings. They are a clarion-call to those indwelling spiritual resources of our character which remain most of the time latent beneath the surface of daily routine.

Today we live in a time of world-wide crisis — a crisis of Ideas and Ideals, a renewed conflict between two very old tendencies of the human mind: the one striving forward along the path of progress, enlightenment and adventure into the future, and the other stubbornly clinging to the entrenchments of a moribund past, crystallized, reactionary and stultifying.

Whenever and wherever you see discontent, upheaval and conflict, you may be sure that behind the mere outward form, often ugly and un-inviting, there is stirring a hidden potency of the Soul, trying to manifest by means of some new embodied form, to be fashioned and moulded through trials and tribulations, through the pangs of a new birth.

Whenever and wherever you find lethargy, apathy, stagnation, and the distressing symptoms of quietude, somnolence and contentment, you may be sure that you are witnessing the forces of reaction, sloth, spiritual and intellectual darkness and obscurantism at work, nay, temporarily victorious.

The time inevitably must come, however, when the Soul of man, whether individually or collectively as a nation, begins to wake up and to realize its lost freedom, its obscured ideals, its emotional and intellectual frustrations. It stirs uneasily in its slumber, and gradually awakens. Then conflict ensues, and the battle for the possession of the future is entered upon, sometimes slowly and sometimes with a suddenness characteristic of the

unpredictable movements of spiritual consciousness. The final outcome is invariably the utter discomfiture of the forces of reaction, the dark powers of matter, the enemies of all progress, enlightenment and truth.

Therefore, it is the part of wisdom that we should welcome the symptoms of inner conflict, and that we should learn to discern them at an early stage and encourage their manifestation. But we should learn also to distinguish between the selfish assertion of our personal desires, arrayed most of the time in conflict against the mandates of the Inner Self, and the imperious demands of the Soul, overriding the lower desires and assuming in due course of time the commanding position of its inherent leadership, in the life of both man and nations.

It is equally necessary for us, as students of the ancient Wisdom-Religion, to understand the symptoms of crisis within the body corporate of the organized Theosophical Movement, and to diagnose its ugly as well as its encouraging and promising characteristics. For the crisis of Ideals and Ideas has been raging there for many years, and is more intense today than ever before. Wherever you find discrimination, ceremonialism, personality-worship, a subservient attitude to the directives of those in power, adoration of hooks and leaders, and a fear complex towards new ideas, you may be sure that you are witnessing the symptoms of internal decay; and whenever you find men and women ready to embrace new ideas, to try new methods, to rely upon the initiative of their own Souls, to stand upon their own feet, and to recognize no other authority than the voice of their own conscience, free from adulation, free from mental servitude to books or persons alike, imbued with the magnificent precepts of Truth, grateful to their forefathers yet how-

women of stable character, unswerving devotion to Truth, unshakable loyalty to Ideals, warm of heart, clear-minded, lucid of vision and sterling of character—you may be sure you are in the company of those who will carry the Movement into the next century and beyond, past the period of crisis, onward and upward to the dis-

upon a regenerated Human Race.

For man is in constant search for a greater life, and his freedoms and achievements have to be perennially *re-won and re-gained*, until, in ages yet to come, they will have become an integral and inseparable part of his character, the *insignia majestatis* of his past struggles and victories.

## THE MIND IN NATURE

H. P. BLAVATSKY

[Originally published in *Lucifer*, London, Vol. XIX, No. 109, September, 1896, pp. 9-14, subsequent to H.P.B.'s passing.]

Great is the self-satisfaction of modern science, and unexampled its achievements. Pre-Christian and mediæval philosophers may have left a few landmarks over unexplored mines: but the discovery of all the gold and priceless jewels is due to the patient labours of the modern scholar. And thus they declare that the genuine, real knowledge of the nature of the Kosmos and of man is all of recent growth. The luxuriant modern plant has sprung from the dead weeds of ancient superstitions.

Such, however, is not the view of the students of Theosophy. And they say that it is not sufficient to speak contemptuously of "the untenable conceptions of an uncultivated past," as Mr. Tyndall and others have done, to hide the intellectual quarries out of which the reputations of so many modern philosophers and scientists have been hewn. How many of our distinguished scientists have derived *honour and credit* by merely dressing up the ideas of those old philosophers, whom they are ever ready to disparage, is left to an impartial posterity to say. But conceit and self-opinionatedness have fastened like two hideous cancers on the brains of the average man of learning; and this is especially the case with the Orientalists-Sanskritists, Egyptologists and Assyriologists. The former are guided (or perhaps only pretend to be guided) by post-Mahâbhâratan commentators; the latter by arbitrarily interpreted papyri, collated with what this or the other Greek writer said, or passed over in silence, and by the cuneiform inscriptions on half-destroyed clay tablets copied by the Assyrians from "Accado" Babylonian records. Too many of them are apt to forget, at every convenient opportunity, that the numerous changes in language, the allegorical phraseology and evident secretiveness of old mystic writers, who were generally under the obligation never to divulge the solemn secrets of the sanctuary, might have sadly misled both translators and commentators. Most of our Orientalists will rather allow their conceit to run away with their logic and reasoning powers than admit their ignorance, and they will proudly claim like Professor Sayce\* that they have unriddled the true meaning of the religious symbols of old, and can interpret esoteric texts far more correctly than could the initiated hierophants of Chaldea and Egypt. This amounts to saying that the ancient hieroglyphatists and priests, who

\*See the *Hibbert Lectures* for 1887, pages 14-17, on the origin and growth of the religion of the ancient Babylonians, where Prof. A. H. Sayce says that though "many of the sacred texts were so written as to be intelligible only to the initiated [italics mine] . . . provided with keys and glosses," nevertheless, as many of the latter, he adds, "are in our hands," they (the Orientalists) have "a clue to the interpretation of these documents which even the initiated priests did not possess." (p. 17.) This "clue" is the modern

were the inventors of all the allegories which served as veils to the many truths taught at the Initiations, did not possess a clue to the sacred texts composed or written by themselves. But this is on a par with that other illusion of some Sanskritists, who, though they have never even been in India, claim to know Sanskrit accent and pronunciation, as also the meaning of the Vaidic allegories, far better than the most learned among the great Brâhmanical pundits and Sanskrit scholars of India.

After this who can wonder that the jargon and blinks of our mediæval alchemists and Kabalists are also read literally by the modern student; that the Greek and even the ideas of Aeschylus are *corrected* and improved upon by the Cambridge and Oxford Greek Scholars, and that the veiled parables of Plato are attributed to his "ignorance." Yet, if the students of the dead languages know anything, they ought to know that the method of extreme necessitarianism was practised in ancient as well as in modern philosophy; that from the first ages of man, the fundamental truths of all that we are permitted to know on earth were in the safe keeping of the Adepts of the sanctuary; that the difference in creeds and religious practice was only external; and that those guardians of the primitive divine revelation, who had solved every problem that is within the grasp of human intellect, were bound together by a universal freemasonry of science and philosophy, which formed one unbroken chain around the globe. It is for philology and the Orientalists to endeavour to find the end of the thread. But if they will persist in seeking it in one direction only, and that the wrong one, truth and fact will never be discovered. It thus remains the duty of psychology and Theosophy to help the world to arrive at them. Study the Eastern religions by the light of Eastern—not Western—philosophy, and if you happen to relax correctly one single loop of the old religious systems, the chain of mystery may be disentangled. But to achieve this, one must not agree with those who teach that it is unphilosophical to enquire into first causes, and that all that we can do is to consider their physical effects. The field of scientific investigation is bounded by physical nature on every side; hence, once the limits of matter are reached, enquiry must stop and work be re-commenced. As the Theosophist has no desire to play at being a squirrel upon its revolving wheel, he must refuse to follow the lead of the materialists. He, at any rate, knows that the revolutions of the physical world are, according to the ancient doctrine, attended by like revolutions in the world of intellect, for the spiritual evolution in the universe proceeds in cycles, like the physical one. Do we not see in history a regular alternation of ebb and flow in the tide of human progress? Do we not see in history, and even find this within our own experience, that the great kingdoms of the world, after reaching the culmination of their greatness, descend again, in accordance with the same law by which they ascended? till, having reached the lowest point, humanity reasserts itself and mounts up once more, the height of its attainment being, by this law of ascending progression by cycles, somewhat higher than the point from which it had before descended. Kingdoms and empires are under the same cyclic laws as planets, races, and everything else in Kosmos.

The division of the history of mankind into what the Hindus call the Satya, Treta, Dvâpara and Kali Yugas, and what the Greeks referred to as "the Golden, Silver, Copper, and Iron Ages" is not a fiction. We see the same

craze, so dear to Mr. Gladstone, and so stale in its monotony to most, which consists in perceiving in every symbol of the religions of old a solar myth, dragged down, whenever opportunity requires, to a sexual or phallic emblem. Hence the statement that while "Gisdhular was but a champion and conqueror of old times," for the Orientalists, who "can penetrate beneath the myths" he is but a solar hero, who was himself but the transformed descendant of a humbler God of Fire (*loc. cit.*, p. 17).

thing in the literature of peoples. An age of great inspiration and unconscious productiveness is invariably followed by an age of criticism and consciousness. The one affords material for the analyzing and critical intellect of the other. The moment is more opportune than ever for the review of old philosophies. Archaeologists, philologists, astronomers, chemists and physicists are getting nearer and nearer to the point where they will be forced to consider them. Physical science has already reached its limits of exploration; dogmatic theology sees the springs of its inspiration dry. The day is approaching when the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known. Once more the prophecy already made in *Isis Unveiled* twenty-two years ago is reiterated. "Secrets long kept may be revealed; books long forgotten and arts long time lost may be brought out to light again; papyri and parchments of inestimable importance will turn up in the hands of men who pretend to have unrolled them from mummies, or stumbled upon them in buried crypts; tablets and pillars, whose sculptured revelations will stagger theologians and confound scientists, may yet be excavated and interpreted. Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun. The cycle has almost run its course; a new one is about to begin, and the future pages of history may contain full evidence, and convey full proof of the above."

Since the day that this was written much of it has come to pass, the discovery of the Assyrian clay tiles and their records alone having forced the interpreters of the cuneiform inscriptions—both Christians and Freethinkers—to alter the very age of the world.\*

The chronology of the Hindu *Purânas*, reproduced in *The Secret Doctrine*, is now derided, but the time may come when it will be universally accepted. This may be regarded as simply an assumption, but it will be so only for the present. It is in truth but a question of time. The whole issue of the quarrel between the defenders of ancient wisdom and its detractors—lay and clerical—rests (a) on the incorrect comprehension of the old philosophers, for the lack of the keys the Assyriologists boast of having discovered; and (b) on the materialistic and anthropomorphic tendencies of the age. This in no wise prevents the Darwinists and materialistic philosophers from digging into the intellectual mines of the ancients and helping themselves to the wealth of ideas they find in them; nor the divines from discovering Christian dogmas in Plato's philosophy and calling them "presentiments," as in Dr. Lundy's *Monumental Christianity*, and other like modern works.

Of such "presentiments" the whole literature—or what remains of this sacerdotal literature—of India, Egypt, Chaldea, Persia, Greece and even of Guatamala (*Pupul Vuh'*), is full. Based on the same foundation-stone—the ancient Mysteries—the primitive religions, all without one exception, reflect the most important of the once universal beliefs, such, for instance, as an impersonal and universal divine Principle, absolute in its nature, and unknowable to the "brain" intellect, or the conditioned and limited cognition of man. To imagine any witness to it in the manifested universe, other than as Universal Mind, the Soul of the universe—is impossible. That which alone stands as an undying and ceaseless evidence and proof of the existence of that One Principle, is the presence of an undeniable design in cosmic mechanism, the birth, growth, death and transformation of everything in the universe, from the

\*Sargon, the first "Semitic" monarch of Babylonia, the prototype and original of Moses, is now placed 3,750 years B. C. (p. 21), and the Third Dynasty of Egypt "some 6,000 years ago," hence some years before the world was created, agreeably to Biblical chronology. (*Wide Hibbert Lectures on Babylonia*, by A. H. Sayce, 1887, pp. 21 and 33).

silent and unreachable stars down to the humble lichen, from man to the invisible lives now called microbes. Hence the universal acceptance of "Thought Divine," the Anima Mundi of all antiquity. This idea of Mahat (the great) Akâsha or Brahmâ's aura of transformation with the Hindus, of Alaya, "the divine Soul of thought and compassion" of the trans-Himâlayan mystics; of Plato's "perpetually reasoning Divinity," is the oldest of all the doctrines now known to, and believed in, by man. Therefore they cannot be said to have originated with Plato, nor with Pythagoras, nor with any of the philosophers within the historical period. Say the *Chaldean Oracles*: "The works of nature co-exist with the intellectual [*noero*], spiritual Light of the Father. For it is the Soul [*psyche*] which adorned the great heaven, and which adorns it after the Father."

"The incorporeal world then was already completed, having its seat in the Divine Reason," says Philo, who is erroneously accused of deriving his philosophy from Plato.

In the Theogony of Mochus, we find Aether first, and then the air: the two principles from which the Ulom, the *intelligible* [*noetos*] God (the visible universe of matter) is born.

In the orphic hymns, the Eros-Phanes evolves from the Spiritual Egg, which the aethereal winds impregnate, wind being "the Spirit of God," who is said to move in aether, "brooding over the Chaos"—the Divine "Idea." In the Hindu *Kathopanishad*, Purusha, the Divine Spirit, stands before the original Matter; from their union springs the great Soul of the World, "Mahâ-Atmâ, Brahm, the Spirit of Life"; these latter appellations are identical with Universal Soul, Anima Mundi, and the Astral Light of the Theurgists and Kabalists.

Pythagoras brought his doctrines from the eastern sanctuaries, and Plato compiled them into a form more intelligible than the mysterious numerals of the Sage—whose doctrines he had fully embraced—to the uninitiated mind. Thus, the Kosmos is "the Son" with Plato, having for his father and mother the Divine Thought and Matter. The "Primal Being" (*Beings*, with the Theosophists, as they are the collective aggregation of the divine Rays), is an emanation of the Demiurgic or Universal Mind which contains from eternity the idea of the "to be created world" within itself, which idea the unmanifested Logos produces of itself. The first Idea "born in darkness before the creation of the world" remains in the unmanifested Mind; the second is this Idea going out as a reflection from the Mind (now the manifested Logos), becoming clothed with matter, and assuming an objective existence.

... While the selfless life as taught in Theosophy is considered by us to be the most beautiful because universal and all-inclusive, yet can we properly be living such a selfless life if we ignore those duties dying nearest at hand? In other words, if a man so yearns to help the world that he goes out into it and neglects duties that he already has assumed, is he doing the thing which is manly? Is he living the selfless life; or is he following a secret, selfish yearning for personal advancement? Is he even logical? Selflessness means never to neglect a duty, because if you do that, upon examination you will discover that you are following a desire, a selfish thought. It is in doing every duty fully and to the end, thereby gaining peace and wisdom, that you live the life which is the most unselfish."

—G. de Purucker.

## WHAT OF H. P. B. ?

HERBERT COBYN

[From *The Theosophic Isis*, London, Vol. I, No. 3, March 15, 1896, pp. 53-56]

The Theosophical Society exacts from its members no profession of belief in Masters, and some, we have heard, are without that belief. Others, believing theoretically in Masters as the culmination of the present possibilities of evolution, regard the evidence for the existence of a certain two of such as defective, and disbelieve or suspend judgment accordingly. We have no quarrel with that attitude. The Society also demands no loyalty to the memory of H.P.B., nor any profession of belief in her integrity or wisdom. Wisdom she never claimed ("My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me"), integrity she did. Loyalty when offered to her, she tried to hand on to the Masters she regarded as having commissioned her.

Let us suppose that commission genuine. What ensued thereon?

She, with two others whom in chief she had inspired, founded the Theosophical Society, thereafter till her death providing it with the air it breathed. Let her writings, our memory of the inspiration of her presence and of her potent personality witness that. Whoever fought took from her some of the energy of his arm; and whoever, having once had faith in her, thereafter lost it, lost also, we maintain, the subtlest yet strongest essence of whatever energy in theosophic work he may have had. By loss of faith on the part of any who had accepted her as guide in Occultism, we mean the acquirement of the opinion that at any point in her theosophic career she had been guilty of fraud or deception. We hold that in Occultism the quality of unwavering loyalty and devotion to the Teacher is also the quality that in another of its aspects potentizes the work of the pupil among men for good. This faith is and begets power. So if we accept Masters,

and believe in that great commission of more than twenty years ago, and have worked in the power of those two beliefs, that acceptance, that belief, and the power of our work go together. With the disappearance of either from the conjunction the others disappear also.

What would be the most effective method of belittling in the eyes of the public the conception of Masters, of the Lodge, of the roots of the Society? How could we most effectively, whilst talking of Masters, uproot at one moment what we had implanted at another? There are two methods, both in full activity; with the first we deal now; the second we shall expose in a future issue.

Century by century the Lodge in its full wisdom, a wisdom founded on knowledge of all the past ages of evolving humanity, on knowledge of human needs in East and West, on knowledge of the past incarnations, the manifested character and the seeds of unmanifest possibility of its selected agents, makes careful choice of one of these. It sends him forth to proclaim Theosophy, to rouse the world, to be the personal and spiritual teacher of all who can enter that most sacred of relationships. That one most effective method of which we spoke above seems to us to lie in representing that that agent, so picked out, so trusted, bearing so dire a weight of responsibility, might yet be capable of fraud.

Either known or unknown to the Senders must have been those germs of fraud. If we suppose them unknown, then it is time we constructed a better conception of Masters. Indeed shortsighted must they have been, and the future as closed to them as to us. They have watched the career of their messenger through many lives, through every combination of trials and cir-

cumstances; they bring to bear upon his character the last possibility of spiritual insight, and the fruit of ages of experience of humanity, yet after all remain more ignorant of what he may do than would have been the street-corner phrenologist or the half-crown astrologer. There is little need to waste more time on that view; let us turn to the other hypothesis, that they were aware that their chosen emissary might in *their name* betake himself to fraud, an hypothesis betraying a completer ignorance of Occultism than the former. The messenger is to be the accredited representative of the Lodge; in that light he is to attract to himself public attention; upon him is to rest much of the karma of the movement he heralds; he is to be the intellectual guide of many; he is to be the intimate spiritual Teacher of some. But those who have any, *even the slightest*, relation of pupilship to an occult Teacher, share in some graduated degree in that Teacher's advance or retrogression; and in the degree of their pupilship the Teacher assumes for them a special karma, so close becomes that tie. And it runs backward and upward through a long chain from the lowest pupil through all the intermediaries to the Heart of the Lodge. Yet, knowing all this, the Lodge is supposed to send forth as Teacher and Missionary one in whom will come to fruit the germs

of fraud. The heavily evil karma of such a selection would tell back from the Teacher to the Senders, and again from them to the pupil, acting and reacting disastrously upon Senders, Teacher, pupils and humanity.

Let us make an end of doubts, knowing well that for centuries past, as for centuries to come, to be charged with fraud is the right and credentials of the Lodge emissary; to be charged by the public, lay and scientific, which is nothing, but to be charged also by those who, taking what they could, either doubted whilst they did so, or in their weakness failed thereafter in loyalty.

Energy in work is to be obtained and maintained by unswerving loyalty, and loyalty confers upon such work a certain occult quality of power not otherwise accessible. This is independent of intellect, of knowledge, of culture, but it underlies all that is said or done on the field. Loyalty alone makes the heart a focus of the force of the Lodge, makes of the man the "power-bearer," the "colour-bearer," is the one path of personal advance. In this or another life, intellect, knowledge, and culture are easily acquired, but it is the co-existence of loyalty that makes them valuable spiritually to humanity, that ensures their permanence, that begins to fashion the man in the image of the Master.

## NOTICE

The Offices of the magazine "*Theosophia*" and of the Theosophical Information Center are being transferred to another address. After the 1st of June, 1952, they will be located at —

Room 22, OXFORD BUILDING,  
615 South Oxford Avenue, Los Angeles 5, California  
Our Telephone remains the same: DUnkirk 4-5521

Please change our address on your own records, thereby assuring prompt delivery of your correspondence with us.

— THE EDITOR.

## ON BEING PATIENT

HAROLD W. DEMPSTER

"Patience sweet that nought can ruffle," is an old familiar quotation appearing in H. P. B.'s *Voice of the Silence*, that has the power to silence our bombastic outbursts, provided we are able to apply it at the psychological instant when it is needed.

One Philosopher is reported as having said that "Patience is the greatest of the virtues, because it includes all the others" . . . which idea contains lots of food for thought.

Having the quality of patience certainly implies an understanding heart. And, if one has such a heart, it is easy to concede that he must be possessed of a relatively high degree of all the cardinal virtues permeating his being. Perhaps that is what the Philosopher had in mind.

If you know anyone who manifests a consistent and sustained degree of patience, observe whether or not you see in such an individual the quality we refer to as "an understanding heart."

It is also difficult to conceive of an "understanding" type of person, without noticing that he is in possession of, and knows how to use, a degree of wisdom that is not to be found in the ordinary individual.

All of this raises the question as to whether we should develop wisdom or an understanding heart first, in order to have the virtue of patience, or vice versa. In order not to become confused on this point, we should see at once that each one already has a certain amount of patience to begin with; also a degree of wisdom; and understanding, relatively developed. It is the increase in the amount and quality of these factors that we should be interested in developing. Therefore, the question becomes: How can we become more patient than we now are?

In the first place, we should have a strong desire to have and to be more understanding, not only intellectually, but in the heart. Desire, guided by our

present amount of inner wisdom, will activate the will to accomplish the desired objective.

In the second place, application is an absolute essential and should operate simultaneously with the desire, the will and the inner understanding. It is assumed that the individual interested in developing patience knows something about the science of reasoning, known as logic, and emotional stability.

In fact, isn't it emotional instability and the failure to use one's logical reasoning powers, that permits impatience to express itself? Why do we fly off the handle? Why do we assume and imagine things that are not so, and become disturbed thereby? Why should we expect the impossible? Why don't we consider the source of that which breeds impatience within us?

Anyone can be patient when everything is going smoothly, although sometimes it continues too smoothly and we become impatient for something to happen. It takes real "know how" to be patient when the pressures are heavy, when the going is rough. But, an inward peace resulting from the extra effort required to maintain self-control is always worth that effort.

Is it wise to be too patient? Obviously not. But, there are many times when, had we just been a little bit more patient, or patient a little bit longer, we would have been amazed at the resultant peace and harmony established thereby. Any of the virtues practiced in the extreme would be unwise. There must always be proportion and balance, according to our best understanding.

Do you want to try an interesting experiment? The next time you think you may have good reason to become impatient with an individual, test out your ability to show more patience. Sometimes another individual may try

to take advantage of your degree of patience, as one takes advantage of the good nature of another. But if this type of situation is happening to you, it is an indication, as with all other experience, that you had something to do with its cause; therefore, be patient and kindly in your reaction.

Are you impatient with the ignorant ones? *Perhaps there is an ignorance in yourself that you have not detected as yet. How ignorant we must be in comparison with Those advanced ones! Have we the right to be brutal to those whom we consider ignorant? Obviously not. When we are at the point of criticizing the other fellow, strongly and with little understanding, isn't it a good time to turn on the search light of critical analysis upon ourselves? Does that mean that no one should have the right to be critical? Certainly not. Criticism is of great value, especially if it is constructive.*

Our degree of patience or impatience is, of course, relative. It should also be stated that a certain degree of impatience, just as the right kind of criticism, can be of great value. Impatience, expressed in the right form, might be of inestimable value in getting someone to mend their evil

habits. Impatience could take the form of firmness or discipline of the appropriate kind. It is often good to become impatient with ourselves, and serves as a stimulus to making us do something about it. Wisdom and an understanding heart will show us when it is good to be impatient, and when to be patient.

*Patience does not mean condoning what is evil or wrong. Patience means to be considerate, wise and just. Patience is a quality of generosity, whereby one gives an understanding greatly needed by the other. Patience is a teacher. It will teach you much wisdom; and wisdom will add to your present patience.*

Patience is like the healing balm of time. Allow time to run and many situations clear themselves up. This takes patience. But, why get all 'hot and bothered' about something today, if by a moment's reflection or thought we would know that in a day, week, month or year, the emotional or mental smoke screen will have cleared away, and we will be glad we displayed patience rather than wrath.

Patience is a quality that emanates from within the heart and provides a broader and deeper understanding of the problems of human experience.

#### PROMOTION FUND

*A sincere "Thank you" to all our subscribers and friends for helping us build the Promotion Fund. Many have responded. Some have not, but might do so in time. The donations that have come in have made it possible for us to get a "breathing spell," and to face the rising costs of production somewhat more cheerfully. Maybe one of these days it will be our good fortune to find a linotype operator, and perhaps a printer also, who would be willing to set up and print our non-profit publication free of charge, as a contribution to the Cause of Universal Brotherhood. We acknowledge with many thanks the following contributions received from April 1st to June 1st, 1952:*

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## A GLORIOUS COMBATANT

KAREN SHANNON

H.P.B. had a lion heart, and on the work traced out for her she had the lion's grasp; let us, her friends, companions and disciples, sustain ourselves in carrying out the designs laid down on the trestle-board, by the memory of her devotion and the consciousness that behind her task there stood, and still remain, those Elder Brothers who, above the clatter and the din of our battle, ever see the end and direct the forces distributed in array for the salvation of "that great orphan—Humanity." --William Q. Judge, June, 1891

Combatants in the Theosophical Movement are not, and never were, few in number. In "the clatter and the din of our battle," are countless soldiers fighting in one or another cause, many privates, many lieutenants—but almost as many "generals"! While a battle area cannot help being somewhat confused, even with the best of armies, the theosophical arena is exceptional in this regard. Confusion is multiplied upon confusion, for the simple reason that only a few theosophists are engaged with the common enemy, the rest being engrossed either in treasonable skirmishes among themselves, in a private "war of nerves" against soldiers of another company, in tamasic stupor, or in virulent "fifth column" work against their own army.

Such is not, of course, the "army of H.P.B.," although many have thought it so, and many proclaim it so to be. It is not the army of H.P.B., unless H.P.B. herself has changed "sides." H.P.B. fought ignorance, intolerance, dogmatism, superstition; she attacked prejudice, preconception, and pride-of-ideas; she spent her life to her last breath in fearless struggle with the causes of human sorrow and suffering. Hers was *glorious combat*, Lucifer's rebellion, the Promethean revolt, the battle of the Buddhas of Compassion.

How many know where H.P.B.'s war is being fought, today? How many have courage for her battle? For her army, there are no flashy recruiting stations, no dramatic "processing," no shiny uniforms. One may not even know all his comrades-at-arms. Mo-

rale, in H.P.B.'s army, is a matter for each soldier to take care of himself. There is neither coddling nor soft berths, neither favoritism nor special privilege. Punishment and reward alike are administered by the man's own conscience: what punishment is worse for a coward than his own fear, and what reward can match the inner confidence that one has done his honest best?

During the short span of fifteen years that H. P. Blavatsky was visibly on the scene of combat, there were many who sought to secure her lion's heart and Lucifer-courage for their own battles. Spiritualists flocked to her when she defended the facts of psychism and the laws of astral phenomena, thinking that H.P.B. was championing *them*. Agnostics cheered when she opened fire on religious dogmas and sectarianism, scientists approved her exposure of Christian superstitions—and clergymen smiled in their beards at her ringing proclamation of spiritual realities and metaphysical planes of being.

What was the consternation in all these ranks when it became apparent that where H.P.B.'s guns raked the field, *each group's* favorite errors had been hit! Every pious reputation trembled on its foundations, and a score of "emperors" with dubious clothing ran hastily for cover. The cry of "Traitor!" resounded from all quarters, only to be met with a merry chuckle from the enigmatic personality who jauntily signed herself "an Unpopular Philosopher."

It is a favorite—and natural—de-

treads on their pet illusions, to attempt a "face-saving" by circulating rumors to the effect that "H.P.B. really doesn't mean" to hurt such-and-such an idea, that she only *seems* to be demolishing it, while actually it is precisely what she herself solemnly believes. Some protagonists, whose personal philosophies or religions crumble into worthless gravel when theosophic principles are set vibrating in their vicinity, try to turn the sonic rays of Truth away from their flimsy structures by "tolerantly" explaining that H.P.B. never saw any evil in either man or events. In the hands of these special pleaders, it is a sign of H.P.B.'s "compassionate sympathy" that she "understands" the basic truth of their theories—which strategy immediately places all who disagree with them in the position of calling H.P.B. a cruel and heartless dogmatist! By these and other slight-of-doctrine, H.P.B. is made to prove her own hypocrisy, as well as to perjure herself dozens of times over.

Now, the recorded teachings of Theosophy would be of little use to the great orphan, Humanity, unless they were capable of universal application. This means that all men, no matter what their condition or problem, can find enlightenment somewhere in the theosophical literature. But it also means that in the same place and at the same time, all bigots, hypocrites, private gossellers, new apostles and super-salesmen can find grist for their mills. *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Key to Theosophy* will prove anything and everything, so far as words and phrases go.

Against use in *inglorious* combat, H.P.B.'s writings are defenseless. Nothing prevents H.P.B. from being held up as an example by an infinite series of mutually contradictory sectarians who masquerade under the name of "theosophists." Nothing saves the very Masters of Wisdom whom she served

from being harnessed in effigy to all manner of perversions in the Movement they originally sponsored.

Yet the eye of the great Law is upon us all. Friends, companions, and disciples of H.P.B., as well as her betrayers, her enemies, and ungrateful pupils—all work and labor with mighty forces, for good or evil. If with the power and knowledge she brought, evil is done, accomplished, or wished-for, the Karmic debt must be paid—whether in this lifetime, or in and for lives to come. If good is fashioned, cultivated, and extended, exact compensation also follows—whether here and now or later, in another cycle; whether recognized by the recipients, or manifesting in the form of hidden protection and providential intuitions.

The salvation of Humanity is too tremendous an undertaking to be encompassed by the mind of a student-theosophist. The power to "ever see the end," in the midst of the difficulties at hand, is not easily acquired—but it is worth some effort to try to keep in mind the *distant* goal, without becoming discouraged at its slow approach. Similarly, we are not yet individually capable of directing "the forces distributed in array"—not all of them, by any means, are even visible to us—but we can take care of directing our own forces, and this, in fact, is all that we are asked to do.

It may be that H.P.B. is "on our side," but that would be for her to decide, and we cannot claim her allegiance. We can, however, arrange to be *on H.P.B.'s side*: that depends only on ourselves. In the struggles for prestige and selfish power, every victory is a soul defeat. In the battle for Theosophy, no apparent defeat is significant, if the fearless warrior keeps faith with his Higher Self—and thus with the Glorious Combatant, H.P.B., behind whose task there stood and still remain, the Elder Brothers of mankind.

## HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW?

BETH MCGUIRE

How *do* we? Actually it's very simple. It is so simple, in fact, that we are sometimes confused by its very lack of complications. Have we ever, while writing a letter, stopped to look at a quite short and commonplace word, which suddenly assumes the aspect of a completely unfamiliar combination of letters? We look at the word "mother," for instance, analyze it and sound it slowly over and over, and all at once we begin to wonder if we have spelled it right.

The same thing happens when we try to analyze how we know anything. We have probably gone along for years without worrying about it, and then someone or something instills the seed of doubt in our minds: "Do we actually know that, or do we just *think* that we know?" And within a couple of minutes, our mind, desperately seeking for something that it *knows* that it knows, passes over and is forced to reject every idea it has ever held. We are back, finally, with Descartes, when he wrote, "I think, therefore I am." Having assured ourselves of this bleak and rather barren fact, we find that, unlike Descartes, we can grow no towering tree of logic and philosophy on such desert soil. Since we are not trained in mental gymnastics at this abstract level, our mind quite refuses to budge an inch from this axiom. How are we *ever* going to prove that we know what we know?

Some have found it helpful exactly to reverse Descartes' statement, to read, "I am, therefore I think." Now there may be seen faint glimmers of thought as the mind is restored to activity, and begins to grope its way back through the dark and intricately winding passages into the domain of That Which Knows, "for it is knowledge." What have we accomplished by reversing the axiom of our philosopher-friend? We have, we will see, restored the mind to its position as an *instrument* of the Soul. It is the soul

that knows. The mind but reasons and relates. Descartes made of it what it cannot be—the source of our egoity, of our individuality. Incidentally, we do not think much of what Descartes was able to accomplish in following through his maxim. To think of mind as the highest principle of the human being is to place him forever beyond the reach of inner certainty. He is the prey of whatever his Frankensteinian logic can think up, since he allows himself no higher "court of appeal."

But once we have established the "I" as the primal unit, the essence of the human being, mind is "thrown back into its proper sphere." There may even be many things that we know, of which our mind is quite ignorant—or, at least, quite unable to advance proof or disproof. There are, on this hypothesis, levels of consciousness above and inaccessible to the mind as we know it. Now we can draw a deep breath, relishing the pure air of freedom. The mind can no longer tyrannize over us with its constant demand for proof, with its unending litany of "whereas" and "therefore" and "on the other hand."

Not, of course, that we stop listening to the mind. But our attitude, from being one of abject servility, becomes rather that of a mother patiently listening to a small and persistent child. Something of what he says may have value, but the mother is always aware that his horizon is so limited, his experience so sketchy, that there will of necessity be many things he will not understand until he grows older.

The soul of man must take much the same position as this. It looks down at the mind—a poor hobbled horse, limited in vision to the area lighted so dimly by his rider's campfire. Not only can the horse see little of the surrounding countryside, but it has no conception at all of that other level of experience which his master is

by the firelight.

Our minds are good and worthy instruments—for their purposes, but we should not ask of them the ultimate in human consciousness. How do we know that we know what we know? That is no question to pose a subordinate! We must go to the higher echelons for the answer to that. And at the top, we will find it, if we search long enough, for it is our very Self. On ultimate questions, if we are not sure that we know what we know, then we do not know it. But if that inner certainty exists, undefeatable by specious reasoning, then that is our knowledge.

How are we to prove this, some may wonder. Don't try, we reply, for it is impossible. How can another

unless he knows that same essence in himself? If he does, he asks not for proofs, for he knows that the only one who can prove anything to him is *himself*.

What are we to say to one who asks us if we know what Theosophy teaches is true? Certain of its teachings are knowable by the mind, and the rest by that larger intuition which antedates it. What harm in saying, Yes, we do know that it is true, if it accords with our inherent convictions? As for proof, the burden of that rests on each one for himself, as the small child that is our earth-bound mind, struggles diligently to understand and follow the course pursued by its "mother"—our spiritual intuitions.

### I WOULD LIKE TO ASK . . . .

*Theosophia* would welcome receiving from subscribers and friends any Questions they may like to ask regarding the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom and their application to daily life. Any type of Question is welcome, with the exception of subjects bordering on political or sectarian matters, or organizational and personal differences.

*Many students have different ideas about what intuition really is. Would you please explain what it is and what it is not.*

Intuition is what might be termed the "voice" of the spiritual consciousness within man, or, to put it in other words, the influence emanating from the highest portion of man's constitution—his own inner god. Obviously, intuition, as we know it in the present state of our evolution, is no more than occasional flashes of that spiritual influence; it sometimes manifests itself as mere "hunches", and at other times as a more or less continuous, or periodically re-occurring under-current of ideas, suggesting to us a certain course of action or conduct. It is usually concerned with deeper and more permanent issues in life, and is often of a rather peremptory nature, not easily set aside or disregarded, although it does become, only too often, beclouded

with the influences emanating from our lower mind and our emotional or psychic consciousness. Intuition takes usually the form of a suggestion "what to do," in contra-distinction to conscience which usually warns us "what not to do."

Conscience is the "voice" of the Re-incarnating Ego in us, the seat of all past experiences and of the accumulated knowledge derived as a result of many lives. While in some respects akin to spiritual knowledge, conscience nevertheless should not be confused with intuition, as the two are derivative from different planes of consciousness and different portions of the human spiritual-intellectual constitution.

Intuition is the faculty of direct and instant cognition of Truth, unrelated to the exercise of reason or judgment, and superior to both. It is really spiritual vision, even though a rudimentary

one in the case of ordinary men and women. It is one of the noblest spiritual powers latent in us, and amounts to an infallible spiritual knowledge, incontrovertible and sure, when developed and fully awakened in men of very high evolutionary unfoldment.

Conscience and intuition may be co-related with each other, but they should never be confused with each other. Conscience can be developed; this is a thought which is not familiar to the Occidental mind. Conscience is not perfect, though greatly more unfolded and certain than are the impulses of the senses or the psychic consciousness of the personality. Conscience can be relied upon to an immensely greater degree than the cogitations of the human brain-mind, because conscience is founded upon far wider experience accumulated in the spiritual recesses of the Inner Ego. But conscience is not the direct "voice" of the Inner God, and therefore the latter, which is intuition, is incomparably greater and safer. But it belongs to a higher type of humanity, except for occasional flashes of it which we all have.

In terms of Theosophical phraseology, it could be stated that conscience originates in the Higher manas, while intuition stems from the Buddhi, or the Atman-Buddhi.

Intuition of course cannot be "developed" in the usual sense of this word. It cannot "grow". But we can and should so purify our inner and outer psychological, psychic and intellectual veils, that this "voice" of our Inner Self may be able to "come through" better than it does at present, and become freer and freer of the "static" created by our intermediate nature. The result of this is, of course, what appears to be a greater "development" of the intuition.

Conscience, on the other hand, can be developed, in the sense that life's experiences add to the accumulated storehouse of past experiences; and in this manner conscience has a way of "maturing" as we go through life; it becomes more keen, more alert, and more sensitive.

It should also be noted, to round out this entire subject, that what we call instinct is intuition as it manifests in the psychological consciousness (and even the physical-astral) of kingdoms below the human, and occasionally in the lower consciousness of even us, human beings. It is the guidance of the indwelling divinity, as it manifests itself in kingdoms which have not yet attained to the level of reason and judgment. Instinct, therefore, is infallible, just as intuition is, but it concerns itself with another sphere of activities and functions.

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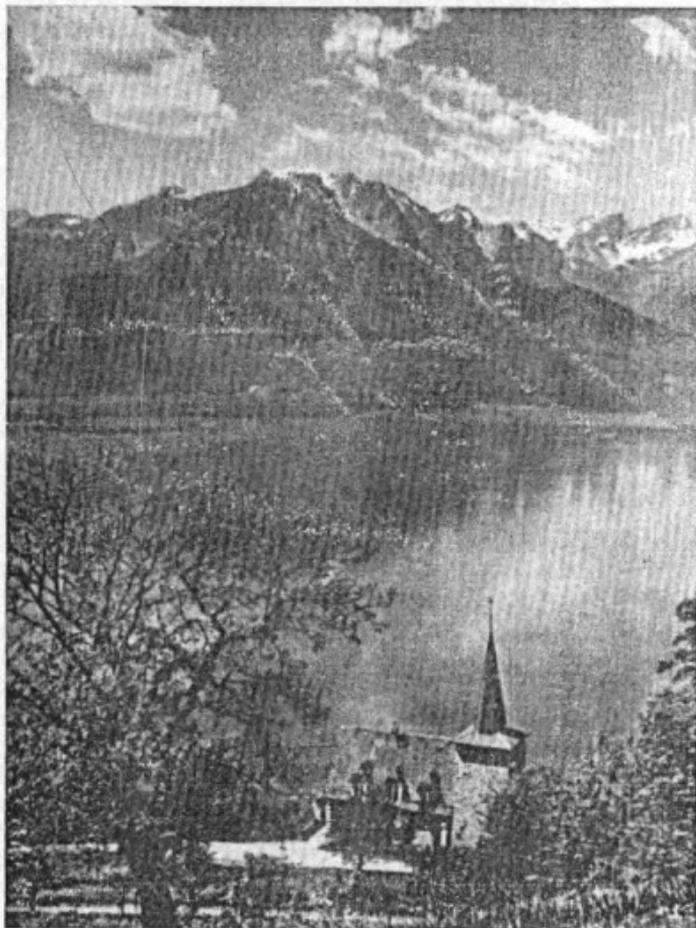
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# THEOSOPHIA

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## THEOSOPHIA

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### A THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

"If Theosophy had done nothing else, it would have made a demand on human gratitude in placing the truth and falsehood of . . . psychic experiences, unfoldments, or delusions as the case might be, plainly before the people, and explaining their *rationale*. It showed a plane of manhood, and proved it unassailably to a number of persons, which transcends any powers or capacities of the inspirational psychic who may imagine himself or herself to be a messenger to the world at large. It placed personal purity on a level which barred out nine-tenths of these claimants from all thought of their presumed inheritance, and showed that such a condition of purity, far transcending any popular ideal of such virtue, was the absolute and all-essential basis of spiritual insight and attainment. It swept the ground from under the feet of those poor men and women who had been listening to the so-called messages from the angels, that they were the chosen of heaven, and were to accomplish world-wide missions . . . Wherever Theosophy spreads, there it is impossible for the deluded to mislead, or the deluded to follow. It opens a new path, a forgotten philosophy which has lived through the ages, a knowledge of the psychic nature of man, which reveals alike the true status of the Catholic saint, and the spiritualistic medium the Church condemns. It gathers reformers together, throws light on their way, and teaches them how to work towards a desirable end with most effect, but forbids any to assume a crown or sceptre, and no less delivers from a futile crown of thorns. Mesmerism and astral influences fall back, and the sky grows clear enough for higher light. It hushes the 'Lo here! and lo there!' and declares the Christ, like the kingdom of heaven, to be within. It guards and applies every aspiration and capacity to serve humanity in any man, and shows him how. It overthrows the giddy pedestal, and safely cares for the human being on solid ground. Hence, in this way, and in all other ways, it is the truest deliverer and savior of our time."

—H. P. Blavatsky, *Lucifer*, Vol. VI, July, 1890, pp. 381-82.

## THE CHALLENGE THAT IS OURS

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

" . . . *Pantes de allélois tèn tapeinophrosinén egkumbósasthe, oti Theos uperéphanois antitassetai tapeinois de didôsin harin.*"

" . . . and all of you be mutually at one with each other, and be clothed with humility. For the Divine repels those of arrogant mind, and bestows its riches upon those of humble heart."

—I Peter, v, 5.

The potency of the Future lies hidden in the dynamic actuality of the Present.

The Challenge of the present moment, and our response to it, determine the course of forthcoming events, as they unroll from seed to fruitage, from cause to ineluctable effect.

The mid-point of any periodic cycle, whether on the scale of a life-span, of a century, or of a cosmic age, is the time when the seeding takes place for the succeeding cycle, and when the foundation-stones are laid for future structures which will be reared in due course of time.

And the Challenge of the present moment is very great. It is a time to be welcomed by all students of mystic lore; an era eagerly awaited by those whose hearts and minds are dedicated to the spiritual service of the race, and whose personal and temporal interests have become subservient to the nobler objectives of Universality and the Oneness of all Life. To those whose hearts beat in unison with the greater heart of Mankind, this is an age of untold opportunities; to those whose horizon has expanded to embrace centuries of human striving and growth, this is an era in which more can be done within one yearly cycle than in a hundred

years of another cycle of less dynamic nature and slower gradient.

The world-wide unrest and mounting confusion are but outward symptoms of the growing dissatisfaction over existing forms of life. It is a rebellion of the human nature against the crystallizations built in former years by a policy of exploitation and crass indifference to the needs of man. And this state of muffled or open struggle is not to be measured by mere outbreaks of violence in this, that or another part of the world, or the vociferous pronouncements of demagogues. The "warfare" is of the Mind, and the struggle is a struggle of ideas upon the inner battlefield of the soul of man wherein are decided at all times the greatest and most vital issues of both mind and heart.

The sympathies of the student of Theosophy are with *all the people*, everywhere upon this Earth of ours. He makes no distinction of nationalities, customs, historical background, ethnic grouping or avocation, though he recognizes these as contributing factors of human complexity and behavior. To him mankind is one great family, and the continents and nations but individual and closely interconnected portions of One World. To him the struggle which is taking place in our era is a fundamental conflict

which must be recognized in its true light, namely, as a symptom of growing consciousness and of widening sympathies. The student of the Ancient Wisdom may, and definitely does, condemn many of the unwise and partially selfish manifestations assumed outwardly by this inner struggle in various portions of the Earth; but *this does not militate against the basic idea that the causes behind the struggle are fundamentally sound and reflect the greater consciousness of man in its often faltering attempts to assert itself in the outer scheme of being.* We must never forget that there exists a wide divergence between basic causes and motivating impulses on the one hand, and their temporary and outward form built by the yet unevolved and relatively weak personality of man. It is paramount, therefore, that we try and understand these basic causes and the ideas back of them, and overlook, if at all possible, the often ugly symptoms and by-products of this deep-seated condition, which is a condition of growth and awakening.

Before our world-wide unrest settles even relatively into a new and nobler way of life, it will have to become organized and coherent around some great, basic, inspiring and regenerative principle of ethics, without which no enduring change for good can ever take place. We will have to renounce our *ways of doing things*, no

matter what may be the motive, and espouse other ways more conducive to human understanding and co-operation. We will have to give up the preposterous idea that other people—on whatever side of the imaginary fence we may be—are all wrong or all stupid, and that our ways of doing things are the only ways which can possibly be sound. *This philosophy of separation in a cause which aims, paradoxically enough, at building a greater civilization for all to live in, defeats its own purpose and nullifies our best plans for the future. We are all guilty of this, every nation without exception; we have all been bitten by this bug, and the poison of it runs high in our veins. The challenge of the era imperatively demands of us that we relinquish this method of procedure; that we renounce once and for all our self-opinionated attitude, our self-righteousness and our ugly pride, individually and collectively.*

Ordinary common sense (one of the most uncommon of senses in people!), everyday logic, and plain, garden-variety intelligence (not intellectuality!) is sufficient to show that we cannot achieve peace, good will and mutual understanding by stock-piling atom bombs on either side of the fence, manufacturing war implements for future carnage, or growing fat and rich by means of building up a complex of mutual fears, and systematically organizing outbreaks of

hysteria to feed the lust for power of a few, to the moral degradation of the many. This is the surest road to national and international suicide, and an excellent prelude to the lunatic asylum.

And let no one imagine that he is wholly excluded from this diagnosis. The overwhelming majority of the human race, irrespective of categories or sides, is infected with this virus, which must be driven out by means of mental and emotional cathartics appropriate to the condition at hand.

And the greatest of these cathartics is a sense of humility and reverence for all life. Yes, *humility* and *reverence!* The growing sense of the awesome mystery of being, of the unfathomable depths of the human heart, of the immensity of potential knowledge, of the insignificance of one single human life compared with the unplumbed depths of the Universe and the vastness of Nature. And the awakening within the human breast of a deepening realization of the nobility of that greater Life, the inherent justice of Universal Law, and the undreamt of potentialities within each human being, whose personal insignificance before the unknown is matched only by his paramount spiritual significance as an atom of the cosmic structure, at home everywhere.

In the midst of the prevailing mental and emotional instability, facing a world of material insecurity and confusion, the Theosophist has a no-

ble and lofty duty to perform, a mighty example to show, an example which few of us, if any, will be able to live up to. But we must try! It is to carry with us wherever we may be an atmosphere of calm detachment, deep spiritual serenity, and warm sympathy for the souls of men; a pacifying influence which soothes ruffled feelings, quiets emotional outbursts, widens the consciousness of those we meet, and brings into their life new ideas of solidarity and good will towards others. We are challenged, and we are called upon, to bring unity where discord has its roots, to point out the fundamental oneness of all men where the impassioned diatribes of demagogues have sown separation and mutual distrust, and to contact all life with those deeper heart-feelings whose roots lie hidden in the Eternal, whose strands are woven with the mystic tapestry of the Universe.

Only when true humility and deep reverence awaken within the collective breast of a distraught mankind, only then can we hope to discern the growth of that mutual understanding, from nation to nation, and from people to people, above all existing barriers, frontiers and barbed wires, which will give rise to the new Continent of Thought upon which will be reared the coming Civilization of the One World.

May we not respond whole-heartedly to the Clarion Call of the day!

## FRAGMENTS

H. P. BLAVATSKY

[*Lucifer*, Vol. XVIII, No. 108, August, 1896, pp. 449-455]

### IDOLATRY

The outward form of idolatry is but a veil, concealing the one Truth like the veil of the Saitic Goddess. Only that truth, being for the few, escapes the majority. To the pious profane, the veil recovers a celestial locality thickly peopled with divine beings, dwarfs and giants, good and wicked powers, all of whom are no better than human caricatures. Yet, while for the great majority the space behind the veil is really impenetrable—if it would but confess the real state of its mind—those, endowed with the “third eye” (the eye of Shiva), discern in the Cimmerian darkness and chaos a light in whose intense radiance all shape born of human conception disappears, leaving the all-forming divine PRESENCE, to be felt—not seen; *sensed*—never expressed.

A charming allegory translated from an old Sanskrit manuscript illustrates this idea admirably:

Toward the close of the Pralaya (the intermediate period between two “creations” or evolutions of our phenomenal universe), the great It, the One that rests in infinity and ever *is*, dropped its reflection, which expanded in limitless Space, and felt a desire to make itself cognizable by the creatures evolved from its shadow. The reflection assumed the shape of a Mahârâja (great King). Devising means for mankind to learn of his existence, the Mahârâja built out of the qualities inherent in him a palace, in which he concealed himself, satisfied that people should perceive the outward form of his dwelling. But when they looked up to the place where stood the palace, whose one corner stretched into the right, and the other into the left infinitude—the little men *saw nothing*; the palace was mistaken by them for empty space, and being so vast remained invisible to their eyes. Then the Mahârâja resorted to another expedient. He determined to manifest himself to the little creatures whom he pitied—not as a whole but only in his parts. He destroyed the palace built by him from his manifesting qualities, brick by brick, and began throwing the bricks down upon the earth one after the other. Each brick was transformed into an idol, the red ones becoming Gods and the grey ones Goddesses; into these the Devatâs and Devatîs—the qualities and the attributes of the Unseen—entered and animated them.

This allegory shows polytheism in its true light and that it rests on the One Unity, as does all the rest. Between the *Dii majores* and the *Dii minores* there is really no difference. The former are the direct, the latter the broken or refracted, rays of one and the same Luminary. What are Brahmâ, Vishnu and Shiva, but the triple Ray that emanates directly from the Light of the World? The three Gods with their Goddesses are the three dual representations of Purusha the Spirit, and Prakriti—matter; the six are synthesized by Svâyambhuvâ the self-existent, unmanifested Deity. They are only the symbols personifying the Unseen Presence in every phenomenon of nature.

"The seven [regions]\* of Bhumi, hang by golden threads [beams or rays] from the Spiritual central Sun [or 'God']. Higher than all, a Watcher for each [region]. The Suras come down this [beam]. They cross the six and reach the Seventh [our earth]. They are our mother earth's [Bhumi] supporters [or guardians]. The eighth watches over the [seven] watchers."

Suras are in the Vedas deities, or beings, connected with the Sun; in their occult meaning they are the seven chief watchers or guardians of our planetary system. They are positively identical with the "Seven Spirits of the Stars." The Suras are connected in practical Occultism with the Seven Yogic powers. One of these, Laghima(n) or "the faculty of assuming levity," is illustrated in a Purāna as rising and descending along a sunbeam to the solar orb with its mysteries; e.g., Khatvānga, in *Vishnu-Purāna* (Book IV.). "It must be equally easy to the Adept to travel a ray downwards," remarks Fitzedward Hall (p. 311). And why not, if the action is understood in its right and correct sense?

Eight great Gods are often reckoned, as there are eight points of the compass, four cardinal and four intermediate points over which preside also inferior Lokapālas or the "doubles" of the greater Gods. Yet, in many instances where the number eight is given it is only a kind of exoteric shell. Every globe, however, is divided into seven regions, as  $7 \times 7 = 49$  is the mystic number *par excellence*.

To make it clearer: in each of the seven Root-Races, and in every one of the seven regions into which the Occult Doctrine divides our globe, there appears from the dawn of Humanity the "Watcher" assigned to it in the eternity of the AEon. He comes first in his own "form," then each time as an Avatāra.

#### INITIATIONS

In a secret work upon the Mysteries and the rites of Initiation, in which very rough but correct prints are given of the sacramental postures, and of the trials to which the postulant was subjected, the following details are found:

(1) The neophyte—representing the Sun, as "*Sahasrakirana*" "he of the thousand rays"—is shown kneeling before the "Hierophant." The latter is in the act of cutting off *seven locks* of the neophyte's long hair,† and in the following—(2)—illustration, the postulant's bright crown of golden beams is thrown off, and replaced by a wreath of sharp liguaceous spines, symbolizing

\* In every ancient cosmography the universe and the earth are divided into seven parts or regions.

† See Judges xvi, again, where Samson, the symbolic personification of the Sun, the Jewish Hercules, speaks of his *seven locks* which, when cut off, will deprive him of his (physical) strength, i.e., kill the material man, leaving only the spiritual. But the *Bible* fails to explain, or rather, conceals purposely, the esoteric truth, that the seven locks symbolize the septenary physical or terrestrial man, thus cut off and separated from the spiritual. To this day the High Lamas cut off during public consecrations a lock of the hair of the candidates for the religious life, repeating a formula to the effect that the six others will follow, when the "upasaka" is ready. The lock of hair or tonsure of the Roman Catholic priests is a relic of the same mystery-idea.

the loss.\* This was enacted in India. In trans-himālayan regions it was the same.

In order to become a "Perfect One," the Sakridāgāmin ("he who will receive new birth," *lit.*) had, among other trials, to descend into Pātāla, the "nether world," after which process only he could hope to become an "Anāgāmin"—"one who will be reborn no more." The full Initiate had the option of either entering this second Path by appearing at will in the world of men under a human form, or he could choose to first rest in the world of Gods (the Devachan of the Initiates), and then only be reborn on this our earth. Thus, the next stage shows the postulant preparing for this journey.

(3) Every kind of temptation—we have no right to enumerate these or speak of them—was being placed on his way. If he came out victorious over these, then the further Initiation was proceeded with; if he fell—it was delayed, often entirely lost for him.

These rites lasted seven days.

#### ON CYCLES AND MODERN FALLACIES

The Hermetic axiom has been made good by astronomy and geology. Science has become convinced now that the milliards of the heavenly hosts—suns, stars, planets, the systems in and beyond the Milky Way—have all had a common origin, our earth included. Nevertheless that a regular evolution, incessant and daily, is still going on. That "cosmic life-times have begun at different epochs and proceed at different rates of change. Some began so far back in eternity or have proceeded at so rapid a rate, that their careers are brought to a conclusion in the passing age. Some are even now awaking into existence; and it is probable that worlds are beginning and ending continually. Hence cosmic existence, like the kingdoms of organic life, presents a simultaneous panorama of a completed cycle of being. A taxonomic arrangement of the various grades of animal existence presents a succession of forms which we find repeated in the embryonic history of a single individual, and again in the succession of geological types; so the taxonomy of the heavens is both a cosmic embryology and a cosmic palæontology." (*World Life*, p. 539.)

So much for cycles again in modern orthodox science. It was the knowledge of all these truths—scientifically demonstrated and made public now, but in those days of antiquity occult and known to Initiates alone—that led to the formation of various cycles into a regular system. The grand Manvantaric system was divided into other great cycles; and these in their turn into smaller cycles, regular wheels of time, in Eternity. Yet no one outside of the sacred precincts ever had the key to the correct reading and interpretation of cyclic notation, and therefore even the ancient classics disagreed on many points. Thus, Orpheus is said to have ascribed to the "Great" Cycle 120,000 years' duration, and Cassandrus 136,000, according to Censorinus (*De Die Natali*,

\* No need of explaining that Sanjna—pure spiritual conscience—is the inner perception of the neophyte (or chela) and Initiate; the scorching of it by the too ardent beams of the Sun being symbolical of the terrestrial passions. Hence the seven locks are symbolical of the seven cardinal sins, and as to the seven cardinal virtues—to be gained by the Sakridagamin (the candidate "for new birth") they could be attained by him only through severe trial and suffering.

(Chron. and Astron. Fragments). Analogy is the law, and is the surest guide in occult sciences, as it ought to be in the natural philosophy made public. It is perhaps mere vanity that prevents modern science from accepting the enormous periods of time insisted upon by the ancients, as elapsed since the first civilizations. The miserable little fragment torn out from the Book of the Universal History of Mankind, now called so proudly "*Our History*," forces historians to dwarf every period in order to wedge it in within the narrow limits primarily constructed by theology. Hence the most liberal among them hesitate to accept the figures given by ancient historians. Bunsen, the eminent Egyptologist, rejects the period of 48,863 years before Alexander, to which Diogenes Laërtius carries back the records of the priests, but he is evidently more embarrassed with the ten thousand of astronomical observations, and remarks that "if they were actual observations, they *must have* extended over 10,000 years" (p. 14). "We learn, however," he adds, "from one of their own old chronological works . . . that the genuine Egyptian traditions concerning the mythological period, treated of *myriads* of years." (*Egypte*, i, p. 15.)

We must notice and try to explain some of these great and smaller cycles and their symbols. Let us begin with the cycle of Mahâyuga, personified by Shesha—the great serpent called "the couch of Vishnu," because that God is Time and Duration personified in the most philosophical and often poetical way.

It is said that Vishnu appears on it at the beginning of every Manvantara as "the Lord of Creation." Shesha is the great Serpent-Cycle, represented as swallowing its own tail—thence the emblem of Time within Eternity. Time, says Locke (*On the Human Understanding*)—Time is "duration set forth by measures," and Shesha sets forth evolution by symbolizing its periodical stages. On him Vishnu sleeps during the intervals of rest (*pralayas*) between "creations"; the blue God—blue because he is space and the depth of infinity—awakens only when Shesha bends his thousand heads, preparing to again bear up the Universe which is supported on them. The *Vishnu-Purâna* describes him thus: "Below the seven Pâtâlas is the form of Vishnu, proceeding from the quality of darkness, which is Shesha, the excellences of which neither Daityas nor Dânavas can fully enumerate. This being is called Ananta [the infinite] by the spirits of Siddha (Yoga Wisdom, sons of Dharma, or true religion), and is worshipped by sages and by gods. He has a thousand heads, which are embellished with the pure and visible mystic sign [Svastika]; and the thousand jewels in his crests (*phana*) gives light to all the regions. . . In one hand he holds a plough\* and in the other a pestle. . . From his mouths, at the end of the Kalpa, proceeds the venomous fire that, impersonated as Rudra [Shiva, the 'destroyer'] . . . devours the three worlds" (ii. 211).

Thence Shesha is the cycle of the great Manvantara, and also the spirit of vitality as of destruction, since Vishnu, as the preserving or conservative force, and Shiva as the destroying potency, are both aspects of Brahma.

\* An emblem referring to the "ploughing" and sowing the renewed earth (in its new Round) with fresh seeds of life.

Shesha is said to have taught the sage Garga—one of the oldest astronomers in India, whom, nevertheless, Bentley places only 548 B.C.—the secret sciences, the mysteries of the heavenly bodies, of astrology, astronomy and various omens. Shesha is so great and mighty, that it is more than likely he will some day, in far off future ages, render the same service to our modern astronomers. Nothing like "Time" and cyclic changes to cure sceptics of their blindness.

But Occult truths have to contend with a far more blind foe than science can ever be to them, namely, the Christian theologians and bigots. These claim unblushingly the number of years lived by their Patriarchs some four thousand years ago, and pretend to prove that they have interpreted "the symbolic predictions of scripture" and have "traced the historic fulfilment of two of the most important of them"—handling Biblical chronology as reverently as though it had never been a rehash of Chaldaean records and cyclic figures, to hide the true meaning under exoteric fables! They speak of "that history that unrolls before our eyes a record extending over six thousand years" from the moment of creation; and maintain that there are "very few of the prophetic periods whose fulfilment cannot be traced in some parts of the scrolls." (*The Approaching End of the Age.*)

Moreover they have two methods and two chronologies to show those events verified—the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. The first relies on the calculations of Kepler and Dr. Sepp; the latter on Clinton, who gives the year of the Nativity as A.M. 4138; the former holds to the old calculation of 4320 by lunar, and 4004 by solar years.

## ON BEING BROTHERLY

HAROLD W. DEMPSTER

H. P. B. has stated that one should have a "brotherliness for one's co-deciple." The chief object of the Masters in establishing a formal Society for the promulgation of the doctrines of the Ancient Wisdom was to create the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood among men.

It is difficult to understand why students of the same Teachers and the identical basic ideas have wandered so far away from these two very important points.

Perhaps, each individual or group feels that he is right; that it is a matter of 'principle'; that we have the Truth, the real Truth and the others do not; that the Masters are working through us but not through others of

equal sincerity, devotion and intuitive perception.

Whatever we may think, or think that we know, the fact remains that an attitude of friendliness and brotherliness should exist between students of the same Wisdom.

But, perhaps our concepts of the same Wisdom differ widely on some points. Even if this be true, it should not be a valid reason for building up enmity between those who differ.

No one has the power, not even the Masters themselves, nor Super Beings beyond them, of divorcing anyone from that Truth-Movement of the Ages that ever exists as a natural part of the Universal structure.

Societies and individuals come and

go, but Truth remains forever. It is true that concepts of Truth change, according to an individual's understanding and degree of growth, and that is natural and good. It does not mean that such an individual's concept is correct in relation to the Truth itself; but it is True to that individual at the time and therefore is very real to him, even to the point of cutting off his relationships and associations with others who may differ sharply with him on certain points.

While it is natural for differing points of view to exist between us, I have often wondered why we can not be big enough and broad enough to allow each one to see the matter as it appears to him, without becoming enemies.

Where is the consistency of subscribing to the central idea of 'Brotherhood,' while at the same time stirring up animosity toward our fellow-seeker after the same Truth? Whether we like it or not we are all brothers constituting the human race; and our actions will speak louder than words on the subject.

All Nature is One, with a natural diversity of its respective parts. But, all of the parts belong to and constitute the whole Unit. There is an interplay of action and reaction between all the parts. This is the Karma of the Universe. To have an inner feeling that we are related to everything else and everything is related to us, produces an inspiration that lifts us out of the realm of pettiness and sweeps us forward with the harmonious currents of the Universe. We feel at one with all, at least to some degree, and recognize our inter-re-

latedness to and with each other. This is Brotherhood.

Master K. H. declared that, "The Chiefs want a 'Brotherhood of Humanity', a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds." (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 24.)

Wise leadership inspires confidence, amalgamates, unifies, brings diverse units closer together without interfering with the freedom of action of each. A spirit of real fraternity is the natural outgrowth, and the cause of Brotherhood is enhanced accordingly. The world is in great need of this type of leadership.

There are some interesting passages in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* that are worth quoting here:

"The term 'Universal Brotherhood' is no idle phrase." "*Strong will creates and sympathy attracts.*" (*M. L.*, pp. 17, 20.)

"If you are willing I will send you an *Essay* showing why in Europe more than anywhere else a *Universal Brotherhood*, i. e., an association of 'affinities' of strong magnetic yet dissimilar forces and polarities centred around one dominant idea, is necessary for successful achievements in occult sciences. What one will fail to do—the combined many will achieve." (*M. L.*, p. 20.)

"A genuine, practical Brotherhood of Humanity where all will become co-workers of nature, will work for the good of mankind *with and through the higher planetary Spirits* . . ." (*M. L.*, pp. 23-24.)

Words might be helpful to make clear what we mean by our concepts

of Brotherhood, but they are at best very inadequate. Brotherhood is a *feeling* . . . an inner heart-touch with the Oneness of all life, reflecting itself from the Heart of Nature into our hearts . . . emanating compassion to all others . . .

If you think that we have not reached the point where we are qualified and ready to "work for the good of mankind *with* and *through* the higher *planetary Spirits*", then let us strive each day to experience in some degree the realization of the ONENESS of all

life, first, on the physical globe in which we live, then the Solar System, and from there on into the Super-Galaxies of ALL SPACE.

But, perhaps you will think this is too abstract. All right. Use whatever method seems best for you. Some find it in the hearts of their fellows, some in the flowers, others in art, music or literature, or even in the little insignificant events of the day. The important thing is that you find it, for then Universal Brotherhood will become real to you.

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### DEATH: A NEW LIFE

SVEN EEK

Many people on the threshold of death often appear strangely different to their families. It is not merely a question of decline in physical strength, or a loss of memory, due to an enfeebled mind; there is something else. A peculiar change is taking place; the once charitable eyes no longer sparkle with the wit of olden days, nor do the forbearance and genteel manners seem the same; even harsh and irritable words are sometimes spoken. There must be a deeper reason for this, as it has plagued so many families and caused so much unhappiness to people who have not understood the mysteries of death.

Death is a complete breaking up as far as the physical body is concerned, but it is only sleep for the higher ego which now enters upon a new plane of life. The old body was no longer a fit temple for it to dwell in, so it gradually withdrew, long before the last breath was actually taken. The body became more

and more of an automaton, continuing its life by force of habit, but the beloved friend was already gone, eagerly waiting for the new adventures which lay in store for him.

The various world religions which came on the scene of human existence, ushered in by one of the great teachers such as Krishna, Zoroaster, Orpheus, Moses, Gautama the Buddha and the Christ, were interpreted by their followers according to their cultural and intellectual development and ability to grasp transcendental truths. Man is a composite being. Fundamentally he is a divine spirit, immortal and part of the Soul of the Universe, but he is also a human soul struggling to bridge the gap between itself and its highest principles. This is a process which requires a long series of re-births on this globe, until the soul has acquired the knowledge and the strength to merge with its higher self, enriched by the experiences of its many incarnations. Lower down the scale we have the

astral and semi-physical elements which in the history of many lands have appeared as doppelgängers, wraiths and 'dear departed ones' so often seen by friends and relatives shortly after the passing of the physical body. The Catholic Church has retained the teaching of a purgatory which it has inherited from the ancient mystery-teachings. The meaning of this is the freeing, the sloughing off, of the more material elements of the composite being after death, to enable the soul to wing its way into the cosmic spheres which are its real home. The passions, lusts and desires are earthbound and can, no more than the purely physical life-atoms, rise to the portals of the sun.

When the earthbound parts of the entity have been cast off, it becomes one with all that is spiritual throughout the universe; it finds its loved ones and soars into a state of bliss which is beyond our power of expression or understanding. The joy is so supreme that were we fully to realize it, we would never sorrow for those who have passed beyond the

limitations of life here on earth. We would rejoice in their glory and wait with confidence for the time when we shall be able to rejoin our loved ones in their unalloyed bliss which one day will be ours as well.

The ancient Egyptians as well as the Peruvians used to embalm and mummify their dead, in the belief that when the soul is ready to re-enter the body it would find the old vehicle waiting for it, unsullied by the use of other beings. It is this mistaken teaching which the Catholic Church, without perhaps realizing it, has retained in its prohibition against cremation.

The bonds between members of the same family and between true friends are strong, just as strong as are the bonds forged by hatred and envy. We have the power to decide now whether we shall have friends or enemies in the future. Make good friends now and you will have them not merely for this life but in lives to come. The psycho-spiritual attraction between human beings will outlast time and space. For love is eternal.

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#### **PROMOTION FUND—**

Sincere thanks to all those who have remembered of late our Promotion Fund. This Fund is of great help to us in meeting current expenses. We gratefully acknowledge below the following contributions, received from June 1st to August 1st, 1952:

F.L. \$0.50; F.V. \$3.50; P.W.D. \$5.00; R.P.H. \$8.50; E.S.W. \$1.50; J.J.L. \$22.00; A.B.D. \$1.00; V.M. \$0.50; P.W. \$0.50; L.C. \$0.50; E.H. \$0.50; F.L.N. \$2.50; W.H.L. \$0.50; N.B. \$3.50; B.H. \$3.50.

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#### **INCREASING THE CIRCULATION OF "THEOSOPHIA"—**

*The Editorial Offices would welcome receiving from our subscribers and friends lists of names and addresses of people in their respective towns, or elsewhere, who may have "leanings" in the direction of Theosophy. We would send them sample copies of the magazine with a subscription-blank attached. Considering the many cities in the country our newspaper goes to, we should be able to get several hundred new names, if our friends help us by sending them in. This would be a real help!*

## I WOULD LIKE TO ASK...

*Theosophia* would welcome receiving from subscribers and friends any Questions they may like to ask regarding the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom and their application to daily life. Any type of Question is welcome, with the exception of subjects bordering on political or sectarian matters, or organizational and personal differences.

*I have met some Theosophist who were using liquor almost daily. Is this not against their own teachings?*

We have met some also. As long as they were trying to outgrow this lethal habit, and were making strides in this effort, they deserved encouragement and sympathy. In those few cases where no effort was being made, ignorance of facts involved was probably the main cause of this condition. We all have many shortcomings and limitations, but if we are willing to consider dispassionately the facts of nature, we will acquire the necessary tools with which to rise above these limitations and to overcome them.

There are in nature substances of various kinds which have the peculiarity of absorbing the lower and more material magnetic and psychic fluids of those people who handle them. Alcohol is one of such substances, and it is easily saturated by the evil magnetism of the people who prepared it for usage. This in itself is a very regrettable thing. Alcohol also has a peculiar affinity with certain portions of the brain substance and the nerve-fluid, a fact not yet recognized by official science. The usage of alcohol results in the progressive degeneration of some of our brain tissues and nerve-cells. This differs, of course, from one person to another, but no one can escape the deleterious effect of alcohol, provided it has been imbibed over a period of time. The effects are gradual but cumulative,

and the physical body becomes greedy for it, establishing a habit difficult to break.

What has been termed above "evil magnetism" is not a mere abstraction. In the light of the teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy, this means certain types of elementals, and this again means certain living, conscious entities of the astral world. They are closely associated with this, that, or another of the grosser and more animalistic tendencies in human psychology. They animate many of the lower thought-forms of man. [It should also be borne in mind that there are many elementals of the most elevating type, conducive to high and noble thoughts and feelings.] By using alcohol, a man surrounds himself with these astral entities. As a matter of fact, he does more than that.

Those unfortunate human beings who have either died from drink, or become totally insane, have populated the lower sub-planes of the astral world with a great many semi-conscious astral forms and moulds which are of the same nature as themselves. These entities are attracted to those who are affected by the desire for drink, and hover around them; they even penetrate into their own astral constitution, whenever an opening presents itself. The full truth about this condition has never been told. Suffice it to say that it is possible for depraved astral entities, human and sub-human, to partially satisfy their own lust for alcohol by vicariously

possessing living human beings addicted to the vice, and by hovering around places where there is traffic in alcohol.

The student of Theosophy is trying to purify his organism, and to become more sensitive to higher and more elevating influences; he is hopeful of attaining in due course of time to a condition when some of the now dormant or latent portions of his brain structure will begin to respond to influences from above, or from within. This can never be achieved, or even approached, as long as there exists even the slightest presence of alcoholic fumes, and their concomitant elemental energies, in the aura of the student, let alone the actual organs of his physical make up. And these influences continue to exist for a while, even after the complete cessation in the actual usage of alcohol. Purification is not a matter of a day or a week, but takes time.

It should be distinctly borne in mind that the amount of alcohol used by any student is not an important factor in this equation. The far more important factor is the degree of his psycho-magnetic sensitivity. As he progresses forward along various other lines of growth, he becomes more and more sensitized. A markedly reduced amount of alcohol may have on him then an effect more deleterious and destructive than a far larger amount at an earlier stage. The only true course of action is to quit using it altogether, once and for all, if true spiritual growth is desired, and an inner strength without weak spots.

Quite apart from the above occult facts, there is involved in this entire subject the question of ethics. Alco-

hol is not only a debilitating drug. It is also "big business," a business in which many Governments the world over are engaged on a tremendous scale. Income is derived, both by the salesman and by his Government, from an occupation resulting in the gradual moral decay of millions of people, and the existing scheme of taxation (with slight modifications from one country to another) makes this traffic in human degeneracy appear lucrative in the extreme and well worth pursuing. As pointed out by H. P. Blavatsky (*Lucifer*, Vol. V, Nov., 1889, p. 195): ". . . it is not so much the Karma of the nation, as that of their respective governments, whose Karmic burden is growing heavier and more terrible with every year. This curse and universal incubus, drink, is the direct and legitimate progeny of the Rulers; it is begotten by their greed for money, and FORCED by them on the unfortunate masses..."

Like so many other dire social evils of this age, the misuse and abuse of alcohol is deeply rooted in economics. Take away the profit that is in it, and the power vested in monopolies controlling it, and you will have won more than half of the battle!

"I understand that The Theosophical Society is absolutely non-political. But if it teaches spiritual and ethical doctrines, do you not think it your duty to take an interest in politics in order to raise the general ethical standpoint?"

"I don't think that this is quite a fair question; for, as individuals, we do take a normal human interest in politics—except myself. I don't like politics at all! I don't like to waste

my time. But let me ask you a question: Would you involve yourself in something which is outside your line of activity, merely in order to show somebody that you are doing what you are actually doing? In other words, should we Theosophists abandon our Theosophical work in order to go and tell the politicians what we think they ought to do, meddling in their business and forgetting our own, abandoning our own line of activity? No!

"We Theosophists go into the homes through our teaching; we go by our teachings into the hearts of the poli-

icians — if we can, — and we shall reach their hearts some day; and our regenerating work is done there, in men's hearts, therefore from within and not from the outside. There is your answer. Change the men; change the hearts of men, and you won't need to talk about refashioning your politics, or about elevating your politics. That is what we Theosophists are doing, or trying to do."

G. de Purucker, in *Questions We All Ask*, First Series, No. 17, January 21, 1930, pp. 257-58.

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### ANCIENT WISDOM—

The Chinese are noted for their wisdom. One Chinese visiting the U.S.A. for the first time, was taken to the racetrack by a friend. After a few races had been run, he got up to leave. His American companion protested: "Where are you going? It isn't finished yet!" to which the Chinese replied: "In our country we proved twenty centuries ago that one horse can run faster than another."

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### FRIENDSHIP TIES—

Many students of the Ancient Wisdom in European countries, and elsewhere, are eager to establish a correspondence contact with students in the U.S.A. This is particularly true of Young Theosophists who welcome new ideas and would like to exchange letters (both in English and in other languages, if desirable) with similarly inclined young people in various parts of the world. This is a wonderful opportunity for establishing new links of friendship and theosophical comradeship.

Take for instance, Young Theosophists in present-day Germany, where the entire stock of Theosophical literature was destroyed some years ago. They are doing courageous work in rebuilding their devastated country, and in sowing the seeds of spirituality wherever possible. Their Director is Michail Alexander (Jungfernstieg 10, Rendsburg, Germany), a most energetic young man, who would welcome both correspondence from abroad and any Theosophical literature, for translation and distribution. Among other Young Theosophists, we will mention: Miss Edith Lauppert, Kaiserfeldgasse 19-i, Graz, Austria; Miss Pirkko Hynynen, Maneesik. 2 A, C 34, Helsinki, Finland; Mr. Phan-chon-Tôn, 4, Square Rapp, Paris 7e, France. The Federation of Young Theosophists in Europe publish a magazine called *Enthousiasme*, with English-French-German text.

How about starting corresponding with some of these fine people?  
We will give you other names and addresses in the next issue.

# THEOSOPHIA

*A LIVING PHILOSOPHY FOR HUMANITY*

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## THEOSOPHIA

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*The Editor is responsible for unsigned articles only.*

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### A THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

"The maturity of a civilization is not imposed upon a people by its laws or legislators. It is released through the people as the result of growth or expansion of consciousness. Institutions cannot exist which are inconsistent with the convictions of the citizen. They may seem to survive for a time, but they are ultimately absorbed or reformed or redirected by public enlightenment. If, therefore, we are burdened with what many feel to be inadequate politics, it is because we have not yet actually experienced this inadequacy as a fact of consciousness. History reveals how people have liberated themselves from unendurable situations and how leaders have arisen as embodiments of collective resolutions. It was in this way that our nation came into being, and we remember with gratitude those men who had the courage and vision to advance the causes near to our hearts . . .

"Whenever and wherever a growth of consciousness reveals a need, personalities emerge as champions of principles. Such emergence is itself inevitable and gives those of firm resolution the opportunity to align themselves according to their dedications. Thus it is important that the intelligent citizen give the weight of his influence to those motions which his internal consciousness tells him are according to the will of Nature and Nature's God. True devotion, true patriotism, and true citizenship are best expressed through those who champion progress under law as it is given that we understand that will . . .

"Obedience to the divine purpose does not imply unquestioning acceptance of the unknown. We are not supposed to continue in a state of ineffectiveness on the assumption that human helplessness contributes to the divine glory. We have been endowed with faculties of observation and reflection in order that we may advance our own destiny. Superiors wish to be understood and not merely honored; in fact, true honor is not possible without true understanding. The situations in which man finds himself constitute a series of challenges. We must improve to meet the emergency or we are overwhelmed thereby. There is nothing to support the notion that we were fashioned simply in order to be overwhelmed."

—Manly Palmer Hall in *Horizon*, Autumn 1952, pp. 5, 12.

## WANTED: UNIVERSALITY

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

The key-note of the Theosophical Movement is *Universality*.

From time immemorial, under all climes and civilizations, the same Movement has manifested itself under many and varied forms; and under all conditions and circumstances, its universal character has been the true touchstone of its worth.

Whenever and wherever personal adulation, worship of human exponents, and a rising sense of separateness from other people, have risen above the basic message and the fundamental precepts of the Movement, the clear stream of the Ancient Wisdom has been polluted by the emotional tendencies to sectarianism resulting in ultimate fanaticism and spiritual decay.

For the very nature of the universal Theosophical Movement is its utter impersonality, all-inclusiveness and oneness, like unto the light of the Sun which is essentially one with it.

The appearance and disappearance of personalities, however exalted, within the Movement itself, is like the rise and fall of individual waves upon the endless expanse of the World Ocean. They come and go, perform their appointed task, deliver themselves of their specific message, and vanish temporarily out of our limited sight, only to re-appear in due course of time for another cycle of activity. But the Movement as a whole neither depends upon their appearance, nor is it affected by their withdrawal, for its roots are in the Eternal, and its structure is nourished by that mystic sap which flows from the Mother-

Source of all Being, as long as the planet itself endures.

Ages come and ages go; civilizations are produced by the genius of man and vanish after a while into the realm of memories; great monuments are erected by noble builders, and are ground to dust by the relentless processes of Nature; waves of culture follow other waves upon the surface of the globe, and periods of moral decay and barrenness are succeeded by periods of brilliant achievement and knowledge. But the Theosophical Movement exists through all of these and adapts itself to the ever-changing forms assumed for the time-being by the constantly shifting stage-setting of human life.

It behooves therefore all students of this Ancient Wisdom to rise above attachments to the passing forms, and to outgrow the need of placing their trust in persons, institutions, or organizations, none of which can be anything more than a temporary mould to manifest a fraction of the infinite message, and to house but a ray or two of the ever-shining Sun.

It is possible to doubt the validity of certain figures in the history of the Theosophical Movement. It is possible to become utterly disappointed in individuals in whom the student may previously have had a very great trust. It is even conceivable that the Movement would harbor for a while personalities whose entire objective is deception under the illusory cloak of sanctity. But, once you are convinced, it is impossible to doubt the worth of the teachings, the integrity of the age-

less wisdom, or the over-all purpose and aim of that mystic power which has manifested itself from age to age from behind the scenes of the outer life. For by doubting them, you doubt your own being and the deepest necessities and yearnings of your own soul.

The realization of the relative insignificance of personalities within the Movement is not synonymous with ingratitude towards them. This in itself would be a very shallow deduction. Personalities are needed and cannot be avoided by men and women of the present era; no more so than channels and canals are needed to convey water or other fluids and forces. But the river-bed is not the invigorating stream it carries, and the electric wire is not electricity. Let us be grateful to certain persons who, acting as Teachers, Adjusters, and Guides, are showing us throughout the ages the direction where the Path can be found, and point out to us the pitfalls to be encountered on our journey. If they are genuine men and women, and not frauds, they will embody in their behavior and demeanor both modesty and self-effacement, both sympathy and understanding, both universality of outlook and all-inclusiveness. Through them will shine a Light which will be greater than themselves, and we will know that Light because their personal consciousness will be translucent enough to convey the effulgence of that Light without too much blurring. Our gratitude should be to that greater Self within them that is dedicated to the ideal of universal service, not to the personal and necessarily faulty humanhood by means of which they work.

The moment we catch ourselves

identifying the Movement with any one personality in it, we fall away from the Ideals of the Movement and drop down onto a lesser level of consciousness. The distinction between the Movement and its personal exponents is a distinction between a Force and the channel that conveys some of it to any given point. They are inter-related but not identical.

It is entirely consistent with the above, and merely a paradox (but not a contradiction), to say that Messenger and Message are essentially one, that Teacher and Teaching are one and the same thing. But it is necessary for us to understand that this identification has to do with the spiritual consciousness of the Teacher and not with the foibles and weaknesses of his or her personal selfhood. We should not forget the fact, often disregarded, that, while any one exponent of the Movement is but a small fraction of the Movement, as far as his or her personality goes, yet both this exponent and we ourselves are in a mystic sense *the whole of the Movement*, in those inner and unfathomed reaches of our inmost Spiritual Self wherein are hidden the limitless and infinite sources of Being, beyond the mere "person" within us. As a matter of sober truth, it would be utterly impossible for anyone of us ever to convey a living truth to another, or to lift his consciousness, or to vivify within him the indwelling seeds of spiritual life, if the Power of our own Inner Self did not touch for a moment the corresponding Power within that other. And if this is true, it follows that as we learn how to do this more and more efficiently, we become less and less personal in our actions, and

more and more universal in our outlook. It is therefore easy to see that in this progressive process of enlargement of our consciousness, we may reach some day a level of knowledge where even our personal selfhood will have become a mighty power for good, as it will be saturated more and more with the universal force streaming from within our own Inner God. Such must be the highly trained and purified personal aspect of the Adepts themselves.

In our work for human enlightenment and service, in our self-conscious activity in the outer world, for the purposes and objectives of the Theosophical Movement, we should develop a high sense of individual responsibility and become largely independent of other people's authority and directives. We must cease to be learners, and learn to be leaders. A leader is not a boss, nor is he a dic-

tator. In the true sense of this much-maligned word, a leader is a man who has a keen sense of the spiritual needs of others, of their deepest yearnings and noblest desires, and who "leads" these out of their latent condition into outward expression, and helps the aspirant to express in his or her life the hidden potencies of the Inner Self. Were he, the so-called "leader", to impose upon others the power of his own stronger will, he would succeed in having a thoughtless herd of followers and obedient slaves, but never a band of strong individuals whose inter-dependent lives are based on spiritual knowledge and the mutual recognition of their indwelling nobility.

The Theosophical Movement is in constant need of men and women whose outlook is universal and whose sympathies include all Life.

## WHOLE-HEARTEDNESS

HENRIETTE DE HOOG

Doing something whole-heartedly, taking part in a "project," with others, or for others, whole-heartedly—does not mean taking a leave of absence from our head, mind and common sense.

If we do a thing with our heart only, then, yes, there is danger that we give ourselves entirely, even to something that we would not do if we were in our right senses. But, if we undertake a work, and there are parts of that work that we do not "see," or if there are people involved whom we "doubt," we can still put our heart into it, for the sake of that part of it that we are in full agreement with—

having "faith," we might say, that what is not clear may reveal itself to us, and hoping that those whom we doubt will prove themselves.

A time may come when we cannot proceed, because what we thought was a straight road, proved to be a crooked path, covered with dreadful things. If we had not put our whole heart in it, for what we *thought* it was, we would not have become aware of the dark path, but would have passively jogged along, not understanding, and what is worse, not caring.

But if our heart is in it, our heart will receive warnings — if they are needed. Our trust and faith need cul-

tivating at the same time. We have to learn to trust and give another "the benefit of the doubt" until it has been made clear to us that the trust was misplaced.

Then?

We may be engaged in a work that is greater than "people" and although we may have lost our "trust," our "faith" in certain *people*, the work itself has proven itself to us and our heart remains in it and we work for it whole-heartedly.

If we confuse our broken illusions in regard to the people we have "found out," with the importance of the work, then we will also deny the work. *The Work is for Souls and "people" are a pale reflection of Souls.* It can be that we are no longer able to carry on the work, because "people" block our usefulness, and, through importance of place, prevent us from carrying out our part according to *our Light!*

Then, we can either take a figurative ax and proceed on a campaign of destruction, or we can quietly go on, doing the work as well as we can, in whatever direction we find the way open to us. For if our doubts are true and those we trust *are* unworthy, the work will go on. But the body through which we served that work may be either destroyed through the unworthy ones themselves, or it may carry on for a long time, animated by the momentum of the vitality of Truth which flowed through it once.

If we give ourselves whole-heartedly, we become aware of what hap-

pens around us, and the "discoveries" or "revelations" of dark things may shock us for a while and perhaps halt our steps momentarily; but after another while we shake our heads, regain our equilibrium and go on.

If we work half-heartedly, we are discontented with everything that happens—good, bad or indifferent—and we then have no discrimination. But if we put *all* our heart into it, and our heart is *true*, then we shall learn to see things for what they are and our discrimination will be strengthened, and will enable us to find ways and means to re-build, or build anew. We shall *not* be stopped!

The whole heart is not separated from the head. It is the never-sleeping, never-resting One, who is forever trying to "come through" and "express" Itself.

If a Vow is taken, with *reservations*, the pitfalls we meet, as our tests and trials, will overwhelm us and we will turn against "those who have maliciously dug those pits to make us fail."

If a Vow is taken *whole* heartedly, the pitfalls, even if we fall and hurt ourselves, will be recognized as our tests and trials and we shall learn to pity "those who dug those pits to affect our failure" for, although *they* have to meet their reckoning for that digging, the pits were still *our* tests and trials. *We* don't have to destroy those who worked for our downfall. We just have to learn to be careful where we step, so that we will *not* fall down.

## LITERARY JOTTINGS

ON CRITICISM, AUTHORITIES, AND OTHER MATTERS

BY AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER

[*Lucifer*, Vol. XI, No. 61, September, 1892, pp. 9-11]

Theosophists and editors of Theosophical periodicals are constantly warned, by the prudent and the faint-hearted, to beware of giving offence to "authorities," whether scientific or social. Public Opinion, they urge, is the most dangerous of all foes. Criticism of it is fatal, we are told. Criticism can hardly hope to make the person or subject so discussed amend or become amended. Yet it gives offence to the many, and makes Theosophists hateful. "Judge not, if thou wilt not be judged," is the habitual warning.

It is precisely because Theosophists would themselves be judged and court impartial criticism, that they begin by rendering that service to their fellow-men. Mutual criticism is a most healthy policy, and helps to establish final and definite rules in life—practical, not merely theoretical. We have had enough of theories. The *Bible* is full of wholesome advice, yet few are the Christians who have ever applied any of its ethical injunctions to their daily lives. If one criticism is hurtful so is another; so also is every innovation, or even the presentation of some old thing under a new aspect, as both have necessarily to clash with the views of this or another "authority." I maintain, on the contrary, that criticism is the great benefactor of thought in general; and still more so of those men who never think for themselves but rely in everything upon acknowledged "authorities" and social routine.

For what is an "authority" upon any question, after all? No more, really, than a light streaming upon a certain object through one single, more or less wide, chink, and illuminating it *from one side only*. Such light, besides being the faithful reflector of the *personal views* of but one man—very often merely that of his special hobby—can never help in the examination of a question or a subject from all its aspects and sides. Thus, the authority appealed to will often prove but of little help, yet the profane, who attempts to present the given question or object under another aspect and in a different light, is forthwith hooted for his great audacity. Does he not attempt to upset solid "authorities," and fly in the face of respectable and time-honoured routine thought?

Friends and foes! Criticism is the sole salvation from intellectual stagnation. It is the beneficent goad which stimulates to life and action—hence to healthy changes—the heavy ruminants called Routine and Prejudice, in private as in social life. Adverse opinions are like conflicting winds which rush from the quiet surface of a lake the green scum that tends to settle upon still waters. If every clear stream of independent thought, which runs through the field of life outside the old grooves traced by Public Opinion, had to be arrested and to come to a standstill, the results would prove very sad. The streams would no longer feed the common pond called Society, and its waters would become still more stagnant than they are. Result: it is the most orthodox

"authorities" of the social pond who would be the first to get sucked down still deeper into its ooze and slime.

Things, even as they now stand, present no very bright outlook as regards progress and social reforms. In this last quarter of the century it is women alone who have achieved any visible beneficent progress. Men, in their ferocious egoism and sex-privilege, have fought hard, but have been defeated on almost every line. Thus, the younger generations of women look hopeful enough. They will hardly swell the future ranks of stiff-necked and cruel Mrs. Grundy. Those who to-day lead her no longer invincible battalions on the war-path, are the older Amazons of respectable society, and her young men, the male "flowers of evil," the nocturnal plants that blossom in the hothouses known as clubs. The Brummels of our modern day have become worse gossips than the old dowagers ever were in the dawn of our century.

To oppose or criticize such foes, or even to find the least fault with them, is to commit the one unpardonable social sin. An Unpopular Philosopher, however, has little to fear, and notes his thoughts, indifferent to the loudest "war-cry" from those quarters. He examines his enemies of both sexes with the calm and placid eye of one who has nothing to lose, and counts the ugly blotches and wrinkles on the "sacred" face of Mrs. Grundy, as he would count the deadly poisonous flowers on the branches of a majestic *mancenillier*—through a telescope from afar. He will never approach the tree, or rest under its lethal shade.

"Thou shalt not set thyself against the Lord's anointed," saith David. But since the "authorities," social and scientific, are always the first to break that law, others may occasionally follow the good example. Besides, the "anointed" ones are not always those of the Lord; many of them being more of the "self-anointed" sort.

Thus, whenever taken to task for disrespect to Science and its "authorities," which the Unpopular Philosopher is accused of rejecting, he demurs to the statement. To reject the *infallibility* of a man of Science is not quite the same as to repudiate his learning. A *specialist* is one, precisely because he has some one specialty, and is therefore less reliable in other branches of Science, and even in the general appreciation of his own subject. Official school Science is based upon temporary foundations, so far. It will advance upon straight lines so long only as it is not compelled to deviate from its old grooves, in consequence of fresh and unexpected discoveries in the fathomless mines of knowledge.

Science is like a railway train which carries its baggage van from one terminus to the other, and with which no one except the railway officials may interfere. But passengers who travel by the same train can hardly be prevented from quitting the direct line at fixed stations, to proceed, if they so like, by diverging roads. They should have this option, without being taxed with libelling the chief line. To proceed *beyond* the terminus on horseback, cart or foot, or even to undertake pioneer work, by cutting entirely new paths through the great virgin forests and thickets of public ignorance, is their undoubted pre-

rogative. Other explorers are sure to follow; nor less sure are they to criticize the newly-cut pathway. They will thus do more good than harm. For truth, according to an old Belgian proverb, is always the result of conflicting opinions, like the spark that flies out from the shock of two flints struck together.

Why should men of learning be always so inclined to regard Science as their own personal property? Is knowledge a kind of indivisible family estate, entailed only on the elder sons of Science? Truth belongs to all, or ought to belong; excepting always those few special branches of knowledge which should be preserved ever secret, like those two-edged weapons that both kill and save. Some philosopher compared knowledge to a ladder, the top of which was more easily reached by a man unencumbered by heavy luggage, than by him who has to drag along an enormous bale of old conventionalities, faded out and dried. Moreover, such a one must look back every moment, for fear of losing some of his fossils. Is it owing to such extra weight that so few of them ever reach the summit of the ladder, and that they affirm there is *nothing* beyond the highest rung *they* have reached? Or is it for the sake of preserving the old dried-up plants of the Past that they deny the very possibility of *any fresh, living blossoms, or new forms of life, in the Future?*

Whatever their answer, without such optimistic hope in the ever-becoming, life would be little worth living. What between "authorities," their fear of, and wrath at the slightest criticism—each and all of them demanding to be regarded as infallible in their respective departments—the world threatens to fossilize in its old prejudices and routine. Fogeyism grins its skeleton-like sneer at every innovation or new form of thought. In the great battle of life for the survival of the fittest, each of these forms becomes in turn the master, and then the tyrant, forcing back all new growth as its own was checked. But the true Philosopher, however "unpopular," seeks to grasp the actual life, which, springing fresh from the inner source of Being, the rock of truth, is ever moving onward. He feels equal contempt for all the little puddles that stagnate lazily on the flat and marshy fields of social life.

H. P. B.

#### PROMOTION FUND—

We wish to convey our sincere thanks to all who have remembered of late our Promotion Fund. We trust our friends will keep this Fund alive, as it is of great help in meeting current expenses. The following donations have been received between Aug. 1st and October 1st, 1952:

H.D.B. \$3.50; M.W. \$1.50; Anon. \$10.00; C.E.W. \$0.50; J.S. \$0.50; E.V.D. \$3.50; B.N. \$1.50; L.C.C. \$0.50; D.W. \$0.50; F.L.G. \$2.00; I.H. \$0.50; D.H. \$0.50; M.S. \$1.00; E.C. \$5.00; S.F. \$3.50; Anon. \$0.50; C.N.E. \$1.00; R.A.D. \$0.50; M.I. \$0.50; H.T. \$0.50; B.N. \$2.50; R.G.O. \$0.50.

#### INCREASING THE CIRCULATION OF "THEOSOPHIA"—

*The Editorial Offices would welcome receiving from our subscribers and friends lists of names and addresses of people in their respective towns, or elsewhere, who may have "leanings" in the direction of Theosophy. We would send them sample copies of the magazine with a subscription-blank attached. Considering the many cities in the country our newspaper goes to, we should be able to get several hundred new names, if our friends help us by sending them in. This would be a real help!*

## DO WE DARE TO DOUBT?

EILEEN MARGARET WALKER

Please realize the fact that so long as men doubt there will be curiosity and enquiry, and that enquiry stimulates reflection which begets effort . . . —*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, page 227.

Do we dare to doubt? And how much, how far, for how long? Do we dare to say, "I don't know," "I'm not sure," "I can't tell"—and really mean the words? Do we dare to doubt our teachers, our friends, our loved ones, our selves? Can we hold up to question the club we belong to, the organization we joined, the company we work for—and the goal we pursue in each of these activities?

And if we have doubted any (or all) of these people or groups, how strong was our doubt, how severe was our questioning, how penetrating was our disbelief? Was our doubt a conventional one, whipped up in a moment of intellectual boredom, or for purposes of discussion — or did it shake us to the roots of our being, and haunt us day and night for months or years? Were we timid about our doubts, too polite to indulge them fully, or were we able to let the "cold light of day" play over our whole life — the shallows and the depths alike? Were we daring enough to admit our doubts to others, whatever they might afterward think of us and did we secretly hope these others would reassure us in a thoroughly convincing fashion? Or did we go one step further than our own doubts, and listen carefully to learn what doubts had occurred to others?

Some there are who take pride in certainty—as if to be certain were a sign of being right. Some there are who congratulate themselves on being devoted—as if the feeling of devotion

itself were enough to sanctify the object of devotion. Some bind themselves to their *latest* faith—as if any faith could be final for the questing soul. Some rest on trust—and do not allow themselves to observe whether or not their trust is honored by those in whom it is fixed!

We forget, all of us who do these things, the true meanings of devotion, faith, and trust. Since these qualities are among the highest and most sacred human feelings, their right use opens the mind to new truths and prepares the heart for new aspirations. But, wrongly used, the same qualities can bring us into weird bondage with false religion, deceiving cults, and unscrupulous apostles. How will we know which is our position, unless and until we doubt and question whatever we have taken for granted?

But, it is often objected, what if our doubts are groundless? What if we doubt wrongly? The answer is that it is impossible to doubt "wrongly," *if we doubt honestly*, and properly speaking, we should not consider ourselves honest believers until we have been honest doubters of that which we hold to be true. It is not wrong to doubt, but it is foolish to stop thinking, once we have raised a doubt. It is not wrong to believe, but it is dangerous to assume that believing takes the place of knowing.

Because true and useful doubting takes considerable daring, it is a rare phenomenon. The thought of *daring* may make our spirits lift, but *daring*

to doubt—that has almost a chilling effect. It has wisely been said that it takes more courage to live for our convictions than to die for them, and one reason lies in this very matter of doubting. Strange as it may seem, it is often harder to doubt than to believe, for in believing, we tend to trust someone else's judgment, while in doubting—honest questioning—we are thrown back upon our own power of discrimination. (Of course, if we are taking our doubts, as well as our beliefs, at second-hand, we meet this difficulty only vaguely, as from a great distance.)

Let us state the matter another way: if our doubts do not cause us to wonder about our own caniness and/or our gullibility, if they do not bring us to recognize a few gaps in our own omniscience, then we are wasting our time in petty and pointless quarreling. To indulge in niggardly doubts, to cavil over minor points of difference which offend our cherished beliefs or preconceptions, to be constantly making objections—these bespeak the essentially frivolous mind, whose vagaries are insignificant.

To doubt courageously enough so that we are urged on with new interest to fresh inquiry, is reserved for minds of stronger calibre. Even then, it may be years before a growing doubt is frankly faced: years when small misgivings accumulate, only to be put aside in loyal, wilful blindness; years when the man strives, almost at the cost of his reason, to ignore the "voice of the silence" which tells him that all is not as it seems; years which finally are host to increasing hours of horror and dismay, as he contemplates the *mâyâ* within

the *mâyâ*—the deception in the heart of the seeming-spiritual.

A deception, moreover, which he himself helped to create, by fastening his dreams, his spiritual hopes, upon a false apostle. No man can be deceived, unless he cooperates by deceiving himself, and so, along with the guilt of the betrayer goes the mistake of the betrayed. Until we are ready to admit that we have connived at our own deception, we can never hold an honest doubt. And until we are prepared to realize that we stopped ourselves from thinking at a certain point—thus allowing another mind to rule our mental roost—we shall never understand why we are so persistently reluctant to doubt! Doubt, in this sense, requires us to start thinking where we left off—and go on, to the bitter end. Is it any wonder we avoid the necessity as long as we can?

But embarking on a course of doubting is not the dark and disagreeable work it first appears. After the first shock is over, we may awaken to find that we have stirred up sleeping powers in ourselves that we should never have allowed ourselves to ignore. We begin by losing some of our self-confidence, but very soon a new self-respect comes to take its place, for we are cutting our own path through the wilderness of ignorance and half-truths, and the effort is exhilarating. Curiosity, inquiry, reflection, effort: the Master's words outline the spiral course to freedom for the soul. Each decision made within ourselves, each private conviction acted upon, each particle of self-knowledge that is turned into mental working capital: each and all are steps taking us slowly but surely into brighter spots of Light.

Thus the doubt that leads to first-hand knowledge relieves us, by the same token, from the doubts that go with fear and ignorance. The doubt

that takes courage to pursue is the surcest way of routing the misgivings that shackle our feet when we would move toward Truth.

## CHARACTER - BUILDING

JAMES O'CONNELL

Some time or other we have all asked the question, "What are you doing?" and received in answer the reply, "Nothing." But in this very reply the person did something; he gave an explanation of the differences in character, which is very much "something."

As a matter of fact, all of us are building character, consciously or unconsciously, from the time we awake in the morning to the time we fall asleep at night. And this building of character is the most important work that one can engage in—the glorious task that only fortune's favored soldiers may wholeheartedly engage in. It is our great duty, the duty we owe not merely to ourselves and our next-door neighbors, but to the whole human family. This duty is always staring us in the face, but we are so blinded by false knowledge and ignorance, that we fail to see it. And worse still, we imagine, while engaged in its performance — albeit blindly—that we are doing nothing.

In the building of character we all are working with the same materials: thought, will, and feeling. Yet how great are the differences in the characters under construction! Some are strong, some are weak, some are a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. What makes these differences? The workmanship of the different builders. To build well we must know, in the first place, what we are building, and

in the second place, what are the materials we are building with. Only then can we build well and wisely.

Thoughts shape acts, acts build habits, and habits build character. In every thought we think, we give shape and color to character. When one aims to become a Master-builder, one has to organize one's thoughts accordingly. In the organization of our thoughts lies the whole secret of master-building. As a man thinketh so he becomes in character. By right thinking he becomes an Adept of the right-hand path; by wrong thinking he becomes the opposite.

But there is a destiny, you say, "that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may." True. A destiny that shapes even the ends of those who busy themselves doing nothing. But it is *character* that shapes destiny. In building character we are building our destiny. We should not try to build hastily; we should endeavor to build slowly and surely.

Character has been defined as a bundle of habits. The word "bundle" aptly qualifies character as expressed in the general run of people—a sort of Pandora box out of which something is likely to jump and bite us whenever we remove the lid. But true character is a harmony. It speaks, as Emerson says, above our heads. It is the music of the heart. Its notes are written on the staff of life—notes of peace and good will.

## SCIENCE MEETS ASTROLOGY

E. HOFFMANN PRICE

Mrs. Stevens phoned, saying, "My neighbor, Samuel Glasstone, has heard enough about your astrological work to make him wonder if you would agree to a test. He is a doctor of science, a doctor of philosophy, and the author of a good many scientific and mathematical text books. Will you join us at dinner, and then face the ordeal?"

After assuring her such would be a pleasure, I asked for the hour and minute of Dr. Glasstone's birth, as well as the day, month, year, and the place. This last is essential. The terrestrial latitude and longitude determine certain details of the horoscope. Since the scholar's hour of birth had not been recorded, my hostess gave me the data for Mrs. Glasstone.

The following evening I kept my rendezvous with science, taking with me the work book in which I had drawn a map of the heavens for 4:48 P.M., July 22, of a year which is strictly Mrs. Glasstone's business. Beneath the chart I had written the following:

"PROBABLE APPEARANCE: tall; face, long and narrow; head shape, long; hands and feet, long narrow; hair, red or reddish-blond. Straightforward expression of eyes. Carries head high. Shoulders probably well squared, to accord with head. The ruler of the Ascending sign is Jupiter; the ruler of the ascending *dekan* is Mars, in Cancer. This Cancer influence may give a characteristic flare to the nostrils, and may modify the nose, shortening it, and giving concavity. Also, give somewhat of roundness to the

figure, offsetting the characteristic flat-chestedness of Sagittarius Ascending. Facial angles softened. The Jupiter influence in Gemini reinforces the Sagittarius Ascendant's effect, giving a tall and slender, long-legged frame. And, longish nose."

It was clear from the moment of meeting that Dr. Glasstone had come without any determination to debunk a "medieval superstition." This was in sharp contrast to a previous encounter with one who, calling himself a scientist, asserted that of course he had never investigated astrology, because he knew in advance that it was nonsense!

No sooner had the courtesies of first meeting been disposed of when I handed my work book to Dr. Glasstone, saying, "Please read this description of your wife. And grade astrology in accord."

He said, "One hundred percent correct."

I said, "You are too generous. The actual flare of Mrs. Glasstone's nostrils is NOT such as I had in mind when I wrote this. Better deduct a few points from the score."

The next test consisted of reading to Mrs. Glasstone the table of those past years in which the Progressed Sun had made major aspects to the planets of her natal chart. Correlating these with the major transits of Saturn, I gave her a brief outline of each year, not as to its details, but as to its trend and flavor. Without hesitancy, she said that each had been correctly delineated, as also had been my description of her present mood and problem.

The next step in the demonstration was to erect, after dinner, the horoscope of Merritt Hosmer, another guest. I said, "Since I have met both Mr. and Mrs. Hosmer previously, it would not be a scientifically convincing test for me to describe the personality or past of either. I shall instead give a brief sketch of Mrs. Hosmer's father."

Dr. Glasstone cut in, "Pardon me, but you mean, Mr. Hosmer's father don't you?"

"No, I mean Mrs. Hosmer's father." Perplexedly, he persisted, "But you have Mr. Hosmer's horoscope."

"Precisely, Doctor, and I propose to read from it a description of his father-in-law's personality."

When I had done so, Mrs. Hosmer exclaimed, "A perfect picture of dad!"

The scientist had by now absorbed about as much as his scientific detachment could take. "How do you explain all this?" he demanded. "What is the principle?"

"Doctor, the only explanation I could give would not come within the boundaries of any science which you recognize. What I have done is no more and no less than this: to follow the rules handed down through the centuries. They were ancient when Claudius Ptolemy of Alexandria wrote his text on astrology, the *Tetrabiblos*. This was about 150 A.D."

"When did astrology originate?"

"There are many traditions. According to one, the science of the stars was perfected by the Sabaeans, the ancestors of the Queen of Sheba, 473, 000 years ago. According to another account, the Elder Brothers of Man-kind, the Children of the Fire Mist, brought astrology to this planet when

they came from Venus, 18,000,000 years ago."

The gallant scientist took that without a twitch. He asked, quietly, "Which version do you accept?"

"There are *Those Who Know*. But since I do not know, my answer would be based only on belief, surmise, conjecture, tentative acceptance. Whereas the scientific approach which we agreed would prevail this evening is confined to ascertainable facts, that which can be weighed, measured, or otherwise perceived by the senses. Once you declare that you are satisfied with this demonstration of astrology, we can suspend the rules, after which I shall be happy to go as far as I can with your questions."

Whereupon the rules were set aside, and we sat until three A.M., having a delightfully unscientific conversation on astrology, karma, reincarnation: for without the two last named, the first is incomprehensible, and relatively meaningless and also, useless.

This is only one of many encounters in which, through the use of astrology, I have been able to gain a hearing for the three fundamental propositions of Theosophy: those outlined in the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*, and restated more elaborately elsewhere.

Most of our materialistic and theologically-conditioned population balk at the mention of karma and reincarnation. Their interest is usually rooted in no more than curiosity. However, astrology is intriguing. It has a certain glamour appeal. Its demonstration is concrete, in ascertainable facts and figures. This cracks the shell of

scepticism, and in many cases moves the sceptic toward receptivity as to more important matters.

These demonstrations are of course the most materialistic aspect of astrology. The "inner" astrology is an

integral part of the *Theo-Sophia*, a facet of the Ancient Wisdom. But when one is working on anything as impermeable as an anvil, something as solid as a hammer is useful and necessary.

### I WOULD LIKE TO ASK...

*Theosophia* would welcome receiving from subscribers and friends any Questions they may like to ask regarding the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom and their application to daily life. Any type of Question is welcome, with the exception of subjects bordering on political or sectarian matters, or organizational and personal differences.

*Is it conceivable that the overwhelming urge one may feel to gather scientific knowledge of all kinds, on a large, logically coherent basis, in order to gain deeper insight and judgment, an urge stronger than any other interests and connected with one's religious and artistic inclinations, may have its origin in former incarnations? Does it imply the necessity of working out and bringing to a close experiences of earlier lives?*

We are inclined to answer in the positive. Such strong urges are certainly rooted in former lives. Strong urges and desires, both of a highly constructive and of a destructive nature, take time to accumulate to a point of intense power; they do not arise suddenly, and could not possibly be of recent origin, because they would have no intense energy to back them up with. The strongest inclinations, propensities or desires of this incarnation are invariably the result, the cumulative effect, of much thought, emotion, and possibly actual work, directed in past lives towards a given objective. We resume these trends at the threshold of a new in-

carnation, and intensify them during life; unless we be temporarily "switched off", as it were, into some by-path into which some other karmic drive directs us for a while. The strongest drive is bound to assert itself sooner or later with full force. Many threads of this life are interconnected with other lives of ours; not necessarily the one immediately preceding this one, however. This applies also to the difficulties encountered. It is safe to assume, in the light of the Theosophical philosophy, that whenever we meet with a seemingly immovable obstacle, physical, intellectual or psychological, this is precisely the point at which we failed in some past life, and were unable to surmount the difficulty facing us at the time. The problem repeats itself in some other form, and with a somewhat altered karmic stage. The essence of the problem has not changed, however.

It is, however, important not to become so completely absorbed by the urge spoken of above, as to become oblivious to many other calls of duty, maybe much closer to home; not to

In other words, there is need of becoming neglectful of our responsibilities to other people or to withdraw from the disturbing influences of surrounding life.

It is easy to forget everything else by identifying oneself with that which is nearest and dearest to our mind and heart, and which satisfies us most as an intellectual or even spiritual pursuit. It is sometimes of immense benefit and of paramount need to do so; but there are many circumstances in which an overwhelming urge for something noble and lofty has to be controlled in the light of other pressing duties, often unpleasant, but nevertheless right and just. Each life is different, and no set rule can possibly be formulated in these respects.

balance; we must try and tread the age-old Middle Way. Strong urges for noble achievements must be handled wisely, and action suggested by them should be entered into, but without rashness or selfish forgetfulness of all else. Sometimes, by means of these strong urges towards noble objectives, a definite Force from within our Inner Self is trying to manifest. There is need of discrimination, calm judgment and a constant attempt at self-control, which alone will spell in due course of time success and growth. Let us look upon our work and our character in the light of centuries instead of a few mere mortal years. It is only then that we gain perspective and vision. From these follow right action and wisdom.

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### CORRESPONDING FELLOWS' LODGE

This Lodge is the outcome of the Correspondence Course in Theosophy started in England during the war. This Course is intended to introduce Theosophy to new inquirers. As students began joining the Theosophical Society, it was found that being scattered all over the British Isles, they were often isolated from other students and could not meet for group-study. Many, too, preferred studying at home. Hence this Lodge, which issues a Monthly Bulletin in which members take part by discussion, questions and answers, etc. The only pre-requisite for joining the Lodge—aside from a recognition of the principle of Universal Brotherhood—is that one is a sincere seeker for Truth wherever it may be found. It is not required that would-be members should first be proficient in a knowledge of technical Theosophy. The key-notes of the work of the Lodge could be summed up thus: 1) Recognizing and encouraging the full right of every member to his own independent thinking and opinions, no one member taking precedence over any other; 2) Putting the Ethics of Theosophy into practice in our lives, or at least endeavoring to do so; 3) Adherence to the teachings of Theosophy as brought forth by H. P. Blavatsky, without being dogmatic about it. Financial support is entirely voluntary. Ten shillings per annum covers the cost of materials for the Bulletin and postage; the work of duplicating being done by members themselves.

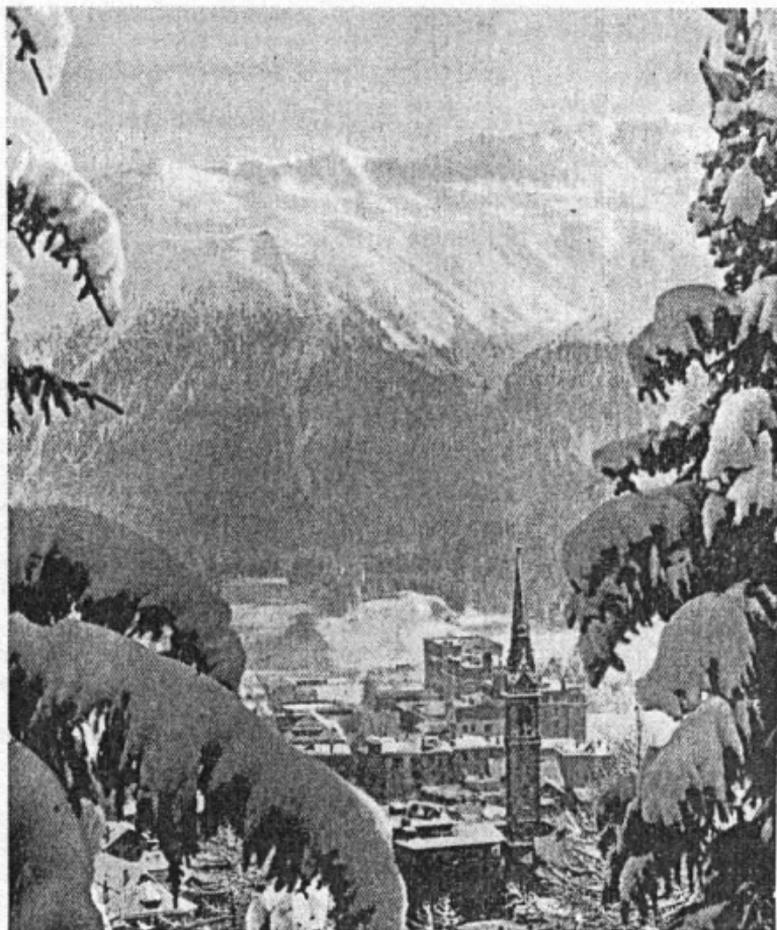
Students of Theosophy living in far away and isolated parts of the world are welcome to become members of the Corresponding Fellows' Lodge; an inquiry sent to Mrs. Elsie Benjamin, Sec'y-Treasurer, 24 Upper Brighton Road, Worthington, Sussex, England, is bound to bring a courteous and helpful answer. Why not get in touch with a group of intelligent and courageous workers?

# THEOSOPHIA

A LIVING PHILOSOPHY FOR HUMANITY

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## THEOSOPHIA

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### THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

"The Christmas tree, dotted with lights and bright with tinsel that reflects those lights and multiplies them manifold, is an old pre-Christian symbol used by the peoples of Northern Europe at the time of the Winter Solstice; and here is the inner significance of it:

"Have you never heard of the World-Tree with its roots in the realms of Spirit and whose branches are the great suns and systems of suns? This World-Tree began in the beginning of this Cosmic Age to bring forth all the stellar hosts. Now the Winter Solstice is the beginning of the cosmic New Year, and so these northern peoples knowing some of the ancient truths, celebrated this cosmic event with the Christmas tree. It symbolizes the World-Tree, and the lights are the suns that bestrew the deeps of Space, hinting to us the message from the divinities who constantly give us the light of love, the light of mind, the light of hope eternal. But so far have we fallen from the wisdom of our forefathers that now the Christmas tree has become merely a sign of festivity, except for the few who preserve its significance in their hearts.

"The giving of gifts on the Christmas tree was emblematic of the self-dedication of the gods so that the worlds might come into being. 'Here is my gift. It is born from myself.'"

—C. de Purucker, *Wind of the Spirit*, p. 241.

"In the final analysis there is but one road to peace and that is the road of fellow-feeling and inflexible determination to achieve peaceful relations among men . . . I am optimistic enough about my fellow-beings to believe that it is human attitudes, not human nature that must be changed . . . Every individual today has it in his power in his daily living, in his attitudes and practices—to contribute greatly to the realization of that ideal."

—Ralph Bunche, quoted in the *New Outlook*, November 1952.

## NORTHWARD, WITH THE SUN . . . . .

Another twelve-months have ticked away on the cosmic dial of Father Time, and the sacred Winter Solstice Season is just around the corner.

With the unbreakable regularity of world-rhythms, and with the unshakable trustworthiness of Nature's processes, the seasons have rolled around and brought us once again to the mystic point in this yearly cycle when deep spiritual currents rise temporarily to the surface of human life.

We knew we could count on it in advance. We could be sure of it.

We were not too sure of anything else. We did not know whether the scientists of our era might not reduce us to a mere cloud of electrons by atom-bombing us some bright morning. We were none too sure whether some gang of political demagogues might not suddenly unleash upon us another world-shaking conflagration. We had no certainty whatsoever whether our assets and material possessions might not with equal suddenness be reduced to a heap of worthless junk . . . . . But somehow or other we could be absolutely sure, right deep within our very heart-of-hearts, that the Winter Solstice Season would come again, in the regular sequence of cosmic cycles; and that neither politician nor demagogue, neither scientist nor dictator, will have any appreciable effect upon the majestic sweep of Cosmic Law. What a marvellous surety to be "sure" of!

We were right. The Winter Solstice is here again, and the unseen tap which somehow or other turns on the stream of spiritual thoughts has been opened. Soon we will feel the full force of its current, and partake once more of its inspiration.

The sacredness of this season is linked with the very structure and constitution of man himself. We are an integral and inseparable portion of the Cosmic Stream and live our

relatively short lives within the overall current of the River of Life, as droplets of the stream, floating onward upon the swirling current of Time. The ebb and flow of Cosmic Life rise and fall in rhythm with the symphonic poem of the Master Musician who is back of the shining and glittering, ever-changing stage-setting, directing the wondrous play, infusing itself into its very fiber and being.

As the Sun moves northward, after the Winter Solstice, bringing new life to Nature and new strength to every living thing, so does the Spiritual Sun within each human being if the latter is attuned to the cosmic rhythm of life. We have within ourselves the rhythms of the whole of Nature, and its processes are reflected in the seemingly small scale of human life.

The Winter Solstice Season has ever been the Season of Initiations, wherein the neophyte comes face to face with his own indwelling Divinity, forging a permanent link between himself, as man, and this cosmic center of divine life within his higher being. To do so successfully, the neophyte must of necessity be in perfect harmony with the outer and inner processes of Nature, and his own internal economy, as it were, must be in complete alignment with the currents pulsating through Mother Nature. His success depends not only upon what he *is* himself, as far as consciousness, mind and soul are concerned, but also upon the degree of correlation that exists between himself and the spiritual mechanics of Nature, wherein the position of the Sun and certain planets plays a paramount role. Hence, the Winter Solstice time is intimately connected with the spiritual awakening of the neophyte, and his ultimate achievement of permanent illumination.

We are all Seekers. May this Winter Solstice Season find us closer to the object of our spiritual search!

## ON THE NEW YEAR'S MORROW

H. P. BLAVATSKY

[Excerpts from an Editorial originally published in *Lucifer*, Vol. V, No. 29,  
January, 1890, pp. 357-64]

"The veil which covers the face of futurity  
is woven by the hand of Mercy."

—BULWER LYTTON.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL! This seems easy enough to say, and everyone expects some such greeting. Yet, whether the wish, though it may proceed from a sincere heart, is likely to be realized even in the case of the few—is more difficult to decide. According to our theosophical tenets, every man or woman is endowed, more or less, with a magnetic potentiality, which when helped by a sincere, and especially by an intense and indomitable *will*—is the most effective of magic levers placed by Nature in human hands—for woe as for weal. Let us then, Theosophists, use that will to send a sincere greeting and a wish of good luck for the New Year to every living creature under the sun—enemies and relentless traducers included. Let us try and feel especially kindly and forgiving to our foes and persecutors, honest or dishonest, lest some of us should send unconsciously an "evil eye" greeting instead of a blessing . . . .

. . . . The future lies in the present and both include the Past. With a rare occult insight Rohel made quite an *esoterically* true remark, in saying that "the future does not come from before to meet us, but comes streaming up from behind over our heads." For the Occultist and average Theosophist the Future and the Past are both included in each moment of their lives, hence in the eternal PRESENT. The Past is a torrent madly rushing by, that we face incessantly, without one second of interval; every wave of it, and every drop in it, being an event, whether great or small. Yet, no sooner have we faced it, and whether it brings joy or sorrow, whether it elevates us or knocks us off our feet, than it is carried away and disappears behind us, to be lost sooner or later in the great Sea of Oblivion. It depends on us to make every such event non-existent to ourselves by obliterating it from our memory; or else to create of our past sorrows Promethean Vultures—those "dark-winged birds, the embodied memories of the Past," which, in Sala's graphic fancy "wheel and shriek over the Lethan lake." In the first case, we are real philosophers; in the second—but timid and even cowardly soldiers of the army called mankind, and commanded in the great battle of Life by "King Karma." Happy those of its warriors by whom Death is regarded as a tender and merciful mother. She rocks her sick children into sweet sleep on her cold, soft bosom but to awake them a moment after, healed of all ailing, happy, and with a tenfold reward for every bitter sigh or tear. *Postmortem* oblivion of every evil—to the smallest—is the most blissful characteristic of the "paradise" we believe in. Yes: oblivion of pain and sorrow and the vivid recollection only, nay once more the living over of every happy moment of our terrestrial drama; and, if no such movement ever occurred in one's sad life, then the glorious realiza-

tion of every legitimate, well-earned, yet unsatisfied desire we ever had, as true as life itself and intensified seventy seven times sevenfold. . . .

Christians—the Continental especially—celebrate their New Year days with special pomp. That day is the *Devachan* of children and servants, and every one is supposed to be happy, from Kings and Queens down to the porters and kitchen-malkins. The festival is, of course, purely pagan, as with very few exceptions are all our *holy days*. The dear old pagan customs have not died out, not even in Protestant England, though here the New Year is no longer a sacred day—more's the pity. The presents, which used to be called in old Rome *strenae* (now, the French *etrennes*), are still mutually exchanged. People greet each other with the words:—*Annum novum faustum felicemque tibi*, as of yore; the magistrates, it is true, sacrifice no longer a white swan to Jupiter, nor priests a white steer to Janus. But magistrates, priests and all devour still in commemoration of swan and steer, big fat oxen and turkeys at their Christmas and New Year's dinners. The gilt dates, the dried and gilt plums and figs have now passed from the hands of the tribunes on their way to the Capitol on to the Christmas trees for children. Yet, if the modern Caligula receives no longer piles of copper coins with the head of Janus on one side of them, it is because his own effigy replaces that of the god on every coin, and that coppers are no longer touched by royal hands. Nor has the custom of presenting one's Sovereigns with *strenae* been abolished in England so very long. D'Israeli tells us in his *Curiosities of Literature* of 3,000 gowns found in Queen Bess's wardrobe after her death, the fruit of her New Year's tax on her faithful subjects, from Dukes down to dustmen. As the success of any affair on that day was considered a good omen for the whole year in ancient Rome, so the belief exists to this day in many a Christian country, in Russia pre-eminently so. Is it because instead of the New Year, the mistletoe and the holly are now used on Christmas day, that the symbol has become Christian? The cutting of the mistletoe off the sacred oak on New Year's day is a relic of the old Druids of pagan Britain. Christian Britain is as pagan in her ways as she ever was. . . .

. . . . Only we theosophists, so kindly nicknamed the "sevening lunatics," would prefer another day for *our* New Year. Like the apostate Emperor, many of us have still a strong lingering love for the poetical, bright gods of Olympus and would willingly repudiate the double-faced Thessalonian. The first of Januarius was ever more sacred to Janus than Juno; and *janua*, meaning "the gate that openeth the year," holds as good for any day in January. January 3, for instance, was consecrated to *Minerva-Athene* the goddess of wisdom and to *Isis*, "she who generates life," the ancient lady patroness of the good city of Lutetia. Since then, mother Isis has fallen a victim to the faith of Rome and civilization and Lutetia along with her. Both were converted in the *Julian* calendar (the heirloom of pagan Julius Caesar used by Christendom till the XIIIth century). Isis was baptized Genevieve, became a beatified saint and martyr, and Lutetia was called Paris for a change, preserving the

same old patroness but with the addition of a false nose.\* Life itself is a gloomy masquerade wherein the ghastly *danse Macabre* is every instant performed; why should not calendars and even religion in such case be allowed to partake in the travesty?

To be brief, it is January the 4th which ought to be selected by the Theosophists—the Esotericists especially—as their New Year. January is under the sign of Capricornus, the mysterious *Makara* of the *Hindu mystics*—the “Kumaras,” it being stated, having incarnated in mankind under the 10th sign of the Zodiac. For ages the 4th of January has been sacred to Mercury-Budha,† or Thoth-Hermes. Thus everything combines to make of it a festival to be held by those who study ancient Wisdom. Whether called Budha or *Budhi* by its Aryan name, *Mercurios*, the son of *Coelus* and *Hecate* truly, or of the *divine* (white) and *infernal* (black) magic by its Hellenic, or again Hermes or Thoth its Greco-Egyptian name, the day seems in every way more appropriate for us than January 1, the day of Janus, the double-faced “god of the time”-servers. Yet it is well named, and as well chosen to be celebrated by all the political Opportunists the world over. . . .

\* This festival remains thus unchanged as that of the lady Patroness of *Lutetia*—Paris, and to this day *Isis* is offered religious honours in every Parisian and Latin church.

† The 4th of January being sacred to Mercury, of whom the Greeks made *Hermes*, the R. Catholics have included St. Hermes in their Calendar. Just in the same way, the 9th of that month having been always celebrated by the pagans as the day of the “conquering sun” the R. Catholics have transformed the noun into a proper name, making of it St. *Nicanor* (from the Greek *nikao*, to conquer), whom they honour on the 10th of January.

## THE BOY WHO FORGOT CHRISTMAS

WALDO A. PEREZ

The small village of Christmas Town nestled in a valley surrounded by high mountains. It had acquired the name through a yearly ceremony with which all the villagers greeted the beginning of the Christmas season. On a certain evening the whole village would gather in front of the mayor's house, and as a bright star rose over the peak of the highest mountain, they would repeat in unison an ancient vow to banish all feelings of selfishness and unbrotherliness for the next thirty days. It was imperative that the whole village participate, in order that the vow should be heard by the gods.

Peter was the village shepherd-boy. Orphaned at an early age, he had

been assigned this duty so that he might help earn his way. Because of the lonely life he was forced to live, wandering in the mountain meadows with the sheep, he always looked forward to the ceremony with great eagerness.

During a particularly dry Spring he was forced to wander far beyond his usual pastures to find the needed grass. It was then he discovered that the Star—the one visible to the village only at the Christmas season—was always in the sky, though hidden from the valley by the mountain. On the evening this great discovery was made, it seemed only natural that he should think of the vow. Standing among his sleeping sheep, he repeated the ancient pledge, with only

the quiet mountain and unwinking Star to register it.

It was after that that the villagers began to remark upon Peter's unusually sweet disposition, his willingness to help wherever he was able, and his unflinching good nature. The people of Christmas Town, alas, were not too different from the people in any other town. They seemed to save the larger part of their feeling of Brotherhood for those solemn thirty days that followed the ceremony.

Peter told no one of what he had seen. Even if he had had any close friends, he would not have thought of confiding his secret, but always in his heart was the vision of the Christmas Star, shining just beyond the mountain. As long as he knew that the Star was shining he had to keep his promise.

Finally, the Christmas season began to approach. Great preparations were begun and the exact night for the solemn gathering was announced. Although the snows had driven Peter and the sheep from the mountains, his work was harder than ever. Some of his charges were restless and he feared that illness might strike a few of the weaker ones. All day Peter had watched and worked with them until, as evening approached, they all quieted down, and Peter dozed.

He awoke to find the Mayor shining a lantern in his face, and an array of the village elders frowning disapprovingly behind him.

"Peter," said the Mayor, "apparently this night does not mean much to you, but it stands for something extremely important to everyone else in this village. Those who took the pledge tonight are bound closer to-

gether throughout the rest of the year. Your failure has separated you from us.

"It has been a long time since anyone failed to greet the Star. The penalty for such a crime is Banishment, as you well know, since even one unhallowed member would endanger the future prosperity of the whole village.

"Why have you done this?"

Peter was frightened for a moment, but as had so often been the case during the year when things went wrong, a calm strength returned with the thought of the Star. Raising his head, he quietly faced the Mayor.

"But I did take the vow," he replied. "It was last Spring. One evening I found the Star shining, there, beyond the mountain, and right then I repeated my vow, and have tried to keep it ever since."

The barn was very quiet. Even the sheep, who had been aroused by the voices, seemed to know that something was happening. The elders looked puzzled. As they thought about what Peter's words implied, they felt ashamed. The Mayor hesitated, recalling stories of Peter's kindness during the past year.

Then, approaching the boy, the Mayor placed a friendly arm across Peter's shoulders, and together they walked to the door of the barn. This time, as the Mayor looked up at the Star, he spoke with a new humility:

"Up there," he said, "there is no night. The living sun never stops shining. It is only here that the shadow of our earth seems to bring the evening darkness. But it has taken a child to remind us: there is no season for the heart."

## ARE THE "FLYING" SAUCERS REALLY FLYING?

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

" . . . . . The refusal to admit in the whole Solar system of any other reasonable and intellectual beings on the human plane, than ourselves, is the greatest conceit of our age. All that science has a right to affirm, is that there are no invisible Intelligences living under the same conditions as we do. It cannot deny point-blank the possibility of there being worlds within worlds, under totally different conditions to those that constitute the nature of our world; nor can it deny that there may be a certain limited communication between some of those worlds and our own. To the highest, we are taught, belong the seven orders of the purely divine Spirits; to the six lower ones belong hierarchies that can occasionally be seen and heard by men, and who do communicate with their progeny of the Earth; which progeny is indissolubly linked with them, each principle in man having its direct source in the nature of those great Beings, who furnish us with the respective invisible elements in us . . . . "

—H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 133.

Most students of metaphysical and occult subjects have heard of a volume whose title is *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. Originally published in December 1923, it has been republished a great many times and remains in considerable demand in various parts of the world.

This work consists of Letters addressed to Alfred Percy Sinnett, then Editor of the Government newspaper, *The Pioneer*, in Allahabad, India, by two of the Adept-Brothers responsible for the founding of the modern Theosophical Movement, and who have become rather widely known by their initials K. H. and M. The latter of the two was the direct Teacher of both H. P. Blavatsky and Col. Henry S. Olcott. These letters were received between Fall of 1880 and Fall of 1885, and they number about 150.

The intrinsic importance of these Letters for the serious student of occult thought cannot be over-estimated. Their spiritual depth, their often prophetic character, and their bearing upon the development of modern science, are sufficient factors to commend them to the careful attention of earnest seekers. But there is an

other point of importance which emerges from the careful consideration of the manner in which these Letters were received.

These Letters were not "written," at least not in the way in which most people understand this word. The thoughts contained in them were precipitated, by means of a thorough knowledge of occult dynamics, upon material which, together with the "writing substance," was equally precipitated from the surrounding astral "storehouse." The process, moreover, was accomplished at varying distances of hundreds or thousands of miles, with or without the intermediary of a regular postoffice at the point of destination. The envelopes were produced in the same manner.

It is to be fully expected that the above account may be considered by some readers as verging on the fantastic, and that some of them may very easily relegate the whole statement to the realm of sheer imagination or mere "blind faith" on the part of some crazy devotees.

But the sober fact nevertheless remains that the originals of these Letters have been deposited in the British

Museum, one of the most scholarly, dignified and honoured Institutions of the world, known for its unimpeachable integrity and good faith. These originals can be consulted upon proper application to the authorities in charge. There is not the slightest possibility of a "hoax" perpetrated by the British Museum upon credulous people, nor can there be any doubt of the further fact that the Museum must recognize these Letters as being genuine communications.

In the light of the above facts, a question or two suggest themselves. If it is possible for living men, of a very advanced knowledge of Nature's laws, to send to any distance whatsoever matter or substance in a state of sublimation yet unknown to modern science, and to re-integrate it at the point of destination in any desirable form, with words impressed upon it, expressive of certain thoughts—would it not be equally possible for beings far in advance of terrestrial mankind to project earthward substances which would temporarily appear to our senses as "flying saucers" or other objects unfamiliar to us? Would it not be possible for such beings to withdraw these temporarily and only partially materialized objects or forms, and to gather from their substance, or from the field of their magnetic energies, whatever information may be required by them regarding this terrestrial sphere of life and its inhabitants?

It should be carefully borne in mind that the majority of "saucers" and other similar objects sighted in various parts of the world have had a tendency to disappear with great suddenness, a suddenness which may

have been interpreted by observers as a sudden acceleration of speed. This fact appears to us as being of primary importance, and might well be directly connected with the actual "dematerialization" of the object at one or another point in space.

It is a well known fact of occult dynamics that unless a materialized object is properly "fixed," it will not remain substantial and tangible for any length of time. If "fixed," however, it remains permanently as objective and material as any other.

On the basis of existing facts, such as those connected with the Letters from the Adept-Brothers, it becomes quite plausible to speculate on the possibility of "flying" saucers being objectivized currents of some extra-terrestrial substance, projected and guided by highly intelligent beings for purposes best known to themselves. These currents of substance, however, do not have to come necessarily from the well known physical planets officially studied by astronomy. Such a view would limit Nature and its storehouse of possibilities. There may be scores of planetary bodies in surrounding space whose substance cannot be perceived by our physical senses, or even our psychospiritual senses, unless trained to do so by severe spiritual disciplines over long periods of time. That such invisible bodies actually exist in space—and maybe far nearer to us than imagined—is fully authenticated today by the research of that new science which is gradually developing under the name of Radio-Astronomy. Scientists engaged in it testify that many centers in space have been localized from which definite sound-

patterns issue, although nothing can be seen there by means of telescopes. It is suspected that bodies of one or another kind are located in those regions, whose vibratory rate makes it impossible for our sense of sight to perceive them.

It is highly significant to find that on page 170 of the book we have been discussing, *The Mahatma Let-*

*ters to A. P. Sinnett*, the statement is made to the effect that "Science will hear sounds from certain planets before she sees them. This is a *prophecy* . . ." The statement was made by Mahatma K. H. and the Letter was received at Simla in October, 1882.

After all, may be the "saucers" aren't exactly "flying"!

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## ON "FINDING FAULT"

ANN LLOYD

"Unto thee who findeth no fault I now make known this most mysterious knowledge." Was this meant for the "expounders of the letter of the law," or for those who refuse to take without question the persons and circumstances they meet in life? Fortunately, the critics have told us that criticism can concern values as well as faults. We also know that we could not know good without evil, optimism without pessimism, and ideals without failures to test their value. Then should we ignore the existence of evil and become critics of critics?

Patience with life is a wonderful thing. It very often keeps us from complete discouragement with things as they are, and reminds us of what they might be. It helps us to face others as they really are, and yet find no fault with the fact they are here with us to be understood.

Couldn't we say that complaint is the only harmful aspect of criticism, something "out of harmony with the scheme of Nature"—due to wrong thinking, as W. Q. Judge reminds us,

But then it isn't the recognizing of "wrong thinking" that is bad, but the failure to do anything about it! Have you ever known one of those rare individuals who can complain constantly of society and life in general and still do something quite effective in another direction toward his ideal? Sometimes such men are recognized years later—writers whose private letters or diaries show more daily hope for humanity than their works reveal, or poets whose last line brings a word of encouragement.

One of the fundamental ideas of Theosophy is that "The Self is within all things, yet is without them all." We learn to understand that the soul knows its own, and that at each step in evolution we come to realize that what we once were aware of as reality cannot comprehend what we now *think* we have reached. If knowing Truth means seeing both good and evil as aspects of the One reality, perhaps discrimination without "finding fault" is the key to criticism.

## GREAT ACTIONS

JAMES O'CONNELL.

If we would have great actions, said Emerson, let us make our own so. This is an open challenge, and all must meet it sooner or later, if we would not be driven like cattle or follow like sheep. And the sooner we prepare to meet it the better. It is essential that we prepare to meet a challenge that involves the raising of action to the level of greatness. The preparation involves neither more nor less than obtaining an understanding of what great action really is, or if you prefer, what it is not.

Many of us entertain very erroneous ideas about great action. We imagine that it is reserved for those who are in high stations, for instance, the President and members of Congress who make the laws for the country, or for the Governor and members of State Legislature who make the state laws. We have but to call history into the witness box to show the absurdity of such an idea. Socrates, who walked the streets of Athens barefooted, seeking whom he might converse with on matters pertaining to Philosophy, Truth, and Justice, and for the express purpose of drawing attention to those matters in which his own attention was completely absorbed, performed greater actions than were done by the men who held the reins of the Government of Athens in their hands. Shakespeare, who was almost unknown in his day, did more for England than did the members of the Royal Family, or of the House of Parliament. And

America's debt to Emerson, a man who renounced the Ministry so as to be free to live according to the dictates of his conscience, is incalculable. He is a source of inspiration for thousands, which is as much as can be said of any of those who make the country's laws.

Another misleading idea that is entertained by many in regard to great action, is that which limits it to big business, such as the building of a bridge, a subway, or anything that appears big to the naked eye. We heartily approve of the building of bridges and subways that can be seen by the physical eye. They are useful in their way. But far more useful, because far more necessary, are the invisible bridges that we may build with our thoughts to help us pass over the darkness of sectarian religions, into the light of truth. But be that as it may, any action that is sanctioned by necessity, when rightly performed, is a great action.

Socrates, Shakespeare, and Emerson had clear ideas in regard to great action. They regarded the whole world as their country and they acted accordingly. They were not ambitious, but worked as those do who are ambitious. They coveted that power which made them seem as nothing in the eyes of men, but which enabled them to make their work a labor of love, which is the acme of great action.

The superior man is the providence of the inferior. He is eyes for the blind, strength for the weak, and a shield for the defenceless. He stands erect by bending over the fallen. He rises by lifting others.

—Robert G. Ingersoll.

## I WANT TO BE AN ASPIRANT!

SVEN BEK

The other day a new friend of mine almost carelessly tossed these words to me, as she left my house to return to the everyday duties of life. It did not startle me, as I have indeed heard that aspiration made vocal many times before, but the history of the young lady had those curious karmic threads interwoven in it which defy the claim of coincidence.

A couple of years ago I met her professionally and was interested in her *snatching at any life buoy on the sea of spiritual living*. It was this and that and another thing, but beneath it all one sensed the earnestness of a genuine searcher after truth. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you," and her knock was sincere. She had decided to join a friend in New York, but during the middle of her journey she met someone who evidently was able to open the door through which she intuitively felt that she should go.

The theory behind the doctrine of the twice-born Brahmans is of course based on the material and the spiritual birth of a human being. Sometimes we have to wait for the moment of physical death ere the spiritual is strong enough to leave its womb. Death-bed conversions to the several faiths all over the world are evidence of this failure of the spiritual to assert itself during the lifetime of the human pilgrim. Fortunate, indeed, is the man who is able to find himself physically, mentally and spiritually while young enough to make life complete. *Mens sana in corpore sano* (a sound mind in a sound body) gave ancient Rome the mastery of the

world. So it would today also. If our existence is solely concerned with the solution of financial and emotional problems, then the day will come when an all-pervading sense of emptiness will leave us utterly bereft of hope with no understanding of life and its purpose of schooling the student and the aspirant to become that for which he has been destined.

We must reevaluate our assets in terms of eternity. If our minds and souls are indeed hitched to a star, we shall not have to worry about the horse falling down dead in its tracks. Friendships are assets, they are not temporary attachments, but capital invested over a span of many lives; *the latter can be said of enmities as well*. Friends and enemies of the future are made today and sorrows of our tomorrows are created during every passing moment of the day. The story is told of a very wise Hindu woman who was able to see fifty of her past lives, and she could not understand why she had been made to suffer so cruelly during her present existence. Her six sons had died under very bitter circumstances and she had lost all her earthly belongings; her friends had deserted her in her hour of need. She went to a wise man to ask for his advice and spiritual aid. She repeated the story of her ability to see the events of her past fifty lives. The guru said: "but had you been able to see back for fifty-one lives, then you would have understood why you have had to suffer so much in this one."

We cannot put off becoming an

aspirant if our hearts and minds have become awakened; neither can we force a development for which we are not karmically fitted. Let us be each other's teachers and each other's pu-

pils, and we shall then learn the inevitable lessons faster and better. When the day of Initiation comes around we shall have to walk the pathway alone.

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## WIDER PATTERNS OF CHRISTIANITY

L. KAVONNE

Is Christianity dying? Almost daily articles appear in newspapers telling of the destruction of foreign missions, Christian idols, and the arrest of persons affiliated with Christian institutions. Some of the difficulties various Christian churches have had to cope with have not been on foreign soil, but right within their own congregations and parishes. Lately there appears to be more opposition to so-called Christian teachings and institutions than in previous years.

Why is this? Some will say it's political intervention, others will contend that the potentates of the churches do not exercise sufficient power to hold the people in the grasp of the church, and a few may think and even possibly voice their opinion that the present form of Christian teaching is not acceptable as Truth. Out of curiosity several people were asked for their opinions of the Bible and the Christian churches, and their answers were most interesting. One woman replied she believed in a supreme being, but could not accept the teaching of most churches because she thought they were money-minded, and would condone any wrong activities on the part of their members, if the members offered money to have their sins forgiven. This woman wanted a more logical and sincere teaching

than most churches could offer. Another woman, queried about her church and beliefs, was so completely propagandized by her religion's doctrines that she had never contested anything she was told by the officials of her church; to her the teachings of her church represented the only "true" religion. A man who once belonged to the same church as this woman replied that he did not have any respect for the teachings of this church because, in his opinion, it had lost all contact with the true meaning of religion and had become full of pagentry and politics. After talking to these people and others, and also noticing consistently pertinent news items in the papers, magazines, newscasts, etc., one begins to wonder if Christian believers are challenging their own teachings, if the mass-conversion to Christianity is on the decline, and if people are really beginning to think for themselves. Some devoutly religious persons will worry over this increasing lack of interest in conventional religious thought, but in reality it is not a disturbing influence, if its possible outcome is considered.

First, the real teachings of Christ have become horribly conflicting and confused, causing many divisions resulting in thousands of sects, each claiming to uphold the "only true

teachings of Christ." Such a welter of religious institutions and claims only makes the present day concept of Christianity appear ridiculous and defeats the purpose of every church. With so many varied offers of the "only true teachings" people will become skeptical, and begin to indulge in serious thinking for themselves regarding spiritual teachings. Only then can any real spiritual and religious progress be made. There is a universal movement of serious spiritual thinking going on today.

Second, in most churches Christ has been upheld as the supreme teacher—more often the only teacher. This creates an erroneous idea that civilizations prior to his time were unworthy of receiving any spiritual instruction and teaching. According to the Bible, such an idea is contrary to Jesus' own words. There were many great men contributing to the spiritual guidance of humanity, not just one, yet Christianity and its present churches largely ignore the teachings of other great souls, or if they choose to recognize them at all, they refer to them as heretical. The great ancient spiritual doctrines have been obscured

to the majority for many centuries, having been overshadowed by a fictitious form of religion; now, with the slow but steady decline of religious fairy-tales, these ancient truths are being uncovered.

Third, for centuries so-called Christian religions and politics have been controlling factors in the destiny of nations. A religion or spiritual philosophy should be regarded as a sacred spiritual path, so far above political matters that no comparison between them is possible. Yet today the potentates of Christian churches, and of other churches also, put their hope for the survival of their church in political organizations. Such acts only prove the spiritual incapability of present day Christianity.

This change from fairy-tale religion to truth will not be revolutionary but evolutionary. It will be slow but constant. If we observe what is taking place in our lifetime, it will become obvious that Christianity, as it has been "preached" and "enforced" in the past, is slowly decaying. Out of this fermentation arises a new desire for Truth.

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#### PROMOTION FUND—

Our sincere thanks to all who have remembered us of late in connection with our Promotion Fund. We trust they will continue to have it in mind. The following donations have been received between October 1st and December 1st, 1952:

A.B. \$5.48; K.S.Z. \$3.60; L.V. \$1.50; W.M.C. \$0.50; Anon. \$1.00; L.K. \$1.00; E.A.S. \$3.00; N.R. \$0.50; A.J.T. \$8.50; G.F. \$0.50; M.H.C. \$3.00; H.F.H. \$1.00; T.M. \$3.00.

## I WOULD LIKE TO ASK . . .

*Theosophia* would welcome receiving from subscribers and friends any Questions they may like to ask regarding the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom and their application to daily life. Any type of Question is welcome, with the exception of subjects bordering on political or sectarian matters, or organizational and personal differences.

*Is there any explanation in the Esoteric Philosophy concerning the kind of communication, if any, between the planets of the solar system, the suns of a galaxy or between one galaxy and another? Also between plant and plant, or mineral and mineral. Do they really "talk" in their own way to each other?*

The Esoteric Philosophy teaches that everything throughout Nature is indissolubly bound together and related to each other, and that these bonds or ties exist on all the planes of the cosmic structure, visible and invisible. So that everything is, we might say, in constant communication with everything else, in close touch with all that is, and partakes in this way of everything that lives.

Very little specific information has been given out concerning the kind of communication that exists between the various portions of the solar system or between the various systems of a galaxy. This subject is an aspect of the more general teaching concerning the *Circulations of the Universe*, under which heading are to be understood the various tenets regarding the perigrinations of the Monads through the outer and inner spheres of the solar system.

There is a constant flow of entities of various kinds between all the planes and spheres which make up the structure of the Universe, or of any specific portion of it. The cosmic

structure, on any of its planes, has its own vascular system and network of inter-communicating channels, just as the human body has. Life-energies of a cosmic nature flow through them, as does the blood-stream in our own bodies.

The Law of Analogy would suggest that there must exist close contact of an intellectual-spiritual kind between the cosmic entities or beings who preside over, and actually are the informing Consciousnesses of, the various solar, planetary, and even galactic systems.

The same would apply to plants and minerals and the greater part of the animal kingdom. Recent research on "inaudible sounds" has shown that we are surrounded all the time by a whole ocean of sounds which our ears cannot perceive. It is most likely that further research will show the existence of "colors" which our eyes cannot cognize. It is by means of these sounds and colors that the various lower kingdoms communicate with each other. But it should be distinctly borne in mind that we would be wrong in ascribing to the lower kingdoms consciousness of the human type, the latter being consciousness which recognizes itself and which we term self-consciousness. The lower kingdoms are conscious on their own planes, and with a consciousness specific to their own scale of evolution. Their means of inter-communication

are in harmony with, and appropriate to, their states of consciousness.

This applies to the human race also. Inter-communication between men depends upon their state of consciousness and the condition of their various evolving organs of sense. The First Root-Race of this our Fourth Round—called the ethereal or astral Sons of Yoga or “Self-born”—was speechless, because it had no mind on our plane. The Second Root-Race possessed a sort of sound-language, made up of chant-like sounds composed of vowels alone. The vowels therefore are the most ancient structural elements of “speech”, and in them inhere certain occult powers which the magician knows how to use. The Third Root-Race continued the evolution of “speech” by means of improvements upon earlier stages, copying some of the animal sounds in surrounding Nature. The rudiments of actual speech began to develop in the second half of the Third Root-Race, when the still *mindless* race began to divide into the two opposite sexes.

It should be remembered that the development of language goes on parallel lines with the development of reasoning faculties. First came monosyllabic speech of the closing periods of the Third Root-Race, after the separation of the sexes and the awakening of mind; then came the agglutinative languages of the main portion of the Fourth Root-Race, the

Atlanteans; these, in their turn evolved into the inflectional language which the most highly developed sub-races of the Fourth Root-Race passed on to the nascent Fifth Root-Race.

Analogy would suggest again that speech, as we know it today, will become recessive, as evolution proceeds, so that the higher Root-Races of future ages will communicate with each others rather by thought-transference (of which we know today but the earlier stages) than by means of speech made up of words. This stage would include “sounds”, analogous to the First Root-Race stage, but of course it will then be a fully conscious knowledge of the power of sound and of its higher co-relations, used by human beings of a highly spiritual state.

Intuitive students should be able to find their own analogies between what has been said regarding the evolution of language in the human race, and the gradual development of speech in our own childhood. The stages through which the race, as a whole, has passed, are reflected and repeated, on smaller scales, and gone through in one form or another in the early years of our individual incarnated lives. As above, so below.

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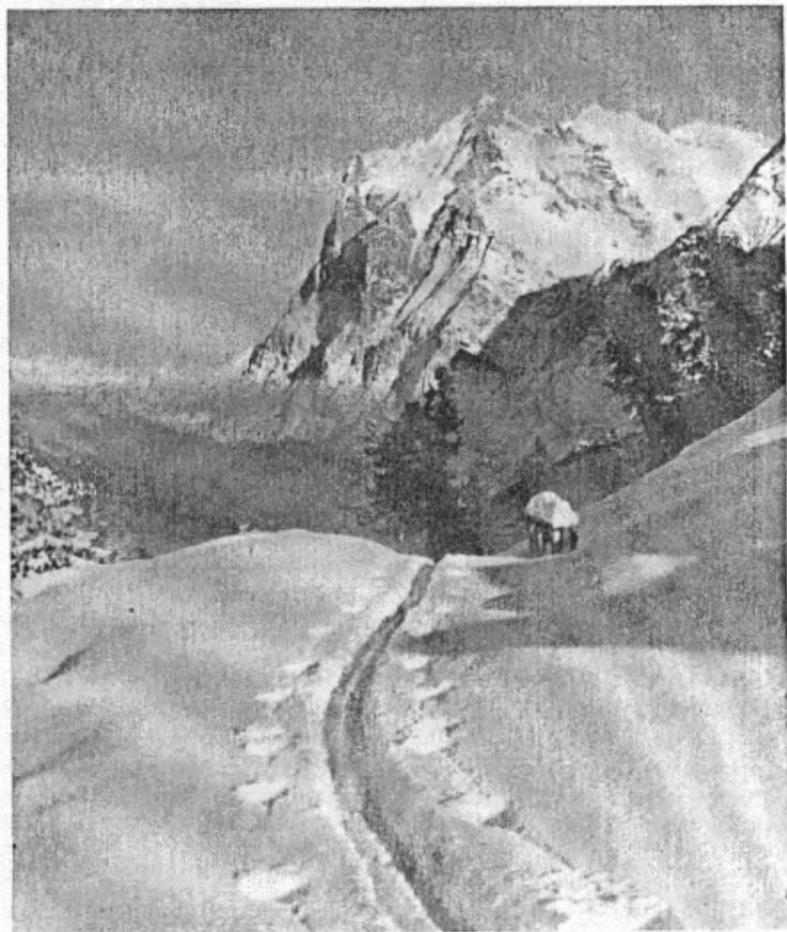
[For more detailed information concerning speech, consult *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, pp. 198-201, orig. edition.]

# THEOSOPHIA

*A LIVING PHILOSOPHY FOR HUMANITY*

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## THEOSOPHIA

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*The Editor is responsible for unsigned articles only.*

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### THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

"Is a great war necessary to make all people better and to make them see the errors which they have experienced?"

"My answer is No, and that this is a damnable doctrine. This is a doctrine from hell. Certainly not. When men are wise enough and use their hearts as well as their brains, war will be looked upon as a nightmare of the past. Ask the doctors if a man needs to have a high fever in order to get health. A high fever weakens him, depletes his store of vitality, and the body is weaker for ever afterwards as long as it lives.

"On the other hand, out of evil will come good. Suffering and sorrow are our best friends. This is the other side. But when I am asked if suffering and sorrow in the form of war, which is insanity, are required in order that men may evolve, my answer is No, and this is an infernal doctrine."

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"Has Christianity as a world religion run its race? Is it about to die?"

"I believe—I may be wrong, but it is my innermost conviction, that there is the possibility for a renaissance of primitive Christianity in the West. It will be when among the ranks of the clergy there shall be found some courageous and high-minded enough to trace back the origins of their grand teaching, their theology, to Pagan antiquity, finding brotherhood in the fellow-thoughts of the ancient races, of Egypt especially, of Greece, yes, even of Rome. For then the religion of the West will have fresh blood flowing through its veins, a new revelation will have come, arising from the spirit, and a new illumination thrown upon the secrets of the past. Then Christianity will be properly understood, and will be seen to be grand; for primitive Christianity was grand because it was the same as Theosophy, the original wisdom of the Gods."

—G. de Purucker in *Studies in Occult Philosophy*, pp. 580-81 and 530-31.

## HORIZONS WITHOUT END!

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

The hallmark of a true Theosophist is a readiness to receive new truths and to adapt himself to the ever-changing karmic pattern of life. This he must do without relinquishing any of the principles of thought and conduct already won in former struggles, and without falling a victim to the psychic nostrums and high-sounding promises of visionaries.

Amidst the confusion of men's self-seeking motives, and the bewildering chaos of selfish passions whipped into fury by their mutually antagonistic objectives, the Theosophist is expected to stand firm upon the ground of his own *inner certainty*, without losing sight, even for one moment, of the Light which burns in the deeper recesses of his heart.

Face to face with established opinions and deep-rooted traditions, most of which are but different names for entrenched self-conceit and crystallized mental and emotional moulds, he must be ready to widen his understanding of any fact of nature in the light of a greater installment of Truth, and to align his former knowledge with yet deeper levels of potential knowledge.

Without abandoning one iota of spiritual and intellectual Truth already living within his consciousness as a power for good, he must expect at any time new pathways of research to open up before his gaze, and new realizations to dawn upon the horizon of his vision.

Unshaken in his positive knowledge concerning certain laws of Nature, he must, nevertheless, be prepared to be challenged at any time in any department of thought, and be placed before facts of Nature never before thought of; and he must feel a keen enjoyment in the process whereby his former views, relatively true and good,

are for ever being broadened and deepened, by the mysterious alchemy of karmic action, and the exhilarating power of transmutation constantly working throughout Nature to unveil still hidden verities.

Whenever and wherever there exist students of Theosophy whose minds and hearts are open to the reception of new Light, the Theosophical Movement is a living power and a great promise. Whenever and wherever individuals or groups exist whose "established" opinions and hallowed "traditions" take the supremacy over the ever-changing, flowing, swirling current of Truth, the Theosophical Movement is virtually moribund, and a particle of static Truth has already become the corner-stone of a sect or an institution.

The true attitude of a student of Theosophy should be one of expectancy and research; expectancy of new Truths to become visible on the horizon, and research into departments of Nature not yet touched by the most venturesome among the pioneers of thought. He must feel at home in change, and welcome progressive ideas which dynamite concreted forms and release the hidden life-stream which has originally given them their temporary value among men.

It should therefore never be forgotten that Theosophy is not a set of doctrines, but a living Reality; it is not a belief with clauses which define it, but an ever-widening realization of Truth; it is not an organization, a sect, a mere school of thought, but a spiritual current whose momentum carries man's consciousness onward and upward, along the pathway to his spiritual home, the mystic land of Eternal Dawn, beyond the Gates of Gold . . . . .

## IS THE DESIRE TO "LIVE" SELFISH?

H. P. BLAVATSKY

[Originally published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, No. 10, July 1884, pp. 242-43]

The passage "to Live, to live, TO LIVE must be his unswerving resolve," occurring in the article on "*The Elixir of Life*", published in the March and April Number of Vol. III of *The Theosophist*—is often quoted, by superficial readers unsympathetic with the Theosophical Society, as an argument that the above teaching of occultism is the most concentrated form of selfishness. In order to determine whether the critics are right or wrong, the meaning of the word "selfishness" must first be ascertained.

According to an established authority, selfishness is that "exclusive regard to one's own interest or happiness; that supreme self-love or self-preference which leads a person to direct his purposes to the advancement of his own interest, power, or happiness, without regarding those of others."

In short, an absolutely selfish individual is one who cares for himself and none else, or, in other words, one who is so strongly imbued with a sense of importance of his own personality that to him it is the acme of all his thoughts, desires and aspirations and beyond that all is a perfect blank. Now, can an occultist be then said to be "selfish" when he desires to live in the sense in which that word is used by the writer of the article "*The Elixir of Life*"? It has been said over and over again that the ultimate end of every aspirant after occult knowledge is *Nirvana* or *Mukti*, when the individual, freed from all *Mayavic Upadhi*, becomes one with *Paramatma*, or the Son identifies himself with the Father in Christian phraseology. For that purpose, every veil of illusion which creates a sense of personal isolation, a feeling of separateness from THE ALL, must be torn asunder, or in other words, the aspirant must gradually discard all sense of selfishness with which we are all more or less affected. A study of the Law of Cosmic Evolution teaches us that the higher the evolution, the more does it tend towards Unity. In fact, Unity is the ultimate possibility of Nature, and those who through vanity and selfishness go against her purposes, cannot but incur the punishment of total annihilation. The Occultist thus recognizes that unselfishness and a feeling of universal philanthropy are the inherent law of our being, and all he does is to attempt to destroy the chains of selfishness forged upon us all by *Maya*. The struggle then between Good and Evil, God and Satan, Suras and Asuras, Devas and Daityas, which is mentioned in the sacred books of all the nations and races, symbolizes the battle between unselfish and the selfish impulses, which takes place in a man, who tries to follow the higher purposes of Nature, until the lower animal tendencies, created by selfishness, are completely conquered, and the enemy thoroughly routed and annihilated. It has also been often put forth in various theosophical and other occult writings that the only difference between an ordinary man who works along with Nature during the course of cosmic evolution and an occultist, is that the latter, by his superior knowledge, adopts such methods of training and discipline as will hurry on that process of evolution, and he thus reaches in a comparatively

very short time that apex to ascend to which the ordinary individual may take perhaps billions of years. In short, in a few thousand years he approaches that form of evolution which ordinary humanity will attain to perhaps in the sixth or the seventh round during the process of *Manvantara*, i.e., cyclic progression. It is evident that average man cannot become a MAHATMA in one life, or rather in one incarnation. Now those, who have studied the occult teachings concerning *Devachan* and our after-states, will remember that between two incarnations there is a considerable period of subjective existence. The greater the number of such *Davachanic* periods, the greater is the number of years over which this evolution is extended. The chief aim of the occultist is therefore to so control himself as to be able to control his future states, and thereby gradually shorten the duration of his *Devachanic* states between his two incarnations. In his progress, there comes a time when, between one physical death and his next re-birth, there is no *Devachan* but a kind of spiritual sleep, the shock of death, having, so to say, stunned him into a state of unconsciousness from which he gradually recovers to find himself reborn, to continue his purpose. The period of this sleep may vary from twenty-five to two hundred years, depending upon the degree of his advancement. But even this period may be said to be a waste of time, and hence all his exertions are directed to shorten its duration so as to gradually come to a point when the passage from one state of existence into another is almost imperceptible. This is his last incarnation, as it were, for the shock of death no more stuns him. This is the idea the writer of the article "The Elixir of Life" means to convey, when he says:—

"By or about the time when the Death-limit of his race is passed, HE IS ACTUALLY DEAD, in the ordinary sense, that is to say, that he has relieved himself of all or nearly all such material particles as would have necessitated in disruption the agony of dying. He has been dying gradually during the whole period of his Initiation. The catastrophe cannot happen twice over. He has only spread over a number of years the mild process of dissolution which others endure from a brief moment to a few hours. The highest Adept is, in fact, dead to, and absolutely unconscious of, the world; he is oblivious of its pleasures, careless of its miseries, in so far as sentimentalism goes, for the stern sense of Duty never leaves him blind to its very existence . . ."

The process of the emission and attraction of atoms, which the occultist controls, has been discussed at length in that article and in other writings. It is by these means that he gets rid gradually of all the old gross particles of his body, substituting for them finer and more ethereal ones, till at last the former *sthula sarira* is completely dead and disintegrated and he lives in a body entirely of his own creation, suited to his work. That body is essential for his purpose, for, as the "Elixir of Life" says:—

"But to do good, as in everything else, a man *must* have time and materials to work with, and this is a necessary means to the acquirement of powers by which infinitely more good can be done than without them. When these are once mastered, the opportunities to use them will arrive . . ."

In another place, in giving the practical instructions for that purpose, the same article says:

"The physical man must be rendered more ethereal and sensitive; the mental man more penetrating and profound; the moral man more self-denying and philosophical."

The above important considerations are lost sight of by those who snatch away from the context the following passage in the same article:

"And from this account too, it will be perceptible how foolish it is for people to ask the Theosophist to procure for them communication with the highest Adepts. It is with the utmost difficulty that one or two can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs. The ordinary reader will say: This is not *god-like*. This is the acme of selfishness . . . But let him realize that a very high Adept, undertaking to reform the world, would necessarily have to once more submit to Incarnation. And is the result of all that has gone before in that line sufficiently encouraging to prompt a renewal of the attempt?"

Now, in condemning the above passage as inculcating selfishness, superficial readers and thinkers lose sight of various important considerations. In the first place, they forget the other extracts already quoted which impose *self-denial* as a necessary condition of success, and which say that, with progress, new senses and new powers are acquired with which infinitely more good can be done than without them. The more spiritual the Adept becomes, the less can he meddle with *mundane, gross* affairs and the more he has to confine himself to a spiritual work. It has been repeated, time out of number, that the work on a spiritual plane is as superior to the work on an intellectual plane as the one on the latter plane is superior to that on a physical plane. The very *high* Adepts, therefore, do help humanity, *but only spiritually*: they are constitutionally incapable of meddling with *worldly* affairs. But this applies only to very high Adepts. There are various degrees of Adeptship, and those of each degree work for humanity on the planes to which they may have risen. It is only the *chelas* that can live in the world, until they rise to a certain degree. And it is because the *Adepts* do care for the world that they make their *chelas* live in and work for it, as many of those who study the subject are aware. Each cycle produces its own occultists who will be able to work for the humanity of those times on all the different planes; but when the Adepts foresee that at a particular period the then humanity will be incapable of producing occultists for work on particular planes, for such occasions they do provide by either giving up voluntarily their further progress and waiting in those particular degrees until humanity reaches that period, or by refusing to enter into *Nirvana* and submitting to re-incarnation in time to reach those degrees when humanity will require their assistance at that stage. And although the world may not be aware of the fact, yet there are even now certain Adepts who have preferred to remain *statu quo* and refuse to take the higher degrees, for the benefit of the future generations of humanity. In short, as the Adepts work harmoniously, since unity is the fundamental law of their being, they have as it were made a division of labour, according to which each works on the plane at the time allotted to him, for the spiritual elevation of us all—and the process of longevity mentioned in "The Elixir of Life" is only the means to the end which, far from being selfish, is the most unselfish purpose for which a human being can labour.

## THE HINDU TRINITY

NANCY BROWNING

In these trying times we look about in awe at the destruction taking place all around us. We cringe as we contemplate the newest inventions of destruction created by man's fertile and feverish mind. And if we have a smattering of Oriental philosophy, we are amazed to think of the Hindu worshipping a god named Siva, the god of destruction. Why should this be? Why idolize something which destroys life? As in many instances, this is a case of little knowledge being a dangerous thing.

Siva was not set apart as a separate god to be worshipped alone, but rather as one aspect of life which is inseparable and linked with the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

Allegorically presented, these three gods were the three functions of nature. Brahma, the creating force; Vishnu, the sustaining force, and Siva, the destructive force. These are the functions of natural laws and go on simultaneously rather than following each other in succession. We know that the human body undergoes constant, unceasing changes, for new elements and atoms are coming into being at all times, while others die, or, rather change form and leave the body. A sustaining force is necessary to hold the body together under this bombardment of atoms. So that, as in the human body, these three forces are constantly at work in nature in all its manifested forms.

This trinity is actually a spiritual power completely devoid of emotions as we know them. Life could not be

without the constant action of this trinity. But this trinity can only apply to forms, obviously. For consciousness is indestructible and is at home anywhere in this vast and spaceless universe. What a joyous cosmic thought! "I am infinite and eternal, and the highest reaches of this mighty realm are mine and welcome me!"

But since we are imprisoned in form and most of us have not yet learned to free our consciousness and take flight, it is soothing to realize that actually Siva means new creation. It should not be sad, for whatever has met seeming destruction has actually been freed from its prison to evolve further and higher.

Brahma is the spring of life, the child, the new leaves on the trees, all that is young and experiencing growth. It is the dawn of a new day, the start of a new year. It is the relative beginning and we love it.

Vishnu is more mellow. It is a maturity like summer lying over a meadow of ripened corn. It is the prime of life—that split second in eternity when time stands still and a man may say, "I am complete; I am in full flower."

Siva is old age, the winter, the closing act of a great universal pageant, or the dying chords of a loved symphony.

Think of a woodland brook hurrying on toward the great waters. As it enlarges, it finds a silver pool and seems to rest awhile basking in reflected light. But it continues onward and finally reaches a mighty ocean and pours itself into it and

is lost in its vastness. Is this sad?

So meditate upon these wonderful life forces. Look about you and recognize them. Go forth and see the earth blanketed in snow or lying fallow. See the naked tree leaning its bare branches against a cold, grey sky, and know that the earth is throbbing and pulsing with new life and very much awake and active. In the tree

the sap is rising, and it will soon be spring again.

So it is with you and me: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter in an endless cycle, forever and ever, until form is no longer our Karmic burden. Then we shall survey the dance of life from the higher reaches and know it for what it really is—a joyous, cosmic manifestation, to be loved, revered, and smiled upon.

## THE ANCIENT WISDOM PRESERVED THROUGH MYTH AND LEGEND

L. GORDON PLUMMER

There is one way by which the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom have been preserved for humanity, and it is perhaps the best way that could have been devised. This is through the medium of the myths and legends that have been handed down to us from so many races. Although we moderns have the tendency to scoff at them as if they were meaningless stories founded upon outmoded superstitions, the fact nevertheless remains that each group of legends still carries its own vitality, and a subtle atmosphere still surrounds them. One cannot read the old Greek, Welsh, Scandinavian, Hindu, American Indian, Peruvian, or Egyptian legends without feeling certain indefinable responses which, I have always felt, are an inward recognition of deep philosophical teachings which are concealed in these stories.

In this connection I would like to take just one instance from the Scandinavian Myths because it is so apt to our present study. So I would like to consider the meaning of the World-Tree, Yggdrasill. You remember that

this tree is pictured as having its roots in the abode of the Gods, and its leaves and branches as forming the world. What a marvelous symbol! It is capable of so many interpretations. It can be shown to be a symbol of the Esoteric Philosophy, wherein the trunk represents the one fundamental proposition that underlies the whole philosophy, and which can be stated in one brief sentence. This one thought is the gateway to an understanding of the deepest mysteries concerning Cosmic and Human life. Briefly, it is this: *Man and the Universe are one.* A full and complete grasp of this primal truth involves an understanding of the inner structure of the worlds, the Solar System, the Galaxy, and the endless systems of Galaxies with which modern science is so concerned at the present time. And equally marvelous, it also involves an understanding of the nature of Man, which is as complex a study as any that may be undertaken about the nature of the Universe around us. It is so complex because the various elements of the universe have a direct bearing upon the

various elements in the human constitution, and the evolution and destiny of the one are inextricably linked to the evolution and destiny of the other.

I propose to show how the Tree Yggdrasill represents the various aspects of the Esoteric Philosophy, all stemming from this one primary concept, the oneness of Man and the Universe, as the limbs and branches all stem from the trunk of the tree. Before enumerating some of these aspects of the Ancient Wisdom, however, I would like to touch briefly on some other interpretations of the symbol.

The trunk of the tree may be taken to represent the Ancient Wisdom which is rooted in the Divine Consciousness which is the Heart of the Universe. All the important religions of the world are as the branches of the Tree of Knowledge, and all derive their vitality from the trunk, whether the followers of these religious systems know it or not. The great philosophies and sciences that have lighted the pathway for the human race are likewise branches stemming from the trunk of the Tree, and whereas their approach to the problems of life and death may be different, their purpose is the same—to bring to the human race a fuller understanding of the meaning of life.

Again, the trunk of the Tree may be taken to represent the essential spark of Divinity which is the core of every human being, and from this Divine spark radiate all the energies and faculties that result in the highly complex structure that we call Man. There are many kinds of trees, and there are many kinds of human be-

ings. Some trees are evergreens, and are beautiful throughout the years. They are like the Great Ones whose strong influence is felt throughout the centuries. Then there are the deciduous trees that lose their leaves in the winter. Perhaps a great many of us humans who seem to have lost the knowledge of our Divine Selves are like these trees that have shed their leaves for a time, and in which the life-giving sap has been indrawn during the winter months, so that to all outward appearances the tree seems to be dead. But for these trees there is another Spring ahead in which they will come to leaf and flower, and so also for the large portion of the human race that neither knows nor cares, there is always another Spring. Well may we be optimistic knowing that the Divine Life is always present in reality, and though outwardly the world seems to be in the winter-time of its spiritual understanding, we may look forward to a time of new growth and beauty.

The student of the Esoteric Philosophy may prefer an interpretation of the Tree which extends beyond our world alone, to include the Solar System as a whole. The trunk of the Tree may represent then the Divine Consciousness which is at the heart of the Father-Sun, and the limbs and branches are then seen to represent the Planets, forming as they do a marvelous *Tree of Life inhabited* by numberless races and classes of beings, the so-called "kingdoms" on the earth being but a few, and representative of the limitless armies of living beings that find their homes throughout the entire Solar System.

And finally, the trunk of the Tree

may represent the Cosmic Consciousness that is behind the operation of the aspect of Nature that is called by some students "the Hierarchy of Compassion." The branches of the Tree are seen to be the lofty beings that operate throughout the various departments of Nature—beings which guide the spiritual destinies of numberless races of sentient beings throughout our own Solar System.

The portion of this Hierarchy of Compassion whose specific province is the spiritual guidance of us Earthlings, appears to us as the Buddhas, the Christs, the Saviors of all ages, whose representatives are among us today. They are known to us collectively as the White Lodge, or the Brotherhood of Adepts, who are interested in and who foster all truly spiritual movements in the world.

So with these several interpretations of the Tree of Life as a background, we may briefly consider a few of the many branches of the Esoteric Philosophy, remembering once again that the trunk represents the fundamental and primal concept: *Man and the Universe are one*. The various branches that spring from this fundamental concept might be enumerated thus:

a) a study of the nature of man;

b) a study of the relation that exists between the human race and the other races of beings on the Earth that we call the kingdoms of nature;

c) a study of the Rounds and Races with its companion study of the building of the Globe Chains;

d) a study of the origin of the Solar System with its companion study, the Outer Rounds; and, following from all these;

e) a study of the mysteries of Death—the wonderful journeyings of the human entity when he has freed himself of the chains of his own forging that bind him to the Earth. And lastly, we may add, and perhaps the most lofty of the branches of the study, is

f) that which has to do with Initiation, and which ties together all the other branches, for it is in Initiation that the Adept experiences what we can study by instruction only. It is in Initiation that the Adept makes the wonderful peregrinations through the Spaces of Space, and comes to know at first-hand the sublime adventure of Death.

Do we not feel an expansion of the consciousness when we consider these lofty themes? Do we not spring at once into realms of thought where the petty differences that hold men apart vanish, and where we can realize the great importance of working together as a body of Searchers for Truth who know the value of that which has been entrusted to them? If we can grasp the meaning of this, the purpose of our study will be magnificently fulfilled.

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"It is difficult for us to free ourselves from the power exerted by our own possessions. The direction of that power is towards the center of our selfhood. The power of perfect Love, however, works in the opposite direction. It is thus that Love frees us from the weight of things. What we need to become free, is not a lessening of the pressure from without, but Love which has the power to carry the burden of the world, not only without tiring, but with actual joy."  
—Rabindranath Tagore.

## ONE TEACHING—MANY CHANNELS

VERNA E. OTT

The annals of history record that there have been periodic, regular, or cyclic efforts made to present to the peoples of the earth what appears to be a set of basic principles. These principles have been variously clothed to meet the needs of the times, and those who have presented them have appeared among men in the guises of King-Initiates, Teachers, Artisans, Prophets and Law-makers—to name but a few. But beneath the cloak, of whatever cut or color, one can find the same principles: One Sustaining Life; One Immutable Law pervading that Life, expressing itself in eternal motion; One Conscious, pulsating Being, united in diversity, with all its units striving toward self-conscious realization.

Always a Way has been presented to each people, consistent with the particularized evolution of each group. Always there have been those who taught how the Way could be found; they have pointed to the entrance of the Path, and have outlined the first steps. Always there have been those who heard, and hearing, understood; and understanding, *tried*. Some few of those who tried found the Way. And always there have been those who heard, and because they did not understand, turned away. Perhaps another time and from another teacher they shall hear again, and hearing again may be aroused to try to understand.

Of those few in each cycle who

found the Way, some succeeded in treading it—and in treading it found themselves among those who humbly sought to help others who knew more than they did, to bring the Truth of the Way to those who knew still less, and who, having heard, had turned away, or perchance had not heard at all.

A few of those who were *trying* to help in whatever way possible, in order to be worthy to tread the Way, strove to improve their own manner of communication with the rest of humanity, by whatever means seemed best to meet the need. And in a cycle where for the first time the Great Secrets had been alluded to in writing by an Initiate, those who strove to help thought it fitting to use the medium of the printed word as well as the spoken language.

To that end a few banded together to give and to receive aid of each other in clarifying their thoughts, checking the accuracy of their ideas by expressing them to each other and accepting correction by the Teachings as written down by the Initiate whom all of them accepted as knowing more than they did. Thus they sought, both orally and in writing, to further the end of spreading the Truth about the principles of Life and Being, and about the Way one can come to an understanding and realization of those principles—among all who might be reached by the ideas embodied in written words.

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“There are but two ways of rising in the world: either by one’s own industry or profiting by the foolishness of others.” —Jean de la Bruyère

## THE UNKNOWN THEOSOPHY

EILEEN MARGARET WALKER

A book on Reincarnation appears, sanctioned neither by Mahatmas nor by chelas. Those who call themselves—and by others are called—"theosophists" read same and proceed to check it, as they say, against the Teachings. Aha! they exclaim, almost immediately, *this is not to be found on any one of our Sacred Pages; that is an unwarranted speculation, surely, since it has nowhere been indulged in by our Great Authors; and that other statement of this self-delighting writer is bound to make mischief, because not even we understand it!*

A new experiment along age-old lines is quietly attempted by a few who know no more than that they need to learn in order to help and teach others. After half-a-dozen years of trials and essays that would have daunted the most ambitious of men (ambition being noticeably weak when compared to the strength of the selfless), the tiny company slowly begins to hew out its path to a Goal which, to their observation, shone ever more clearly as they surmounted each Hardship Hill.

But lo! comes one who can perceive neither the new idea nor the old truth out of which it came. What matter, to such an one, are the years and the cares endured—or the motive, *the aspiration, and the devotion* that have successfully withstood the tests of the human nature in which they have temporary lodging? The pious passerby is quick in his judgment and certain of its merit; he does not pause to dally with fools whose method differs from The Way. He himself is

too busy *imitating*, not having either the wit or the wisdom, yet, to choose the *path of his own soul* and to advance boldly, confidently, and with single-hearted zeal upon the task of disentangling the subtle mesh of Nidanas—which are cause and effect linked in a chain of universal concatenations.

So move and pass the karmic visions: seen by some, by others dreamed, and slept through by still others. In karmic visions, nevertheless, are the beckonings of the Unknown Theosophy.

Movement is *life* and a static position, *death*, but it must not be imagined that all of the so-called living prefer *Life*. Growth is *change*, and change permits liberation, but the means of resisting all three are universally known, almost as universally practiced, and generally admired.

Yet a Form is a lifeless container, useful not in or of itself, but as something to break out of, as the baby chick pecks through its birth-prison. A Place is a meaningless zero-point in the maya of what men call Space, merely an emptiness to stare away from, as a bird wings off from a dead tree. A Creed is a measure of what we *used to think*; today, we must be up and stirring about for fresh nourishment.

Hence, *if we would know Theosophy, we shall do well to keep our eye fixed upon the Unknown Theosophy*. We cannot walk backward into Spiritual Evolution, gazing always on what we have already learned; we must face the seemingly untrodden track,

and use every sense and sensibility to pick out and learn by heart the lessons of the way. This not simply to keep ourselves amused on the strange and lonely road, but against the time when it will be our turn to render assistance, invisibly, to later travellers (as we ourselves are even now being helped to the extent that our self-will allows and our humility permits).

We are not often allowed to see the helping hand, lest we watch *it* instead of the Path. We are seldom conscious of *how* we find a new freedom, because the discovery is neither marked by familiar signs nor achieved by the usual compound of impatience, impertunity, and wilfulness. Suddenly, we see—where a moment before nothing registered on our vision; or, we hear—and are conscious that the sound existed for some time before we were able to gather it into our ear. We dream—and with the light of day a light breaks, also, on our nightly fancies; comprehension flashes upon us, and in the thrill of new understanding, we omit to notice the source of our illumination!

If we would know Theosophy, let us keep our eye fixed upon the unknown Theosophy, and if we would know that Unknown, let us persever-

ingly step beyond what H. P. Blavatsky, on the first page of *The Secret Doctrine*, calls "the limitation of the human mind." Her footnote on that page, by the bye, sounds a keynote which, if we were wise enough to be her pupils in the Doctrine still a secret to us, would unceasingly reverberate through our mental consciousness, as the buoy's bell sings its one note over the everlasting waves. Do we imagine that the Soul of Man is shut out from "Divine Thought"? Why churn restlessly and forever the "tardy process of ratiocinative thought," when we might aspire—and not in vain—to "a clairvoyant wisdom superior to all consciousness"? Are we apprehensive that the Water of Life may drown us, all in an instant, in a Niagara of Knowledge—if once we open the mind to higher intuitions? Rather, that elixir is collected slowly, drop by drop, in the golden chalice of the quiet heart, wherein compassion lives and calmness reigns.

Let us, then, answer the call of the Unknown, and leaving behind the pain and sorrow of the "living death," taste the never-ending joy of treading a never-ending Path into the Unknown, into the Self.

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#### PROMOTION FUND—

Our sincere thanks for all who have remembered us of late in connection with our Promotion Fund. We trust they will continue to have it in mind. The following donations have been received between December 1st, 1952 and February 1st, 1953.

F.P. \$0.50; L.B. \$2.00; R.F.H. \$3.50; A.W. \$3.50; Anon. \$5.50; W.E.S. \$0.50; K.J. \$1.50; J.O. \$3.50; C.G.L. \$1.50; P.V.C. \$3.50; N.C.L. \$0.50; M.T.P. \$0.50; M.L. \$1.50; C.N.E. \$5.00; \$5.00; M.T. \$5.00; H.L. \$0.50; H.M.L. \$12.50; M.S. \$5.00.

## THE PATHWAY OF LIBERATION

GEORGE CARDINAL LE GROS

Man as Mind stands between the two poles of Spirit and Matter, Divine Love and Personal Attachment, Altruism and Selfishness. His true destiny is to gravitate toward the Pole of Spirit, purifying the body of Matter and transforming it into a worthy servant of the Higher Self. How shall he accomplish this? Let us consider:—

As life follows life, and the soul becomes richer in experience, the desires and urges of both Spirit and Matter, Good and Evil, wax stronger, until an incarnation is reached when a compromise between the two polarities can no longer be maintained. The individual begins to realize that he must make a final break with the selfish, lower nature and identify himself with the Higher, or else be totally absorbed by the powerful animal that can no longer be held at bay with reasonable indulgence. Even human love, the holiest and most beautiful of terrestrial emotions, *unless purified utterly of all selfishness*, becomes, by reason of its increasing strength and intensity, adulterated by jealousy, possessiveness and fear of loss. The mind, now broadened in its scope, realizes that even the object of its devotion—the one beloved—will yet one day be torn away by death, or itself pass on, leaving the loved one behind. Where before its consciousness rested comfortably in the narrow confines of the Present, self-blinded to the briefness of life, it now *knows* that all things, good and ill, must have begin-

nings and ends, that nothing offers permanent support and anchorage. The Garden of Love becomes a thicket of thorns because every attempt to find true peace and happiness therein must now bring eventual sorrow and loss. Human love and passion must be replaced with Divine Love, Compassion, devotion to all that lives.

The mind must then overcome its basic delusion of identification with the physical body. By thinking of the body as nothing other than the house it temporarily lives in, the mind will never yield to its temptations. And with consistent effort it proceeds to conquer the prominent weaknesses of its nature by *developing thought in the direction that will kill each particular passion*. After its first efforts an indescribable vacuum and blankness is felt in the heart, but this is only the soft twilight heralding the sunrise of Spiritual Freedom. Sadness is not an evil. What seem intolerable sufferings and obstacles are often in reality the mysterious means of nature to guide us toward oneness with our Inner God.

Thus do we all eventually awaken to the great Truth of Life, leaving behind us forever the false dreams of happiness that deceived us before. The Way is ahead, not back, and always before us is that *true God of our heart*, waiting compassionately for us, saying: Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest, and peace, and strength.

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“The more extensive a man’s knowledge of what has been done, the greater will be his power of knowing what to do.” —Disraeli.

## REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

JAMES O'CONNELL

Ideas, said Plato, rule the world. A similar thought is expressed in the statement "As a man thinketh so is he". Both statements are based on the perception of the power of mind over matter, a perception which true science arrived at ages ago.

Yes, ideas rule the world, but unfortunately the ruling ideas are not always the soundest. This is especially true of the ruling ideas of the present age which are mostly an offspring of materialistic thinking. Take for example the idea of reward and punishment. This idea has ruled the mind of the Western world for many centuries, and still rules it to a great extent. It rules it under the false pretense of being spiritual, while, in reality, it is a purely materialistic idea. Considered as exact result of thought and act, there is justice in it but considered as the prerogative of a personal God who rewards the good, that is to say, those who worship him, with eternal happiness, and condemns those who do not worship him, to everlasting punishment, it is the acme of injustice, hence a dangerous idea. It stands not only in the way of spiritual progress but even in the way of material happiness, for, as the *Bhagavad-gîtâ* teaches, and as many of us know from experience, "the miserable and unhappy are those whose impulse to action is to be found in its reward." Taking all this into consideration the idea of reward and punishment will be found wanting, as a ruling idea. The thoughtful discard it; the thoughtless—those who blindly believe in authority, will hold on to it to the bitter end, for, as

Thomas Moore said:

"Faith, fanatic faith, once wedded  
fast

To some dear falsehood hugs  
it to the last"

Verily, the idea of reward and punishment, as the prerogative of a personal God, is a very dear falsehood; which explains its fascination for minds that swing, pendulum like, between the hope and fear of gaining or losing, of eternal reward or punishment.

True, we cannot escape the results of our thoughts and acts. Nor should we try to escape them, even if it were possible to do so, as that would be attempting to escape responsibility, yielding to unmanliness, a course of action no true man would countenance. "Death before dishonor," should be our motto for guidance at all times. And what is more dishonorable than yielding to unmanliness? Better, a thousand times better, to shuffle off our mortal coil than yield to unmanliness. If we stand firmly on our manhood, we shall not be disturbed by the results of our actions. We live, move, and have our being, as incarnating egos, in the very midst of the results of our thinking and acting. Our environment is one of the outstanding results of our thoughts and acts, and our attitude toward our environment is an outstanding reward or punishment, for things done, and left undone. Two individuals having the same environment may have entirely different attitudes of mind regarding it, which goes to prove the truth of the old saw that nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so.

We must have proper food for thought, in other words a proper ruling idea, as we journey through life. It is not necessary that we pay attention to the results of our thoughts and actions. As a matter of fact the less we think about reward or punishment, and the more we confine attention to the performance of our duties, the better off we shall be physically, mentally, and morally when we reach our journey's end. For:

"Not enjoyment and not sorrow  
Is our destined end or way  
But to act that each tomorrow  
Finds us farther than today"

These words of Longfellow, express an idea to which we might well subject the rule of our conduct. For there is a deeper fact in the soul, as Emerson said, than compensation, to wit its own nature. The ancient Greeks had written over the doors of their Temples, the words, "Know thyself!" The proper study of mankind is man. It was so in the beginning, it is so now, and will be so until the end. When we become wholeheartedly engaged in this study, we shall have neither the time nor the inclination to think about such ordinary side-issues as reward and punishment.

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## LOYALTY

KAREL DEKKER

Where do feelings of faith and trust originate? In all periods of history, we have read of great loyalties to family, race or what men have held as ideals. Whether for good or evil, all men have this feeling of loyalty. Could it have come down from very ancient times, when the gods lived openly among mankind and the people had faith built on knowledge that justified their loyalty to those divine instructors and what they represented?

This sense of devotion or loyalty is a thread running through our lives. Sometimes we look back on this thread-path and see the trail extending from the physical plane of matter to the highest spiritual idea that we can conceive. This path of loyalty is often a very bumpy one, for many of us know the experience of misplaced loyalty to another person, and the heartaches that it can bring. We must question

what we are being loyal to: a person, a place, an idea or a true spiritual ideal. This rocky road turns heroes to tinsel figures sometimes, but the process is an excellent one for forcing a person to find the spiritual center at the core of his being. Loyalty should never make us set aside our own integrity.

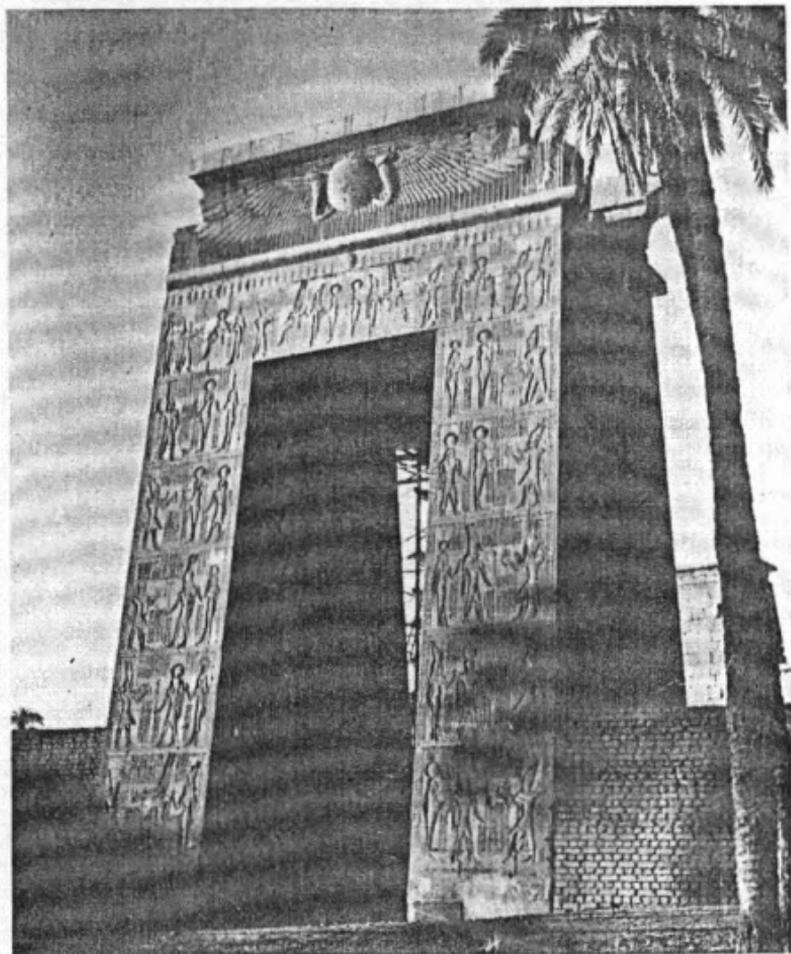
Perhaps this idea of loyalty is inherent in all beings because of our very Oneness. The meaning of the word loyalty itself should afford us a clue, as it is derived from the latin word *lex* or law. If we think that this is a lawful and just universe, then by being loyal to our highest ideals and to the elder brothers of humanity, as embodiments of these ideals, we can help bring about a cycle of enlightenment in which we can freely give our loyalty to all.

# THEOSOPHIA

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South Gate, Temple of Karnak, Egypt

*(Photo by Hussia, Cairo, Egypt)*

## THEOSOPHIA

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### THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

"Apprenticeship is a severe test of will-power and unselfishness, and, lacking these, one may be sure of failure. Usually such persons fancy, because of the interest they take in occult literature, that they would like to be students under the Adepts, who possess the secrets of nature and have spiritual power to a degree little dreamt of by the generality of mankind. Such interest grows or weakens according to the impelling motive governing the character of the person. Appreciation of the study is the first step, and desire for more light is the applicant's passport to the probationary stage. His progress depends upon several conditions, which, if complied with in the main, will secure him a reasonable hope of success. These are a sound mind in a sound body, right moral principles, and a well-disciplined nature. Then begins the work of — what? Obeying certain set rules and regulations, issued like the ukases of a czar or the commands of a military chief? Many would like to have such, for it is easier to follow the directions of a leader than to discover the way without guidance. No. The impelling force must be in the neophyte, and without it he has nothing to hope for. Once it is shown that the desire to succeed is stronger than the distracting, engrossing, material cares of life which enthrall the vast majority of people, the next step is made plain for the struggler, but it may require a much longer time and a greater test of patience than even a strong-willed person can always bring to the task. Those who persevere in the right direction succeed, but intuition must be developed to discover which is the true way . . . . ."

"The resolution once formed to be a chela, and that resolution fed by constant mental effort, the teacher is impelled to recognize that chela's qualifications and to direct his future steps. Chelas, it may be said with truth, are not created by any sudden zeal or spasmodic sentimental desire . . . . The road which the chela walks is strewn, every inch of it, with reminders of frays and skirmishes with himself. He has no other enemy half so powerful as his own selfish earthly nature, which he undertakes to discipline, and of whose strength he has no conception until he deliberately and earnestly begins the work of purification . . . ."

—*Man: Fragments of Forgotten History*, by Two Chelas, pp. 146-48.

## MUSINGS ALONG THE PATH

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

As we ponder over the prevailing circumstances of life, and the difficult conditions in which many students of the Ancient Wisdom live at the present time, certain definite ideas suggest themselves for consideration, in an attempt to help ourselves—all of us in whatever land—to gain a greater perspective, a stronger sense of peace, and a wider vision.

First of all we might mention our common studies—studies of the teachings and precepts of the Ancient Wisdom, or at least as much of that Wisdom as has been made available to us in years gone by.

We owe it to ourselves, as students and seekers, *to make of that study the central point of our lives.* A "central point" in any figure is theoretically a mathematical point without size. In actuality, it is a very minute point, whose size is hardly even comparable to the surface or volume of the overall figure or form. It is "central" not on account of its size, but on account of its importance, mathematical and structural, and it serves as the pivot around which everything else gravitates, and with which everything is intimately related.

By analogy, our studies of the Esoteric Philosophy do not have to occupy necessarily long hours in duration, and be "important" on account of the amount of time they consume. But these studies must be of such spiritual importance to us, and of such paramount significance in our life, that even a few moments of profound thinking, of deep meditation, and of self-identification with the

teachings, would set the key-note of our consciousness and establish the general direction for our mental and emotional reactions for the rest of the day, and all through its manifold routines and duties.

If we knew how to do it, a few minutes of concentration on some of the lofty principles of thought contained in the teachings of Theosophy, would be sufficient. In most cases, however, students find it necessary to achieve by means of time what they are unable to reach by intensity.

It is to be remembered—and this on the ground of the experience of many generations of devoted students—that nothing is better than *regularity* in connection with our studies: a specific time set aside in our life when we know that a minimum of interruptions, and a maximum of quiet, will create the condition best suited in our life's routine for reading, pondering, meditation and self-analysis. Our lives differ greatly from each other, and no set rule can be formulated in these respects, although it might be suggested that the first hour upon rising, or the last hour before retiring, are very auspicious times. This does not exclude other periods of the day or night, if the prevailing circumstances are such as to warrant the adoption of some other technique of study.

Collective study of the teachings in a group of students is very good, but it is not sufficient; it must be reinforced by that quiet, solitary form of study which is not interrupted even by the thoughts and words of

co-students bent upon the same task. It is equally true that solitary study, with no participation in collective work with other students, is insufficient in most cases, and should be vitalized by active participation in the thoughts and reaction of others, which group-study certainly does.

*Try therefore to adjust your lives, your duties, avocations, and personal obligations in such a fashion as to create, make, build for yourself a quiet spot of consciousness, a hermitage of your own in the midst of the world, where you can retire with great regularity for study and self-study; safeguard this spot (a spot in time rather than a locality!) from the intrusion of worldly elements; protect it from the onslaught of routines, habits, trifling nuisances, and the exasperating minutiae of every-day life; consider it to be your own Temple, whose portals can be tightly shut against any and all intruding and disquieting elements; and do not make the psychological mistake of imagining that in doing so you are practicing selfishness, exclusiveness or uncharitableness towards others. You are doing nothing of the kind, because your motive and purpose is to become strengthened and refreshed, spiritually speaking, so that you may go out into the world of everyday routines and duties that much more able to cope with whatever comes your way, and that much more fitted to help others. Are you selfish, exclusive or uncharitable, when you retire from this world, deliberately and regularly, and take refuge every twenty-four hours in the land of sleep, as you must do, whether you choose it or not?*

The key-note of this entire process is in the intimate relation that exists, and must exist, between your studies of the ancient truths and their application in daily living, by means of your duties and obligations towards others. Only when this balance is well kept, do your studies build a solid foundation for the future. When that balance does not exist, and the student finds himself absorbed in hours of study, fascinated with its beauty, and forgetful of his outward duties and what he owes to others, he becomes progressively a more and more useless member of society whose mental and spiritual concerns, however lofty they may be in themselves, bear no vital relation to the woes and sufferings of an unprogressed and confused world. He shuts himself in a shell made up of his own spirituality (which can have a selfish aspect, strange as this may sound to some people!), and fails to learn the lessons of compassion and sympathy which only a close contact with the world of men can ever teach him.

Contrariwise, the student who devotes most of his time to benevolent work, beneficent activities, and acts of helpfulness, by means of and through his various duties and contacts, but never gives himself the time to ponder deeply and by himself over the great problems of existence; and does not attempt to commune with the higher part of himself in the silence of his hour of study, is apt to become very superficial in his reactions to life and to find himself with no sure spiritual-intellectual foundation which alone can make his outer work for others inspired and strong.

Another very important subject is

the application of the result of our studies to the affairs of daily life. Upon this subject, many misunderstandings exist, and many misconceptions are current, especially among new students.

That the ethical precepts of the Ancient Wisdom—universal in their principles of thought and present in all the great religions and philosophies of the world—are directly applicable to our daily duties and responsibilities, is of course obvious; and we can discover, as we go along, many new ways of putting such precepts into daily practice.

But many students, in their beginner-stage, have been at a loss to find any "practical" application to life of such teachings as those which are concerned with Rounds, Root-Races, invisible Hierarchies, Cosmic Cycles or submerged and long forgotten continents. Ideas have been expressed over and over again by those yet immature in this line of thinking, that such teachings are too abstract and metaphysical to have any practical value in life, while the world is in need of some simple way to solve the existing problems, with a down-to-earth philosophy of life.

This may be so from one standpoint, and the idea is not bad at all as far as it goes; the trouble is that it does not go far enough, and disregards a number of important factors. Some students, on account of their mental conditioning or background, are simply unable to grasp the deeper teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy; they do not have the psycho-intellectual tools with which to do so. For them the Ancient Wisdom has many simpler thoughts which they can fully under-

stand and apply to their respective lives; and no blame can possibly be attached to people whose mental workshop lacks as yet the necessary spiritual mechanism for more serious and intricate work. In time, if they persevere and teach themselves *how to think*, they may outstrip even some of those students who today consider themselves proficient in the understanding of these deeper and more technical teachings.

But we are here primarily concerned with those students who have the mental and emotional equipment with which to grasp the more technical teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy, but who, on account of lack of careful and systematic thinking, consider them abstruse, metaphysical, unrelated to life, as we know the latter, and as we have to live it every day.

It would be possible to enter into a lengthy discussion on this subject, and to show that the teachings about Rounds, Root-Races, Hierarchies and Cycles have their representative factors in everyday life, and are reflected in the small, mirrored in the minute, and surround us everywhere without our noticing them. But this would take a great deal of time and space, and will have to wait for the present.

However, here is the key with which to approach this subject, and open for oneself vast vistas along the line of the "practical application" of seemingly "abstruse" teachings to what we call the "daily life." Serious study of these teachings, consecutive reading, collating of passages, pondering over the various implications, etc., raises the vibratory rate of the student's mind, elevates his consciousness,

establishes a new rhythm in his entire system, almost imperceptibly to himself. It is especially the case if and when such studies are continued over a long period of time, were it only a few moments on any particular day. Certain new mental groves of a higher type are established; deeper and more salutary channels are built in the mental mechanism of the student; noble, lofty, quieting and harmonising thoughts and feelings are unfolded and sustained; and the whole nature is raised as a result of ideas and conceptions—even if only partially understood — which strike notes of grandeur, sublimity, magnanimity, universality, all-inclusiveness and harmony. In due course of time, these thoughts become the main background of the student's mind, and he finds them present almost at all times as a backdrop against which are projected his various mundane activities. He has initiated an undercurrent which does not stop or cease, and this undercurrent begins gradually to permeate his various reactions to life. The worldly affairs of men, as well as his own duties and temporary avocations; his relation to other human beings and their relations to him; the surrounding circumstances, their changing karmic setting, and the passing "show" of outward life—all of these and many other factors take in the student's vision a new perspective; they are automatically compared with the grander, the greater, the more spiritual and enduring facts of being regarding which he has deeply thought; and in this comparison and *inter-relatedness*, the smaller issues of life are transcended, the petty emotional disturbances are outgrown, and

the personal elements of daily life gradually assume their rightful place—a very un-important one—in the overall scheme of being, where the student senses the pulse of a mighty Force whose cosmic objectives and universal aims he knows to be at one with the nobler side of his own Self.

What can be more "practical" than to be able to view the smaller aspect of life, the personal, the fleeting, the imperfect, the relatively distorted and limited, *in the light of* the greater aspect of universal Life, and with the impersonal, the enduring, the more perfect, and the more harmonious and limitless, as its background? Is this not an "application" of the deeper teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy to "daily life"? Does it make of the student a mere dreamer, a metaphysician, an abstract thinker unrelated to his daily responsibilities and duties? Surely it does not. Any careful thinking along this line would result in a similar deduction.

And so next time when we are confronted with the nasty temper of X, or the entrenched selfishness of Y, or again with the narrow-mindedness of Z; or maybe when we have just been insulted by the bus-driver, or unexpectedly accused by a friend of having done something which we have not even dreamt of, or perhaps scornfully laughed at because we failed to recognize any enduring value in the prating of some political demagogue—let us relate these events and conditions to the scale of cosmic evolution, and ask ourselves what will remain of them all in a few thousand years from now. The chances are very great indeed that we will fail to become unduly excited over the pin-

pricks of the personal aspect of life, and will remain unperturbed when face to face with its more ugly manifestations. This will be due primarily to the all-important fact that consecutive, serious study of very noble and seemingly "abstract" teachings has raised the key-note of our consciousness, so that it has lost, at least partially, its characteristics of feverishness and irritability; it has begun

to vibrate in unison with something far greater and majestic, compared with which the passing phantasmagoria of personal events assumes the characteristics of a marionette-show, whose strings are pulled from behind the visible scene by forces and powers working constantly and steadily towards a higher, impersonal, cosmic Goal.

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## APPRECIATION

L. B.

In the philosophies of old Greece we constantly find that the search for "The Good, the Beautiful, the True" was held as one of the major objectives; and in Christianity as well as in Buddhism, Love and Brotherhood were fundamental. The concepts we have of all these words vary with each one of us, and it is by no means easy to define them in such a way as to satisfy the practical desire we have for their common applicability. Each one of these as Ideas is very relative to the individual understanding, and upon analysis there is little agreement except in a general way.

If, however, we consider each from the standpoint of our *appreciation* of it in definite circumstances, it is possible not only to get enlightenment but also to make it practical in our lives, without undue strain or struggles. For instance: is not Good that which is beneficial? We can *appreciate* anything which tends to bring about wholesome results in any and all directions—Cosmic or Local. In a similar manner we can *appreciate*

harmonious arrangements and scenes which appeal to our esthetic receptivity. What is True? Is it not anything that is based upon, and manifests fundamental laws in whatever degree? Therefore, there is Truth in everything according to its nature and the conditions under which we find it, because any manifestation, objective or subjective, must be a reaction, or as the fact, a composite of reactions, inevitable under existing conditions and circumstances.

The ideas we have of Love are nebulous and often irrational, and more often than not they are expressions of our desires and expectations; very rarely are they radiations of impersonal beneficence. But it is quite possible to have such an *appreciation* of what is harmonious and pleasing to our own natures, that it calls out an outpouring of a subtle energy that is not of the *desire* nature, but is a spontaneous radiation of joy and happiness.

Brotherhood in its essence is an abstraction; but brought down to earth

it is the Golden Rule in its positive or negative form in every-day life. "Helping and Sharing is what Brotherhood means" was taught to the children at Point Loma many years ago, and they not only understood it but practised it forthwith, not as an injunction, but as a Truth which they realized.

The above analysis suggests that we could get a clearer understanding of problems if we would look into them from the viewpoint of our appreciation in a common and practical way, rather than treat them as abstractions or imagine them as being so complex that the essentials for ourselves are passed over or overlooked. This applies to the circumstances of every-day life and affairs, for in spite of our anxieties and difficulties we find that crises occur exceedingly rarely in the manner we anticipate them; so that when we cannot do anything at the moment, we can stand back of our lesser selves, and in that withdrawal clear the channels for any action required of ourselves or of the

helpful aid which will meet the necessity.

This withdrawal from confusion and uncertainty will induce an attitude of "watchful waiting" in a more or less *impersonal* attitude of mind, when it is quite likely that the inner "Watcher" will have a broader understanding, and transmit it to the lower mind in so far as the culture and capacity of the present stage of evolution allows it.

The attitude of *appreciation* is a step beyond that of understanding because it includes values which are inclusive and not limited to the conditions and circumstances. When the mind reflects upon the *reasons* for our appreciation it opens the way for Ideas which are more or less translations of certain phases of Reality, but while doing so, it is in great measure warped by previous attitudes, knowledge and experience. Still, if the *sense of appreciation* be retained, the result of such reflections will be wholesome and conducive to an expansion of Consciousness.

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"Purge out of every heart the lurking grudge. Give us grace and strength to forbear and to persevere. Offenders, give us the grace to accept and forgive offenders. Forgetful ourselves, help us to bear cheerfully the forgetfulness of others. Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind. Spare us to our friends, soften us to our enemies. Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavors. If it may not, give us strength to encounter that which is to come, that we be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath, and in all changes of fortune, and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving one to another."

—Prayer by Robert Louis Stevenson.

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"I belong to the Great Church which holds the world within its starlit aisles; that claims the great and good of every race and clime; that finds with joy the grain of gold in every creed, and floods with light and love the germs of good in every Soul."

—Robert G. Ingersoll.

## MEMORY IN THE DYING

H. P. BLAVATSKY

[Originally published in *Lucifer*, Vol. V, October, 1889, pp. 125-29]

We find in a very old letter from a MASTER, written years ago to a member of the Theosophical Society, the following suggestive lines on the mental state of a dying man:—\*

"At the last moment, the whole life is reflected in our memory and emerges from all the forgotten nooks and corners picture after picture, one event after the other. The dying brain dislodges memory with a strong supreme impulse, and memory restores faithfully every impression entrusted to it during the period of the brain's activity. That impression and thought which was the strongest naturally becomes the most vivid and survives so to say all the rest which now vanish and disappear for ever, to reappear but in Deva Chan. No man dies insane

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\* [H.P.B. refers here to a letter of Master K.H. received by A. P. Sinnett about October 1882, when he was at Simla, India. It is a very long communication, and contains answers to queries sent in by Sinnett. These queries and the Master's replies can be found in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, pp. 144-178. Sinnett had asked:

"(16) You say:—'Remember we create ourselves, our Deva Chan, and our Avitchi and mostly during the latter days and even moments of our sentient lives.'

"(17) But do the thoughts on which the mind may be engaged at the last moment necessarily hinge on to the predominant character of its past life? Otherwise it would seem as if the character of a person's Deva Chan or Avitchi might be capriciously and unjustly determined by the change which brought some special thought uppermost at last?"

To this, the Master replied:

"(16) It is a widely spread belief among all the Hindus that a person's future pre-natal state and birth are moulded by the last desire he may have at the time of death. But this last desire, they say, necessarily hinges on to the shape which the person may have given to his desires, passions, etc., during his past life. It is for this very reason, viz.—that our last desire may not be unfavorable to our future progress—that we have to watch our actions and control our passions and desires throughout our whole earthly career.

"(17) It cannot be otherwise. The experience of dying men—by drowning and other accidents—brought back to life, has corroborated our doctrine in almost every case. Such thoughts are *involuntary* and we have no more control over them than we would over the eye's retina to prevent it perceiving that colour which affects it most."

Immediately following the above sentence, there occurs the passage quoted by H.P.B.—Editor, *Theosophia*.]

or unconscious—as some physiologists assert. Even a *madman*, or one in a fit of *delirium tremens* will have his instant of perfect lucidity at the moment of death, though unable to say so to those present. The man may often appear dead. Yet from the last pulsation, from and between the last throbbing of his heart and the moment when the last spark of animal heat leaves the body—the *brain thinks* and the *Ego* lives over in those few brief seconds—his whole life again. Speak in whispers, ye, who assist at a death-bed and find yourselves in the solemn presence of Death. Especially have you to keep quiet just after Death has laid her clammy hand upon the body. Speak in whispers, I say, lest you disturb the quiet ripple of thought, and hinder the busy work of the Past casting on its reflection upon the veil of the Future. . . .”

The above statement has been more than once strenuously opposed by materialists; *Biology* and (Scientific) *Psychology*, it was urged, were both against the idea, and while the latter had no well demonstrated data to go upon in such a *hypothesis*, the former dismissed the idea as an empty “superstition.” Meanwhile, even biology is hound to progress, and this is what we learn of its latest achievements. Dr. Ferré has communicated quite recently to the Biological Society of Paris a very curious note on the mental state of the dying, which corroborates marvellously the above lines. For, it is to the special phenomenon of life-remembrances, and that sudden re-emerging on the blank walls of memory, from all its long neglected and forgotten “nooks and corners,” of “picture after picture” that Dr. Ferré draws the special attention of biologists.

We need notice but two among the numerous instances given by this Scientist in his *Rapport*, to show how scientifically correct are the teachings we receive from our *Eastern Masters*.

The first instance is that of a moribund consumptive whose disease was developed in consequence of a spinal affection. Already consciousness had left the man, when, recalled to life by two successive injections of a gramme of ether, the patient slightly lifted his head and began talking rapidly in Flemish, a language no one around him, nor yet himself, understood. Offered a pencil and a piece of white cardboard, he wrote with great rapidity several lines in that language—very correctly, as was ascertained later on—fell back, and died. When translated—the writing was found to refer to a very prosaic affair. He had suddenly recollected, he wrote, that he owed a certain man a sum of fifteen francs since 1868—hence more than twenty years—and desired it to be paid.

But why write his last wish in Flemish? The defunct was a native of *Antwerp*, but had left his country in childhood, without ever knowing the language, and having passed all his life in Paris, could speak and write only in French. Evidently his returning consciousness, that last flash of memory that displayed before him, as in a retrospective panorama, all his life, even to the trifling fact of his having borrowed twenty years back a few francs from a friend, did not emanate from his *physical* brain alone.

but rather from his spiritual memory, that of the *Higher Ego* (Manas or the re-incarnating individuality). The fact of his speaking and writing Flemish, a language that he had heard at a time of life when he could not yet speak himself, is an additional proof. *The EGO is almost omniscient in its immortal nature.* For indeed matter is nothing more than "the last degree and as the shadow of existence," as Ravaisson, member of the French Institute, tells us.

But to our second case.

Another patient, dying of pulmonary consumption and likewise reanimated by an injection of ether, turned his head towards his wife and rapidly said to her: "You cannot find that pin now; all the floor has been renewed since then." This was in reference to the loss of a scarf pin eighteen years before, a fact so trifling that it had almost been forgotten, but which had not failed to be revived in the last thought of the dying man, who having expressed what he saw in words, suddenly stopped and breathed his last. Thus any one of the thousand little daily events, and accidents of a long life would seem capable of being recalled to the flickering consciousness, at the supreme moment of dissolution. A long life, perhaps, lived over again in the space of one short second!

A third case may be noticed, which corroborates still more strongly that assertion of Occultism which traces all such remembrances to the thought-power of the *individual*, instead of to that of the personal (lower) Ego. A young girl, who had been a sleep-walker up to her twenty-second year, performed during her hours of somnambulant sleep the most varied functions of domestic life, of which she had no remembrance upon awakening.

Among other psychic impulses that manifested themselves only during her sleep, was a secretive tendency quite alien to her waking state. During the latter she was open and frank to a degree, and very careless of her personal property; but in the somnambulant state she would take articles belonging to herself or within her reach and hide them away with ingenious cunning. This habit being known to her friends and relatives, and two nurses, having been in attendance to watch her actions during her night rambles for years, nothing disappeared but what could be easily restored to its usual place. But on one sultry night, the nurse falling asleep, the young girl got up and went to her father's study. The latter, a notary of fame, had been working till a late hour that night. It was during a momentary absence from his room that the somnambulant entered, and deliberately possessed herself of a will left open upon the desk, as also of a sum of several thousand pounds in bonds and notes. These she proceeded to hide in the hollow of two dummy pillars set up in the library to match the solid ones, and stealing from the room before her father's return, she regained her chamber and bed without awakening the nurse who was still asleep in the armchair.

The result was, that, as the nurse stoutly denied that her young mistress had left the room, suspicion was diverted from the real culprit and the money could not be recovered. The loss of the will involved a law-suit

which almost beggared her father and entirely ruined his reputation, and the family were reduced to great straits. About nine years later the young girl, who, during the previous seven years had not been somnambule, fell into a consumption of which she ultimately died. Upon her death-bed, the veil which had hung before her physical memory was raised; her divine insight awakened; the pictures of her life came streaming back before her inner eye; and among others she saw the scene of her somnambule robbery. Suddenly arousing herself from the lethargy in which she had lain for several hours, her face showed signs of some terrible emotion working within, and she cried out "Ah! what have I done? . . . It was I who took the will and the money. . . Go search the dummy pillars in the library, I have . ." She never finished her sentence for her very emotion killed her. But the search was made and the will and money found within the oaken pillars as she had said. What makes the case more strange is, that these pillars were so high, that even by standing upon a chair and with plenty of time at her disposal instead of only a few moments, the somnambulist could not have reached up and dropped the objects into the hollow columns. It is to be noted, however, that ecstasies and convulsionists (*Vide the Convulsionnaires de St. Médard et de Morzine*) seem to possess an abnormal facility for climbing blank walls and leaping even to the tops of trees.

Taking the facts as stated, would they not induce one to believe that the somnambule personage possesses an intelligence and memory of its own apart from the physical memory of the waking lower Self; and that it is the former which remembers *in articulo mortis*, the body and physical senses in the latter case ceasing to function, and the intelligence gradually making its final escape through the avenue of psychic, and last of all of spiritual consciousness? And why not? Even materialistic science begins now to concede to psychology more than one fact that would have vainly begged of it recognition twenty years ago. "The real existence" Ravaisson tells us, "the life of which every other life is but an imperfect outline, a faint sketch, is that of the Soul." That which the public in general calls "soul," we speak of as the "reincarnating Ego." "To be, is to live, and to live is to will and think," says the French Scientist.\* But, if indeed the physical brain is of only a limited area, the field for the containment of rapid flashes of unlimited and infinite thought, neither will nor thought can be said to be generated *within* it, even according to materialistic Science, the impassable chasm between matter and mind having been confessed both by Tyndall and many others. The fact is that the human brain is simply the canal between two planes—the psycho-spiritual and the material—through which every abstract and metaphysical idea filters from the Manasic down to the lower human consciousness. Therefore, the ideas about the infinite and the absolute are not, nor can they be, within *our* brain capacities. They can be faithfully mirrored only by our Spiritual consciousness, thence to be more or less faintly projected on to the tables of our perceptions on this plane. Thus

\* *Rapport sur la Philosophie en France au XIXme. Siècle.*

while the records of even important events are often obliterated from our *memory*, not the most trifling action of our lives can disappear from the "Soul's" memory, because it is no MEMORY for it, but an ever present reality on the plane which lies outside our conceptions of space and time. "Man is the measure of all things," said Aristotle; and surely he did not mean by man, the form of flesh, bones and muscles!

Of all the deep thinkers Edgard Quinet, the author of *Creation*, expressed this idea the best. Speaking of man, full of feelings and thoughts of which he has either no consciousness at all, or which he feels only as dim and hazy impressions, he shows that man realizes quite a small portion only of his moral being. "The thoughts we think, but are unable to define and formulate, once repelled, seek refuge in the very root of our being." . . . When chased by the persistent efforts of our will "they retreat before it, still further, still deeper into—who knows what—fibres, but wherein they remain to reign and impress us unbidden and unknown to ourselves. . . ."

Yes; they become as imperceptible and as unreachable as the vibrations of sound and colour when these surpass the normal range. Unseen and eluding grasp, they yet work, and thus lay the foundations of our future actions and thoughts, and obtain mastery over us, though we may never think of them and are often ignorant of their very being and presence. Nowhere does Quinet, the great student of Nature, seem more right in his observations than when speaking of the mysteries with which we are all surrounded: "The mysteries of neither earth nor heaven but those present in the marrow of our bones, in our brain cells, our nerves and fibres. No need," he adds, "in order to search for the unknown, to lose ourselves in the realm of the stars, when here, near us and in us, rests the unreachable. As our world is mostly formed of imperceptible beings which are the real constructors of its continents, so likewise is man."

Verily so; since man is a bundle of obscure, and to himself unconscious perceptions, of indefinite feelings and misunderstood emotions, of ever-forgotten memories and knowledge that becomes on the surface of his plane—*ignorance*. Yet, while physical memory in a healthy living man is often obscured, one fact crowding out another weaker one, at the moment of the great change that man calls death—that which we call "memory" seems to return to us in all its vigour and freshness.

May this not be due as just said, simply to the fact that, for a few seconds at least, our two memories (or rather the two states, the highest and the lowest state, of consciousness) blend together, thus forming one, and that the dying being finds himself on a plane wherein there is neither past nor future, but all is one present? Memory, as we all know, is strongest with regard to its early associations, then when the future man is only a child, and more of a soul than of a body; and if memory is a part of our Soul, then, as Thackeray has somewhere said, it must be of necessity eternal. Scientists deny this; we, Theosophists, affirm that it is so. They have for

what they hold but negative proofs; we have, to support us, innumerable facts of the kind just instanced, in the three cases described by us. The links of the chain of cause and effect with relation to mind are, and must ever remain a *terra-incognita* to the materialist. For if they have already acquired a deep conviction that as Pope says—

“Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain

Our thoughts are link'd by many a *hidden* chain. . . .”

—and that they are still unable to discover these chains, how can they hope to unravel the mysteries of the higher, Spiritual, Mind!

## OPENING DOORS TOGETHER

EILEEN MARGARET WALKER

What would happen if a group of people met together with “no holds barred,” and discussed the issues most vital to them as theosophists and human beings? What if every theosophist felt that his ideas and convictions were meant to have a place in the present Theosophical Movement—even though, with the passage of the days and the years, he might alter both his convictions and his ideas? How can the human resources of mind and heart be released so that they may be poured into work for Theosophy?

To be a theosophist is not so much a matter of education as of aspiration; a theosophist is to be defined not by what he presently is, so much as by what he is *dedicated* to. The theosophist's task is not to acquire theosophical information, but rather to learn how to acquire knowledge theosophically. There are more opportunities for learning all around us, at every moment, than we ever avail ourselves of. And the reason why *they are so many closed doors*, as far as we are concerned, is that we do not understand fully how the mind is enlightened—specifically, how *our* mind is enlightened. H.P.B., there-

fore, does more than “teach,” as we ordinarily understand the term: she *teaches how to learn* from anybody, any book, any experience, any time, anywhere.

One consideration H.P.B. emphasizes—not to be found in worldly education—is that true wisdom comes only through a pure motive, steadfast will, and unremitting work. Many who would never call themselves “writers” (although they might like to learn to write), have a strong and sure power of expression because they genuinely wish to share their deepest thoughts and feelings with others. A feeling of mutual respect often inspires this sort of exchange between two individuals, and in writing, one needs only to extend this feeling (in his mind, or abstractly) to people he does not know personally, who, reading his words, will feel a kinship with the author.

This act of imagination—imagining an audience who will be appreciative of the efforts made, if not always of the *result achieved*—is difficult. This is one reason why many are struck powerless by the very act of taking up pen or pencil or confronting a blank piece of paper. To overcome this, we

need to feel that it is important for us to say what we really think and know and feel, even if we cannot believe (to begin with) that *what* we say is important. Another way to overcome writer's inertia, as it may be called, is to remember how our minds are stimulated and often inspired by the simple words of someone else who is only telling what to him seems "common knowledge," and what to us is a "new idea."

Returning again to the question of motive, we will observe that the mind is somewhat like a vessel, which can only be further filled if it is first partly emptied. Why it should be so, is something of a mystery, but every one has had the experience of being saturated with theosophical information on a subject—or with Theosophy itself, as a study—until some occasion presented itself in which he had to "give out" what he had absorbed, or make use of some explanation he had mastered in the Teachings. Then, as if by magic, he feels an inner stimulus to return to the literature, to dig on deeper into the doctrines, to follow the explanation still further. Perhaps he has created a mental "vacuum," which irresistibly draws new ideas in to his mind.

Writing is one way of giving in this fashion, and often an idea, after it is written out, will cease to have the fascination for us that it once had—while going on to fascinate the reader. So, it is a common experience for the writer to feel, after having set forth what to him was an exciting or interesting idea, that it is "no good, after all." What he should say to himself is that it is no further good to him, but it may be to others—and he

should let the *others* decide that for themselves.

Writing out an idea is also a psychological help in many instances. Where a problem or a question or some anxiety plagues our mind, and we cannot make a decision or get a clear picture of a situation, writing down what is going round and round in our heads has been known to clear matters up wonderfully. There is a real sense in which this brings difficulties "down and out" of our inner squirrel-cages. That is, they become objective, something we can see and study, as against something subjective which is almost wholly a matter of feeling and private interpretation, usually uncertain in the extreme.

By trying to write theosophically (no matter what we write about, or what style we employ); by trying to consider *why* we write and *how* we think; by trying to be sincere in what we say and to respect our own and the reader's integrity; by trying to distinguish between our imagination and our fancy; by trying to appreciate the effect of our intent and of our power to concentrate—by all these attempts, we shall find ourselves gradually able to discriminate the true from the false in *all* writing.

It is not enough to believe that H.P.B. wrote the Truth: we must be able to recognize what is true about *what she wrote*, what is true in what other authors write, and what is true in what we and our friends write. This power of discrimination and judgment does not apply only to the written word, but also to the spoken word. For here again, in the final analysis, we need to *know for ourselves* when truth is being spoken and when we

are hearing something else in the name of Truth.

H.P.B.'s writings are more useful to the sceptic than to the believer, in the sense that they are more apt to be *used* by the sceptic who appreciates their force, than by the believer who merely accepts their "truth." The questioner learns more than the yes-man; the honest doubter moves more swiftly toward wisdom than do the mentally lazy and obtuse who imagine that their "trust in H.P.B." will automatically draw into their heads the knowledge she worked for incarnations to master—through Doubt and Despair and Testing of the very Soul!

The theological student fords no quiet stream by conveniently-placed stepping-stones (placed there, forsooth! by someone else). He must wade into a rushing river, and set down his own stepping-stones, one by one—with, perhaps, many trips back to the shore to get the water out of his lungs and pick up another sturdy boulder. The man who is afraid to

leave one idea for another, will never have his own bridge across that river of Doubt and Ignorance; he will try to stand on the first or second stone he puts down—or, possibly, on a stone he found in the river, discarded by some predecessor! The smaller the notion he is "marooned on," the more fearsome the river will appear, and the more impossible will seem the crossing. The lighter his step becomes, the briefer his stop on the successive stones, the safer — paradoxically enough—will be his journey. But for this, his heart must be light—it must be lifted with the desire to know for the sake of others.

We have nothing to fear but inertia, passive acquiescence, withheld convictions, disguised thoughts, unexpressed ideas. We are called upon to practice *freedom of conscience* to the best of our ability, for a free conscience goes with an open mind, a mind opened for others to enter and share, as well as for ideas to enter and grow.

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## PROMOTION FUND

We deeply appreciate the donations which our good friends have recently sent to our Promotion Fund. We trust they will continue to keep us in mind. The following donations have been received between February 1st and April 1st, 1953:

L.V. \$2.00; W.J.C. \$2.00; G.B. \$0.50; L.E. \$0.50; M.C.C. \$3.50; H.D. \$2.00; H.S. \$0.50; J.C. \$0.50; M.E.P. \$0.50; H.R. \$3.50; K.K. \$22.00; F.L. G. 2.00; D.S. \$2.00.

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"If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."

—Henry David Thoreau.