

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### LET US ENERGIZE OUR HEARTS

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We are not working merely that people may call themselves *Theosophists*, but that the doctrines we cherish may affect and leaven the whole mind of this century. This alone can be accomplished by a small earnest band of workers, who work for no human reward, no earthly recognition, but who, supported and sustained by a belief in that Universal Brotherhood of which our Masters are a part, work steadily, faithfully, in understanding and putting forth for consideration the doctrines of life and duty that have come down to us from immemorial time. Falter not, so long as a few devoted ones will work to keep the nucleus existing.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THERE is a view of Theosophy that is cosmic and dynamic. It includes teachings that can be grasped by the human mind at any stage of growth, and advice and instruction to fit all possible needs and circumstances. It teaches children to grow and mothers to rear them and fathers to provide for them; it teaches labourers to work and merchants to trade, teachers to educate and rulers to reign, and everyone to live out his own life. Mr. Judge has given us the image of the ocean: into it divers plunge deep to find the pearl of great price; fishermen catch fish, big and small; swimmers enjoy, some buffeting the waves and others not venturing far from the

shore; and there are those, such as little children, who only paddle in the shallow water. In this sense Theosophy, which is a veritable ocean of knowledge, is for all. Those endeavouring to make it a living power in their lives, few though they be, are recruited from all walks of life, and no single race, creed, sex, condition or colour is entirely unproductive of earnest students of the sacred science.

At the same time it must be remembered that Theosophy is for those who want it and for none else. As Robert Crosbie wrote:

As long as we are self-centred, as long as we are satisfied with what we know and what we have, this great Message is not for us. It is for the hungry, for the weary, for those who are desirous of knowledge, for those who see the absolute paucity of what has been put before us by those who styled themselves our teachers, for those who find no explanation anywhere of the mysteries that surround us, who do not know themselves, who do not understand themselves.

Again, we read in the Preface to H.P.B.'s *Key to Theosophy* that the reader can hardly expect Theosophy to be intelligible to himself unless he will make some mental effort; that to the mentally lazy or obtuse Theosophy must remain a riddle. This and the passage from Mr. Crosbie rather limit the circle of people for whom Theosophy is. How many are really desirous of knowledge and willing to make the necessary effort to obtain it? Krishna says in the *Gita*: "Among thousands of mortals a single one perhaps strives for perfection, and among those so striving perhaps a single one knows me as I am." (vu, 3)

It is then a matter for little surprise or discouragement that comparatively few are drawn towards Theosophy, which is aimed at making people strive for perfection. Students have no reason to be down-hearted. Our success does not depend on numbers, and the result of our work is never immediately visible. In fact what we achieve may not find full expression on the physical plane until many, many years have passed. In the words of Mr. Judge, "the greatest work is not done on outer physical planes but on the thought plane." As Gandhi once wrote:

If the evolution of form takes aeons, why should we expect wonders in the evolution of thought and conduct? And yet the age of miracles is not gone. As with individuals, so with nations. I hold it to be perfectly possible for masses to be suddenly converted and uplifted. Suddenness is only seeming. For no one can say how far the leaven has worked. The most potent forces are unseen, even unfelt for long. But they are working none the less surely.

It may even happen that what we have actually accomplished on the outer plane—little though it be—gets destroyed. But the soul of what has disappeared from sight is immortal and will some time seek and find physical expression again. That which is accumulating on the inner planes as the result of the efforts of a few will triumph in the long run and burst out like the sun after a storm and illumine the earth. We are filling a reservoir which will supply refreshment to many, perhaps when those who helped to fill it are dead and gone.

It is not easy always to realize the truth of all this. We wish for results that can be observed by the physical senses. Yet all down the ages men have proclaimed the power of thought and of the invisible. An expression of this conviction is found in the Bible, in a passage in *Ecclesiastes*:

There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. (ix, 14-17)

We are sowing seeds in confidence that in the course of time they will produce a bountiful harvest. To encourage those of us who are inclined to feel disheartened and to waver in our faith, one of the masters once wrote: "Ah! if your eyes were opened, you might see such a vista of potential blessings to yourselves and mankind lying in the germ of the present hour's effort, as would

fire with joy and zeal your souls!"

As is said, the Theosophical Movement is ahead of the times, and the fact that this "most serious movement of this age" should have succeeded as far as it has in our present *Kali Yuga*, the Dark Age, is itself a notable achievement. Those who take up Theosophy as a mere recreation, a pastime, drop out in course of time. Those again who study it because it is an intellectual stimulant, an exercise in mental expansion, make the wrong approach. Theosophy is a serious, vital force which, once the individual plunges into its current, can change the entire entity—physically, mentally, spiritually. It demands sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, and service of one's fellows which seeks no reward. Here the failures begin. Mental laziness is not the only impediment; there is also lack of heart-energization. Without love and compassion in the heart for suffering humanity, one cannot be touched by the power of inspiration which comes from Theosophy.

Seekers of wisdom, and even perhaps donors of wealth, are many compared to the voluntary sacrificers who study that they may serve and who mortify their personalities to rise above all distinctions and differences and to be united in brotherly feeling with other student-servers. What is needed is not only a larger number of students, but more among them of those whose hearts are burning to give warmth and comfort, to radiate light and leading for their fellow men. This is an increasingly pressing present need.

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ONLY a life lived for others is a life worth while. The man who regards his own life and that of his fellow creatures as meaningless is not merely unhappy but hardly fit for life. Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value.

-ALBERT EINSTEIN

## CHARACTER BUILDING

EACH individual is born with a character. Differences in character do exist, and reincarnation is the only logical explanation.

Character is Karma. The memory aspect of character is not understood and people want specific instances of memory: who they were in their past life, where they had lived, and what they did. But memory is the result of life-experiences transformed through assimilation in the post-mortem state of *Devachan*. Just as through digestion and assimilation the different items of food that we eat become transformed, enriching or enfeebling blood, flesh and bones, so the present character of each is the transformed result of all actions and experiences in former lives. Between each life there is a process analogous to the process between two meals. This memory aspect of character refers to the past.

There is also the motion aspect of Karma, and therefore of character. Karma is not only of the past; it is also action in the present. So by our efforts and actions in the present we are putting something into our character. To continue the comparison: our present physical body improves or deteriorates, is made gross or subtle, sensitive or dull, by the food that we eat day after day. Healthy bodies become ill, and weak bodies gain health and strength by the kind of nourishment given. So with character.

Whether we know it or not, like it or not, by our present action we are changing our character—bettering it or weakening it. Just as modern science advocates knowledge of physiology, hygiene and dietetics, so that we may live good, healthy lives, so Theosophy asks us to acquire knowledge for the building of character.

Just as our present character is the result of past Karma of our own making, so our future character will result from our present Karma. Most people are building now their future character, unconsciously to themselves. Theosophy opposes every form of unconscious action, for such action means lack of knowledge, working in the dark.

In our present efforts there is one important factor to be noted, that the assimilation of our present efforts and actions takes time.

We are apt to overlook this, engrossed as we are in living our life, doing this thing and that. Our present-day actions impress our character, but these experiences have to go through the mill of assimilation ere the full result becomes manifest in character. Just as we do not digest and assimilate food in the hour of eating, but one process follows another, so also in ordinary beings life-activities and experiences in the body are assimilated by the soul in after-death states. Many students of Theosophy who endeavour to improve their character get dejected because results do not show themselves. Here is one of the reasons why honest, earnest and sincere effort does not show results. Of course we are taking for granted that effort, honest, earnest and sincere, is made. As *The Voice of the Silence* puts it: "Learn that no efforts, not the smallest—whether in right or wrong direction—can vanish from the world of causes."

Here we might make one more point and an important one for students of Theosophy. In the great School of Raja Yogis whose practical science H.P.B. taught, real Chelas of the Great Gurus are taught to forgo the bliss of *Devachan*, so that they might continue unbroken the spiritual service of the Race. This necessitates their assimilating their present experiences now and here, day by day.

But leaving alone this higher process, it is well for all people to learn that their present efforts are producing future character.

That brings us to the practical question of how we can build our character in the present for the future; and future includes tomorrow and the years belonging to this life, as well as lives and incarnations ahead of us.

There is character that is visible and character that is invisible. Weak or strong, good or bad character, expresses itself in action; but there is the invisible counterpart represented by our thoughts and feelings which are there all the time and which are so to speak the soul of actions. In the invisible department there are thoughts and feelings; in the visible department there are speech and deeds, words and actions.

It is necessary to recognize the existence of the invisible soul of character, made up of thoughts and feelings which cause the

visible results of words and deeds. To take an example: Because of kindness in our character we do a helpful action for someone. That deed is- visible in the result; but what is kindness? It is an emotion, people say. But what is an emotion? It is a force, an energy, substantial though invisible. Take another example—thoughtlessness. The world suffers much more from thoughtlessness than from actual wickedness. Thoughtlessly we do something that hurts or injures another person, or perhaps irritates him or even makes him angry. The thoughtless person causing this phenomenon may be ignorant of the consequences of his action, but the deed is done.

So when we speak of building our character we have to take into account four factors in two departments. Past character or memory, and present character or actions, involve four factors or four principles—mind, feeling, speech, deed. But let us not overlook the most important fact that these four belong to the Soul, the Real Man.

Character is the memory of the Soul who is also the actor or doer or mover in the present. The Soul is at the back of memory, at the back of effort, and ever will be. Mind, feeling, speech and deed belong to the Soul and there can be no Karma without a being to make it. Soul is the Being who makes or transforms his character.

What is the actual method which Theosophy offers to anyone who desires to improve his own character, consciously and deliberately? Having recognized the existence of these factors, what shall we do?

Let us begin with the Soul and acquire some knowledge about the creative faculty of the Soul. Soul creates his character and is therefore superior to the four factors of character—mind, feeling, speech and deeds.

Here arises an important question: If Soul builds character, how is it that there is ugliness in our present character? This ugliness came into our character not because of the Soul but in spite of it. Whenever we disregard the Soul, our character gets impressed with ugliness. Let us watch ourselves in daily life. We speak and act a hundred times a day—mostly thoughtlessly, i.e., we speak and act without deliberate thought. This happens because we are carried

away by our likes and dislikes. We are attracted or repelled by this, that or the other, and we never pause to question: why, how, what? All such actions are wombs of pain, as the *Gita* points out. That is how ugliness and weakness came into our existing character. Removing this ugliness is one of our tasks.

All of us are apt to indulge in impulsive actions, disregarding the Soul. When we grow angry or jealous, the Soul flees from its tabernacle; when the mind and feelings are focused in the senses, the Soul weeps inside the castle of illusion; and so on. If it is true that we do so in the present life, it is equally true that we acted thus in the past. That is how ugliness entered our present character and often we increase it or strengthen it and we will have to face the results of our present follies in the future.

Therefore the first task is to rid our character of its existing ugliness. The best way to achieve this is to try to develop the opposite virtue. Do not only fight your irritation, but develop patience; do not only restrain your jealousy, but develop magnanimity and graciousness; do not only wage a war against your pride and egotism, but unfold gratitude and humility.

All this can be done with the help of the mind. "As you think, so you become." Therefore think nobly, unselfishly. Every morning read and recite such words and ideas as are related to the qualities or virtues you wish to develop. The mind wanders, and such words and sentences and aphorisms are an aid to steady the mind.

Next, Theosophy says that like master-keys there are certain master-virtues, i.e., seed virtues; and if we develop these seed-virtues others fructify quickly and naturally. What are they?

- (a) Graciousness towards all.
- (b) Gratitude towards high things of life and nature.
- (c) Compassion towards lower things and kingdoms of life and nature.

Because we are ordinary, normal people we should begin with the development of Graciousness. Graciousness leads to Gratitude and Compassion, just as affection develops into love.

The Supreme Characters of the drama of Evolution are the Great Ones whom Theosophists call Masters—living men whose sacrifice

is so thorough that renouncing the Beatitude of Nirvana they remain with us, toiling for humanity. Ever gracious, they are Gratitude Incarnate, for they see the Supreme Self in each and every being. They are Compassion Absolute, for their vision is perfect and they see where we are blind. Those Gracious Ones, then, we must seek out as Patterns to build our character; in their likeness, humbly but confidently, we should endeavour to grow. Studying their Philosophy in the company of co-students, we will soon learn the qualities of Graciousness, Gratitude, Compassion, and transform ourselves into men and women who are a blessing not only to our kin and friends but to all who contact us.

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THE object of reincarnation is that all the possible egos may have the chance to become immortal by uniting themselves with Spirit. If they do not, they lose. But further yet, it is laid down that the periods of evolution succeed each other in endless succession, and all who are "left over" unsaved at the end of any one of such periods are taken up again, in the succeeding evolution, for the purpose of working up to perfection. Thus in every Manvantara numbers of egos reach perfection, for that period is very long as mortals count years. I say "numbers" because in fact the number is very large, although, if compared to the entire whole, they may not seem to be many. This is what Theosophists are working for—not only to reach perfection themselves but to help all other men to do so likewise. And they should remember that whether they like it or not, the laws of life will bring them upon earth again and again until they believe in the doctrine, and acquire aspiration, and turn both into action.

—W. Q. JUDGE

## THOUGHTS ON "ISIS UNVEILED"

"ISIS UNVEILED" was H.P.B.'s first public exposition of Theosophy, yet its two volumes are stupendous in their scope. It is significant to note at the outset that the work is dedicated by H.P.B. "to the Theosophical Society, which was founded at New York, A.D. 1875, to study the subjects on which they treat" i.e., to all of us present-day students who are carrying on the work for which the original T.S. was founded. On the title page, H.P.B. calls the book "A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology." Volume I is entitled "Science," and Volume II, "Theology." These two main subjects of human inquiry had become contending forces, though they were in reality two sides of the same coin, and an endeavour is made in the book to show that religion can have a basis in scientific law and fact. The two volumes go on to destroy the wrong notions then prevalent and to show that ancient Science and true Religion had sprung from a common source of Knowledge which was not the exclusive property of any one nation or any one sect, but was once universally known. The knowers of this Knowledge have always existed, and in the very opening sentence of the Preface H.P.B. gives due acknowledgment to "Eastern Adepts" with whom she had "intimate acquaintance" and who had taught her all that she knew and that she was now giving out. This public acknowledgment of Adept-Teachers who are Custodians of the one Wisdom-Religion and who are moreover living men in our day and age was among the most important purposes of H.P.B.'s mission.

In the latter half of the 19th century when science and religion were at loggerheads, a new entrant into the arena was Spiritualism. So-called "Spiritualistic" or psychic phenomena were then the rage in the Western world, though they were ridiculed and denied by both science and religion. *Isis* had as one of its main objects the affirmation of the existence of the unseen realms with their own laws, forces and phenomena. Psychic and spiritual powers exist in every man, though in latency, but there are those who have by training and self-mastery developed them enough to be able to

practise them. *Isis* describes phenomena after phenomena, many of which H.P.B. had witnessed during her travels, and in those early years just before and after the Theosophical Movement was launched into the public world, she herself was performing wonderful phenomena—not as an end, but as a means to demonstrate to the world the existence of the psychic in nature and in man, about which science and religion knew nothing and the Spiritualists offered a distorted explanation. The phenomena were presented only as instances of a power over perfectly natural though unrecognized forces, and incidentally over matter, possessed by certain individuals who have attained to a higher knowledge of the universe and of man than has been reached by scientists and theologians. There are no miracles, *Isis* affirms, and it provides a rational explanation of the seemingly "miraculous." "Everything that happens is the result of law eternal, immutable, ever active."

The Ten Items or fundamental propositions of Oriental Philosophy given towards the close of Volume II may be said to contain the essence of *Isis*.

The following paragraph from H.P.B.'s article "Occult or Exact Science" (originally published in *The Theosophist*, April 1886; reprinted in *The Theosophical Movement*, July 1964) is an excellent summation of the main aims of the work:

About ten years ago, when *Isis Unveiled* was being written, the most important point the work aimed at was the demonstration of the following: (a) the reality of the *Occult* in nature; (b) the thorough knowledge of, and familiarity with, all such occult domains amongst "certain men," and their mastery therein; (c) hardly an art or science known in our age, that the *Vedas* have not mentioned; and (d) that hundreds of things, especially mysteries of nature—in *abscondito* as the alchemists called it—were known to the Aryas of the *pre-Mahabharatan* period, which are unknown to us, the modern sages of the XIXth century.

In the course of the work it is amply demonstrated that "there was true science, profound religion, and genuine phenomena before

inclusive body of knowledge which is destructive alike of the claims of orthodox religion and materialistic science. In the very Preface—a most important piece of writing of far-reaching worth—H.P.B. declares that her work "is a plea for the recognition of the Hermetic philosophy, the anciently universal Wisdom-Religion, as the only possible key to the Absolute in science and theology" (p.vii). This primitive Wisdom-Religion was pre-Vedic and was the parent of all religions, all philosophies, all systems of thought, all sciences known to mankind (II, 216, 639). Its principal articles of faith are: "the unity of God, the immortality of the spirit, belief in salvation only through our works, merit and demerit." (II, 116)

The Preface, the opening section "Before the Veil," and the Table of Contents of the two volumes are enough to give us an idea of the object of the work, which in H.P.B.'s own words is to offer "a brief summary of the religions, philosophies and universal traditions of humankind, and the exegesis of the same, in the spirit of those secret doctrines, of which none—thanks to prejudice and bigotry—have reached Christendom in so unmutated a form, as to secure it a fair judgment" (I, xlv). The study of "the noblest of sciences—that of the spiritual man," had gradually fallen into "unmerited contempt" on the part of the multitude who had lost the key to it (*Ibid.*); and the time was ripe for a reawakening of the human soul to its own innate divinity and aspirations.

Deeply sensible of the Titanic struggle that is now in progress between materialism and the spiritual aspirations of mankind, our constant endeavour has been to gather into our several chapters, like weapons into armories, every fact and argument that can be used to aid the latter in defeating the former. Sickly and deformed child as it now is, the materialism of To-Day is born of the brutal Yesterday. Unless its growth is arrested, it may become our master. It is the bastard progeny of the French Revolution and its reaction against ages of religious bigotry and repression. To prevent the crushing of these spiritual aspirations, the blighting of these hopes, and the deadening of that intuition which teaches us of a God and a hereafter, we must show our false theologies in their naked deformity. and

distinguish between divine religion and human dogmas. Our voice is raised for spiritual freedom, and our plea made for enfranchisement from all tyranny, whether of SCIENCE or THEOLOGY. (I, xiv)

Some of the other main ideas covered in *Isis* and "submitted to public judgment" include: the kinship of man's spirit with the Universal Spirit or God; the wondrous powers of man's immortal self; the truth about the inner and outer man; mediumship and adeptship; review of the ancient philosophical systems and traditions; Platonic philosophy as the link between eastern and western thought; the priceless value of ancient sacred and other works; the achievements of the ancients in many spheres; the lost arts; psychological and physical marvels; magic as a divine science; the mysteries of nature; the role of the astral light; the doctrine of cycles; interpretation of certain ancient myths and allegories; Egyptian and Indian wisdom; the corruption of Western religions and the absurdities perpetrated by religious orthodoxy and by theological Christianity in particular; the mission and teachings of great Adepts through history; the antiquity of the human race, through millions of years of rises and falls in civilization, the vicissitudes of which are governed by the Law of Cycles, or Karma; the correlation between ethical ideas and superphysical laws of nature; the researches of students of symbology and mysticism.

In the years following its publication, many controversies had centred round this book, mainly because of the unfamiliarity of ordinary thinkers with Occult ideas—e.g., the distinction between the personality and the individuality in man. Moreover, when *Isis* was written it was felt by the Adept-Teachers from whom the impulse which directed its preparation came, that the time was not ripe for the explicit declaration of a great many truths which were later imparted in plain language. So this first work of H.P.B.'s supplies its readers "rather with hints, sketches and adumbrations of the philosophy to which it relates, than with methodical expositions." These hints, however, were addressed to the intuition of the reader. H.P.B. wrote in *The Theosophist* for November 1882, five years after the publication of the book: "In *Isis* the explanations



of a hundred mysteries lie but half buried...only waiting for the application of intelligence guided by a little Occult knowledge to come out into the light of day." And in her very last article, "My Books," published in *Lucifer* for May 1891, she stated that, all its literary defects notwithstanding, *Isis Unveiled* contains a mass of original and never hitherto, divulged information on occult subjects." (*She Being Dead Yet Speaketh*, p. 201)

The prime mission of H.P.B. was to spread broadcast true basic concepts of Deity, of Law, and of Man. *Isis* was written with this very object in view, as were all her other writings. From this first work of hers up to the last, the emphasis was on *Knowledge* in place of belief, Adept-Teachers in place of priestly authority. *Isis* paved the way for the later teachings of the immemorial philosophy of Theosophy.

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MANKIND is obviously divided into god-informed men and lower human creatures. The intellectual difference between the Aryan and other civilized nations and such savages as the South Sea Islanders, is inexplicable on any other grounds. No amount of culture, nor generations of training amid civilization, could raise such human specimens as the Bushmen, the Veddhas of Ceylon, and some African tribes, to the same intellectual level as the Aryans, the Semites, and the Turanians so called. The "sacred spark" is missing in them and it is they who are the only *inferior* races on the globe, now happily—owing to the wise adjustment of nature which ever works in that direction—fast dying out. Verily mankind is "of one blood," *but not of the same essence*. We are the hot-house, artificially quickened plants in nature, having in us a spark, which in them is latent. I

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 421 fn.

## FREEDOM—OUTWARD AND INWARD

Valuing freedom of thought above all things, as the only way of reaching at some future time that Wisdom, of which every Theosophist ought to be enamoured, we recognize the right to the same freedom in our foes as in our friends.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

When freedom is not an inner idea which imparts strength to our activities and breadth to our creations, when it is merely a thing of external circumstance, it is like an open space to one who is blindfolded.

-RABINDRANATH TAGORE

The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment.

-GANDHIJI

IN these days of mechanistic materialism we are apt to evaluate all things in terms of externals. Thus, when we think of freedom, we generally think of the freedom of the outward man. If a man is serving a term in prison and confined to his cell, we say he is not free. And this is true as far as the movement of **his** body is concerned: he cannot leave the penal institution where he has been imprisoned; he cannot go where he wants to. But bodily imprisonment is only the loss of outward movement. There is another kind of imprisonment, namely, psychological captivity, and this is far, far more injurious than physical imprisonment. For a man may be in prison and yet remain free in mind and free in conscience. A slave may be dragged through the streets in chains and yet remain a free man. And the reverse is equally true. A man out of prison may walk the streets at liberty and go to whatever places, near or distant, he wants to, and yet be a captive. He is not under physical constraint, yet may be a mental slave afraid or unwilling to think for himself. As Sir William Drummond's saying goes: "He that will not reason is a bigot; he that cannot reason is a fool; and he that dares not reason is a slave."

What applies to the individual is equally applicable to the collectivity and the nation. Political freedom does not necessarily include true freedom, which is inward. And this is being demonstrated again and again in contemporary history.

The age in which we live is one of over-organization and over-regimentation. These are fast reducing large numbers of men and women to the condition of mental slaves; men and women willing to abandon their most precious gift, that of free thinking, to sell their birthright for a pottage of lentils! And yet without inward freedom man ceases to be man. Freedom is the essence of human progress, and, deprived of it, man stagnates and degenerates.

The challenge of the modern age is above all the challenge to man's freedom of thought. Men are not machines; no, not even "thinking" machines. Men, to be men, must retain their freedom of thought. This alone makes them moral beings. For no action which is not voluntary can be regarded as moral.

In his thought-provoking book *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley describes the drastic consequences of totalitarian dictatorship utilizing all the devices of scientific knowledge to make men "conform" to their rule. Under such a *regime* life would be a veritable nightmare and human endeavour a mere parody. Man is a strange creature and, faced with the problems of economic, political and social insecurity, he is too often tempted to surrender his individual liberties. Tired of the struggle for existence and the conflicts of life, he escapes into passivity and servile obedience to external law. Such obedience and conformity imply having someone else do your thinking for you.

And science has developed tremendous weapons for the exploiter and the tyrant, more dangerous than nuclear weapons. There are both crude and subtle ways of psychologizing men's minds and influencing their thinking, through systematic propaganda to brain-washing.

These methods are already conditioning and indoctrinating human minds in various fields and their potential danger in the hands of the exploiter should not be underestimated. While legislation can and should condemn some of these methods as

illegal, legislation, we all know, cannot enforce the law. What is needed is a greater awareness on the part of the individual. Rightly did Lord Buddha say that vigilance is the way to immortality and that the heedless are already dead.

The only remedy lies in educating the children to enable them to protect themselves against the forces of tyranny. The success or failure of a democracy lies in its system of education.

Children must not be allowed to become the victims of undesirable suggestions, but helped to develop sufficient discrimination to recognize the danger and protect themselves. "A proper and sane system of education," says Madame Blavatsky, "should produce the most vigorous and liberal minds, strictly trained in logical and accurate thought, and not in blind faith." Are our teachers helping to produce such "vigorous and liberal minds" and can they succeed unless they are fearless and liberal themselves and able to think and reason for themselves? We need teachers who are able to kindle and to enlighten the spirit of liberty in the hearts of the young; and only "free men and women, free intellectually, free morally, unprejudiced in all respects, and above all things, *unselfish*" can communicate to their pupils the true meaning of freedom and impart to them its value. It was H.G.Wells who said that "history is becoming more and more a race between education and catastrophe." Yes, but education must be such as will provide children with a foundation sound enough to satisfy both reason and aspiration. They must be able to look after themselves morally and intellectually, so that they cannot be easily drawn into the destructive currents of our times, or easily exploited by those in power. Realizing their responsibility and able to face it courageously and wisely, they must be able to recognize truth from error and not be misled by mere slogans, glamoured by false promises or deceived by external appearances. They must be helped to develop integrity and honesty.

We must not overlook the fact that education can also be exploited by vested interests and that a wrong and perverse system of education can corrupt and produce men and women incapable of thinking for themselves. A king in ancient Sparta on being asked

what boys should learn in school is said to have answered: "Why, I suppose, what, being men, they shall do." Let the children be taught self-reliance, altruism and freedom of thinking, that the men and women of tomorrow may be true and responsible citizens of a Republic of Brotherhood.

May we learn to value freedom of thought above all things, that we may see the Truth and act accordingly!

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IT is now some time since this theory [of cycles], which was first propounded in the oldest religion of the world, Vedaism, then taught by various Greek philosophers, and afterwards defended by the Theosophists of the Middle Ages, but which came to be flatly denied by the wise men of the West, like everything else, in this world of negation, has been gradually coming into prominence again. This once, contrary to the rule, it is the men of science themselves who take up. Statistics of events of the most varied nature are fast being collected and collated with the seriousness demanded by important scientific questions. Statistics of wars and of the periods (or cycles) of the appearance of great men—at least those as have been recognized as such by their contemporaries and irrespective of later opinions; statistics of the periods of development and progress at large commercial centres; of the rise and fall of arts and sciences; of cataclysms, such as earthquakes, epidemics; periods of extraordinary cold and heat; cycles of revolutions, and of the rise and fall of empires, etc.; all these are subjected in turn to the analysis of the minutest mathematical calculations. Finally, even the occult significance of numbers in names of persons and names of cities, in events, and like matters, receives unwonted attention. If, on the one hand, a great portion of the educated public is running into atheism and scepticism, on the other hand, we find an evident current of mysticism forcing its way into science.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## THE THEOSOPHY OF THE KORAN

### I

THE Second Object of the Parent Theosophical Society founded in 1875, was the study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study. In order to detect the vital principles common to all religions and thus do away with sectarianism and exclusiveness, a mind free from preconceptions and a tolerant heart are necessary. To evaluate a faith correctly, one should study its original scriptures, applying to them the touchstone of common sense, logical reasoning, and knowledge and appreciation of the great truths common to all faiths, ancient and modern.

Religion *per se* is Spiritual Knowledge, that true bond which could unite all men together. False religion, false knowledge, separates man from man, by accentuating unimportant temporary differences.

In evaluating the importance of Mohammed and his teachings in the religious and social history of the world, it should be remembered that his system was chiefly influenced by Judaism and Christianity. He drew upon these to illustrate his teachings, because the men and women of his day were familiar with their terms.

In the *Koran*, one finds some concepts which are constructive and ennobling, reiterations of great principles common to all the great religious movements. To judge of the value of the contribution of Islam from this basis alone, however, would be only a partial appraisal of it. It must be recalled that the Arabia to which Mohammed came had almost no social code. Its traditional religion was worship of the personified powers of Nature and of the Sun, as evidenced by the many idols in the Kaaba. The Arabians' ancient moral teachings had become submerged in debased and superstitious ceremonials. Their old religion had behind it the traditions of a high degree of culture, but the culture to which Mohammed came was illiterate in the modern sense. Mohammed

brought to a backward people a conception of the One Life, the Universal Force, or the One God, Allah—the Great Breath, contained in and energizing all things. He offered them a code of social conduct and common-sense laws that could be comprehended and accepted by them at their cultural level, thus enabling them to advance out of the darkness into which they had fallen.

Max Muller, in his introduction to the translation of the *Koran* in the Sacred Books of the East Series, describes the Arabs thus:

Brave and chivalrous, the Arab was always ready to defend the stranger who claimed his protection, while he would stand by a member of his own clan and defend him with his life, whether he were right or wrong....They were generous and hospitable to a fault....Pride of birth was their passion, and poetry their greatest delight....But their vices were as conspicuous as their virtues, and drunkenness, gambling, and the grossest immorality were very prevalent among them....Cruel, and superstitious too, they were; and amongst the inhuman customs which Mohammed swept away, none is more revolting than that commonly practised by them, of burying their female children alive....The position of women amongst them was not an elevated one....As for government they had, virtually, none.

Before beginning a more detailed study of some of Mohammed's teachings, let us review some of the outstanding events in the Prophet's life.

We have to depend on Muslim chroniclers for the little we know of Mohammed's early years. He was born in 570 A. D. in the tribe of the Quraish, members of which were the hereditary guardians of the Kaaba in Mecca, around which the ancient culture of the Arabian people had been built up by the Ishmaelites. He was early left an orphan and was brought up by his uncle, the powerful and respected Abu Talib. By temperament he was serious, thoughtful and sensitive. He lived a reserved life of exceptional rectitude and nobility. In his dealings with others he was straightforward and outstandingly honest, so that he earned for himself the title of "Al-Ameen," or "the Trusty." Not even the bitterest of Mohammed's

opponents in later years could point to a blemish in his personal character and conduct. He travelled widely with trading caravans, visiting Basra at the age of 12, and other cities later. During these journeys he must have learned much of the religious philosophies of the Jews, the Persians, the early Christians, the Egyptians and the Greeks. It is said that the persecuted Gnostics gave the Arabs a knowledge of Greek philosophy. The Nestorians made them acquainted with the Neo-Platonic writers and the persecuted Jews instructed them in the Kabala.

The Nestorian Christians, many of whom had taken refuge in Arabia, seem to have greatly influenced Mohammed; particularly by their aversion to idolatry and their revolt against the carnalized Trinity of the orthodox Christian Church.

When 25 years old, Mohammed entered the service of a rich widow, Khadija, whom he later married. After his marriage, through his wife's elderly cousin Waraqa, he came in closer contact with a small group of thoughtful people in Mecca who called themselves "Hanifa," "the rightly inclined." These people may be considered as the Theosophists of those days: searchers for truth and students of philosophies and religions. They were familiar with the systems of the Jews, the early Christians, the Essenes, the Greek, the Syrian and the Abyssinian Christian Churches; they practised meditation, asceticism, devotion to truth and harmlessness or non-violence. They sought to bring about a return to the original Semitic religion of Abraham, and held that man could achieve salvation only through *Islam*, or submission to the will of the Universal Spirit called by them the One God, ALLAH. For example, we find in the *Koran*: "Lo! Religion with Allah is Surrender [to His will and guidance]."

Mohammed frequently retired to a secluded cave in the mountains outside Mecca for long periods of fasting and meditation. It is recorded that he was sometimes so weakened by fasting and the exertion of his search and meditation on the iniquities of his people, of which he was deeply aware, that he was overpowered physically, and occasionally lost consciousness. During one of these spells, when he was about 40 years old, an Angel holding a scroll is said to have appeared to him in a vision. and commanded him to

read a passage from the heavenly book:

Read! for thy Lord is the most beneficent, who hath taught thee the use of the pen, who hath taught man that which he knew not. Nay, truly man is deeply plunged in wickedness because he finds himself attached to wealth. Verily unto the Lord is the return of all things. (*Sura xcvi*)

Rushing home in a frenzy, Mohammed told his wife of this experience. What did it mean? Was he possessed? Was it authentic? Khadija urged him to believe the evidence of his vision and accept the command from the messenger of Allah; since, surely, because of his blameless and noble life, Allah would not permit him to be oppressed by an evil spirit. In spite of these assurances, Mohammed continued to doubt, and in the agony of his mind, he is said to have even contemplated suicide. After two or three years of this uncertainty, the vision appeared a second time, and in a similar fashion commanded him to reveal the truth about the One God, and to be His mouthpiece in the instruction of the Arabs in the ways of righteousness. After this, he doubted no more and began with confidence his appointed work.

He gained followers first from within his own household and then from among his friends. Many of his supporters were drawn from the youth, the poor and the slaves of the city. Soon a small community was formed which professed and practised *Ham'f* teachings. Mohammed thus did not found a new religion, but rather attempted to reform an existing one which had become corrupted. He had little to say that was new. His first "Revelations," delivered impersonally, proclaimed monotheism; One God, who required one-pointedness in worship, self-surrender, obedience, temperance, prayer, charity and non-violence. What Mohammed brought to these old teachings was his enthusiasm and his intense earnestness.

His fellow citizens looked upon him with disfavour because of his preaching against their licentious ways of life. It would seem that as a result of this, his preaching became more personal, threatening those who rejected his teachings with the disfavour of Allah. Further, he directly attacked the old tribal worship of many

gods and goddesses and thus incurred the anger of the powerful and orthodox Meccans.

Until 620 A.D., when he was 50 years of age, Mohammed was under the powerful protection of his uncle Abu Talib and, though subjected to daily insults from his enemies in Mecca, he was not physically attacked, though some of his followers had been cruelly treated and found their lives in danger. Some of these fled across the Red Sea to Abyssinia, finding protection with the Abyssinian Christians.

In that same year, both his faithful wife Khadija and his uncle died. Bereft of their encouragement and protection, Mohammed, after struggling on for a time, almost decided that his cause in Mecca was hopeless. At this time of despair he received encouragement from a group of people from the city of Yathrib (Medina) who were visiting Mecca on pilgrimage. They were interested in, and sympathetic with, his teachings. For those who wanted to become his disciples he then formulated a pledge: to associate no material thing with God, to be honest, not to seek the unjust acquirement of others' goods, to be chaste, not to kill newborn infants, to avoid slander and calumny, and to obey Mohammed in everything that was right. The pilgrims returned home to Medina and, when their solicitations for support there had been sufficiently fruitful to ensure success, the Islamic community of Mecca made a secret exodus in 622 A. D.

Mohammed and Abu Bakr, his close friend, escaped together. Once, when danger approached very near, old Abu Bakr lost faith and feared for them. "We are but two," said he. "Nay," answered Mohammed, "we are three, for God is with us." In this spirit they overcame their difficulties. From this flight, called the Hejira, the Muslim era dates.

In Medina rapid success attended Mohammed's efforts. There, under the stress of circumstances, he was not only the religious leader but became also the ruler and general of his followers. He set an example of frugality and abstinence, hard work, justice, friendliness and an unbroken devotion to his mission. War was made against Medina by the infuriated Meccans who desired to

exterminate the Muslims. As a general, Mohammed proved himself wise. History records that he was just to friend and foe alike and forgiving and tolerant to the vanquished.

Some of his declarations, issued in time of stress, might lead one to believe that he advocated violence and extreme measures in war. But side by side with these are exhortations to mildness, forgiveness and mercy.

Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors.

And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for Allah. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against wrong-doers. (*Sura n*, 186-189)

We should not forget the fiery and warlike nature of the people to whom Mohammed came and whose unrestrained violence had laid Arabia waste with fratricidal wars for centuries. Through his teachings the tribes were welded together, but at no time did he preach any kind of religious conversion through fear, oppression, injustice, or war.

Converts to Islam increased and, when Mohammed finally advanced on Mecca shortly before his death, with a large number of followers, the city submitted peacefully to him. He forgave all the unjust and harsh treatment to which he and his followers had been subjected, letting the power of his tolerance and non-revengefulness turn the hearts of his enemies to an appreciation of Islam, which many freely embraced.

History records that all the battles fought by the early Muslims under Mohammed were of a defensive nature. Resistance by arms was resorted to only after the greatest provocation, or attack upon the community. But short is the path from defensive war to offensive war, when passions are aroused. After the Prophet's death, Islam became a strong, self-confident faith with a hostile attitude on the part of many towards non-Muslims. Forgotten were the Prophet's teachings that:

The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr. (*Sayings of Mohammed*, p. 94)

The pen is mightier than the sword.

There are as many ways to Allah as there are breaths of the children of men.

The most excellent *Jihad* [Holy war] is that for the conquest of self.

And in the *Koran*:

There is no compulsion in religion. (*Sura it*, 256)

The guerdon of an ill-deed is an ill the like thereof. But whosoever pardoneth and amendeth, his wage is the affair of Allah. Lo! He loveth not wrong-doers. (*Sura xm*, 40)

Who beareth injuries patiently and forgiveth, verily this is a necessary work. (*Sura xm*, 41)

(To be concluded)

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HERE is the test of wisdom,  
 Wisdom is not finally tested in schools,  
 Wisdom cannot be pass'd from one having it to another  
 not having it,  
 Wisdom is of the soul, is not susceptible of proof, is  
 its own proof,  
 Applies to all stages and objects and qualities and is  
 content,  
 Is the certainty of the reality and immortality of things,  
 and the excellence of things;  
 Something there is in the float of the sight of things  
 that provokes it out of the soul.

-WALT WHITMAN

## A LIVING RELIGION

THE great Teachers of humanity come among us for the purpose of teaching us the Law of Life and making us understand the object of existence, thus enabling us to be self-reliant and responsible human beings. A mere glance around shows that most people live for themselves, without any consideration for others. There is such a great attachment to the transitory things of life that the immortal Essence beyond is not even recognized or believed in. Consequently, people think and act and live in an irresponsible manner.

This earth, Disciple, is the Hall of Sorrow, wherein are set along the Path of dire probations, traps to ensnare thy EGO by the delusion called "Great Heresy." (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 4)

That which is unreal is taken for the Real, and so this world has become the Hall of Sorrow, where Human Egos, instead of fulfilling their divine destiny, are caught up in the traps of illusions and delusions, self-created. People go through terrible suffering because of their false concepts about themselves, God and Nature. Would they commit suicides or murders in an irresponsible way if they understood the principle of unity in diversity? Would there be deliberate robbing or covert dishonesty in trade if they understood the divine Law of Karma? Would there exist slaughter-houses and butchers, would there be a craze for hunting and shooting, would there be cruelty to animals in any form by human beings if they understood the law of interdependence? Would there be any thought of making weapons of destruction if the law of brotherhood was practised? This shows how lack of correct knowledge as given by the Teachers has led people to irresponsible behaviour. Theosophy is the Religion of Responsibility that awakens in man his divine intuitions and makes him aware of his own responsibilities to himself, to his fellow beings and to the whole of Nature.

Those who are scientifically inclined do not care to study the Scriptures because they have divorced religion from science. They associate religion with orthodoxy and superstition. They try to

understand everything in Nature, whether the distant firmament or the tiniest atom, only through their telescopes or microscopes. What they cannot prove through their own methods cannot exist! They want to conquer outer space without knowing the fullness of the invisible space! Though their inventions have brought forth useful articles of material comfort, they have not succeeded in bringing mankind any nearer to true peace, inner contentment and happiness.

Every religion, on the other hand, the religion of the churches, the temples and the mosques, keeps people away from the true teachings so that they may rely more and more upon the outer crutches of rites and ceremonies which are considered to be necessary for the forgiveness of sins. Religion has become a form of rituals instead of a way of Life, as it should be.

Madame Blavatsky, in her first great book, *Isis Unveiled*, exposes false science and false religion, and points out where and how they became corrupted. She also indicates the One Source of all religions, philosophies and sciences.

As cycle succeeded cycle, and one nation after another came upon the world's stage to play its brief part in the majestic drama of human life, each new people evolved from ancestral traditions its own religion, giving it a local colour, and stamping it with its individual characteristics. While each of these religions had its distinguishing traits, by which, were there no other archaic vestiges, the physical and psychological status of its creators could be estimated, all preserved a common likeness to one prototype. This parent cult was none other than the primitive "wisdom-religion." (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 216)

What this Wisdom-Religion is, is also indicated by her:

A philosophy so profound, a moral code so ennobling, and practical results so conclusive and so uniformly demonstrable is not the growth of a generation, or even a single epoch. Fact must have been piled upon fact, deduction upon deduction, science have begotten science, and myriads of the brightest human intellects have reflected upon the laws of nature, before this ancient doctrine had taken concrete shape. (II, 99)

So it is a practical philosophy, a living religion, an ennobling moral code. It is not a speculative philosophy, changing its theories from year to year. It is an exact body of knowledge, dealing fully with the whole of Nature in all its aspects, visible and invisible. At the same time it is an ennobling moral code to be applied in daily life. Morality and moral education have little value in our age and era. It is hardly recognized that the moral nature of man belongs to his immortal aspect and therefore no attention is paid to the building of character. This ennobling moral code of Theosophy can bring about practical results so conclusive and uniformly demonstrable that it can be relied upon. What H.P.B. says needs to be noted, that the brightest human intellects first *reflected* upon the great laws of Nature, and then only the doctrine took a concrete shape. This is the Religion of Responsibility that makes man fully aware and responsible for every thought, word and deed. The word "religion" means a binding force that can unify every aspect in man's constitution as well as every man to his fellow beings, and to the whole of Nature around him. Instead of this, religion has become a source of constant fights and struggles. In the words of a Master: "Remember, the sum of human misery will never be diminished unto that day when the better portion of humanity destroys in the name of truth, morality, and universal charity, the altars of their false gods."

This is the task adopted by Theosophy, the Religion of Responsibility. It shows each man, each woman, each child, how to live in the world, how to fulfil each duty, how to avoid the conflict of duties. Man himself becomes a mediator between the human and the divine. The Religion of Responsibility indicates to him that he is the mover of his own Law to a certain extent, that it cannot be propitiated, nor can it be thwarted, but its course can be followed wisely. This Religion of Responsibility, once contacted, cannot be abused, misused or neglected, but it is to be practised, and lived to the best of one's ability. We are not navigating unknown oceans without chart or compass; everything is provided for. All that is needed is to make a beginning and to go on sailing, patiently and perseveringly, in the right direction, till the other shore is

reached. To watch for the beacon light of Truth and to avoid the pitfalls indicated by Those who have reached the other shore triumphantly is the one and only method to be adopted.

The Religion of Responsibility, first and foremost, teaches us to keep clean and clear the storehouse of thought. No one would wish to keep dirty, rotten things in his storeroom; then why allow ugly and evil thoughts to enter the mental storehouse and remain there? Why not restrict admission to pure, noble and altruistic thoughts that would feed the hungry and uplift the downtrodden?

The second lesson taught by the Religion of Responsibility is the cultivation of the right type of speech that would give visible expression to the invisible ideas stored in the mind. The tone of our speech should be such as to comfort and help others.

Next, on the plane of action, too, the Religion of Responsibility indicates the correct way: Fulfil all duties; perform all deeds as sacramental actions; offer every act to the Divine. Thoughts, speech and deeds are the triple avenues of life that would raise one to a higher level. Not only does the individual rise above the normal, average mankind, but he can also help the very matter that he comes in contact with to become purer. This dual task is to be achieved by every student-practitioner of the Religion of Responsibility. Observance of the Divine Discipline of moderation—avoidance always of the two extremes and the walking of the middle way—is also a great necessity.

The Religion of Responsibility can be lived by anyone, anywhere. It requires no outer formalities but inner restrictions, inner discipline, inner transformation. In the words of a Master:

Each one of you contains within the precincts of his inner tabernacle the Supreme Court—prosecutor, defence, jury and judge—whose sentence is the only one without appeal; since none can know you better than you do yourself, when once you have learned to judge that Self by the never wavering light of the inner divinity—your higher Consciousness. (U.L.T. *Pamphlet No. 22*, p. 11)



## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The subject of dreams continues to fascinate researchers and the public alike. Milton Kramer, M.D., Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at New York University School of Medicine and Director of their Sleep Consultation Service, says that 40 years of research suggests that dreams do have meaning; and the nature of that meaning helps determine our mood the next day. "That, in turn, determines how we function and what we can accomplish." (*Psychology Today*, September/October 2000)

Quite simply [Kramer goes on to say], the dreams we have at night set the stage for our actions the following day, priming us to either rise and shine and conquer the world, or crawl back under the covers and duck the challenges that lie ahead...

We all have multiple dreams across the night, but not all of them succeed at untying our emotional knots...What determines whether we will have a helpful or unhelpful sequences of dreams? It depends on two factors: whether there is in our emotional arsenal a solution to the kind of problem at hand, and whether we happen to be up to the task. Just as some days we are more productive than others, seemingly without rhyme or reason, so some of our dream experiences are more useful than others in solving life's quandaries.

Research has shown us that dreams are not just the machinations of the unconscious on random play. They have order, and they reflect important psychological aspects of our lives and personalities...Dreams vary from person to person—they are individualized, like fingerprints—as well as from day to day, reinforcing the idea that the events of each day play out in the night's dreams.

These psychological regularities prove that the dream experience has order, and as we have seen in the laboratory, order paved the way for meaning. The nature of that meaning can change our mood for better or worse from night to morning... How we feel influences how well we function in waking life. Happiness affects performance.

Our waking and dreaming lives have a great deal in common

With whom we spend the night and how well things work, awake or asleep, largely determine our happiness.

The key to the understanding of dreams lies in the recognition of man's inner nature, his inner Ego, with its own set of senses, the scope of which stretches far beyond the limit granted to the physical senses. As W. Q. Judge puts it in his article "Remembering the Experiences of the Ego":

The Ego, when thus released from the physical chains, free from its hard daily task of living with and working through the bodily organs, proceeds to enjoy the experiences of the plane of existence which is peculiarly its own. On that plane it uses a method and process of thought, and perceives the ideas appropriate to it through organs different from those of the body. All that it sees and hears (if we may use those terms) appears reversed from our plane...

What we have to do, then, is to learn the language of the Ego, so that we shall not fail to make a proper translation to ourselves. For at all times the language of the plane through which the Ego nightly floats is a foreign one to the brain we use, and has to be always translated for use by the brain. If the interpretation is incorrect, the experience of the Ego will never be made complete to the lower man...

Upon awakening, a great hindrance is found in our own daily life and terms of speech and thought to the right translation of these experiences, and the only way in which we can use them with full benefit is by making ourselves porous, so to speak, to the influences from the higher self, and by living and thinking in such a manner as will be most likely to bring about the aim of the soul. (U.L.T. *Pamphlet No. 11*)

In many countries, the last few years have seen a revolution in the way education is looked upon. That true learning, rather than mere knowledge acquisition, should be the goal is being increasingly recognized. The new instructional approaches "emphasize the student as the main agent of learning, who not

only takes more initiative but does so in conjunction with other students to make learning a socially interactive rather than a one-way transfer of pre-packaged information," write Edmund J. Hansen and James A. Stephens under the heading "The Ethics of Learning-Centred Education." (*Change*, September/October 2000)

Despite the talk and enthusiasm, however [state the authors], the reality in most classrooms remains strikingly different. The majority of faculty still rely on lectures as their prime teaching method. Those using collaborative learning, for example, tend to treat it as a toolbox of supplementary methods rather than as a new approach to teaching....

To confront this dilemma, our argument is that teaching needs to rediscover its moral base; doing so will enable students and teachers alike to do their job of developing minds with courage and integrity. Therefore, we argue that one cannot define or facilitate human growth without the use of moral categories....

Despite the ideological appeal of learner-centred instruction, the lecture remains the predominant teaching method on most campuses....Years of passive note-taking and silent absorption of information have convinced many students that this is the appropriate way to learn. Combined with a climate in which students' class preparation at home has become an almost negligible activity, this atmosphere has taught students that they can rely almost exclusively on the instructor to tell them what they need to know. Not surprisingly, this leads students to rely on memorization more than understanding....

The moral virtues of teaching and learning are based on a mutual interest in intellectual growth and development. Helping students become educated members of society constitutes a contract between three partners: the student, the teacher, and society at large. Each of them is responsible to the other two. Knowledge acquisition is only one element in this contract. More important is that the teacher help the student acquire the courage to grow and develop his or her potential. This can never be accomplished in a service relationship, which is by definition one-sided.

of certain attitudinal qualities, which are based on moral values. Essential teacher virtues, say the authors, include honesty, courage, care, fairness, and accountability. To fulfil their mission, educators need to rediscover the moral base of teaching and learning. Education is a moral act, and will fail if morality is treated as optional.

In *The Key to Theosophy*, written in 1889, H.P.B. outlines very briefly the method of education which Theosophy would recommend. She states there that the child must be considered as a unit; he must be taught self-reliance, to think and reason for himself, mutual charity, love for his fellow men, and, most importantly, unselfishness. The purely mechanical working of the memory, she says, must be reduced to an absolute minimum, and every effort must be made to develop the inner senses, faculties and latent capacities.

While in some ways modern educational methods are aiming at all this, they yet lack one important key, and that is, the knowledge of the soul. Educational methods, in the present as in the past, are meant to cultivate the mind of the student, not the soul. Theosophy, on the other hand, teaches that the mind is a product of the soul, a tool or an instrument of the soul. Mere head-learning, as distinct from soul-wisdom, breeds selfishness.

Recognition of an immortal, reincarnating soul changes our whole basis of thinking and of acting. Any system of education that leaves out spiritual and moral education is a limited system. There must be the education of the soul, which is spiritual and moral, as distinct from education of the physical and intellectual faculties.

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The British journal *Nature* reports that life on land may be more than a billion years older than previously thought. Scientists have come to this conclusion after discovering organic matter in ancient rocks in South Africa. Researchers now claim to have evidence that while primitive life has flourished in the oceans for the past

3.8 billion years, it appeared on land much later, between 2.6 and 2.7 billion years ago.

What, after all, is life? Is there anything inorganic in the entire Universe?

Occultism does not accept anything inorganic in the Kosmos. The expression employed by Science, "inorganic substance," means simply that the latent life slumbering in the molecules of so-called "inert matter" is incognizable. ALL IS LIFE, and every atom of even mineral dust is a LIFE, though beyond our comprehension and perception, because it is outside the range of the laws known to those who reject Occultism. "The very Atoms," says Tyndall, "seem instinct with a desire for life." Whence, then, we would ask, comes the tendency "to run into organic form"? Is it in any way explicable except according to the teachings of Occult Science? (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 248-49)

Last month, "In the Light of Theosophy" commented on animal intelligence. Further instances, especially of what animal-behaviour specialists call the canines' "sixth sense," are to be found in an article by Lynn Waldsmith in *Reader's Digest* for November 2000 (Indian ed.)

Some dogs, rare though they are, can sense their owners' impending strokes or seizures and warn them in advance by head-butting behind their knees, or by grabbing hold of their arm and gently pulling them to the ground, or by other means. Such seizure-alert dogs allow epileptic patients to find a safe resting place before the seizure occurs. They are proving to be a boon to people whose health—and even lives—may hang in the balance. These dogs are given special training in much the same way that guide dogs are trained to assist the blind.

What signs and signals the dogs are picking up remains a mystery. One theory is that a canine's sense of smell, estimated to be at least 300 times more sensitive than a human's, is responsible. It might be the patient's sweating or some kind of unusual secretion

that a dog can perceive by smell, opines one of the investigating doctors.

Animals are more or less clairvoyant and psychically sensitive, and can sense things that human beings cannot. According to Paracelsus,

certain animals have inherited instincts that cause them to act in a certain manner, which will indicate other future events than a change in the weather. The peculiar cry of a peacock or the unusual howling of a dog indicates the approach of a death in the house to which they are attached, for every being is a product of the universal principle of life, and each contains the light of Nature.

"It is better to give than to receive" is an old adage, but few understand why this is so. "Giving" does not mean just tangible gifts, but also giving guidance or doing someone a service. Ellen J. Langer, Ph. D., professor of psychology at Harvard University, says that giving is a gift, not only to others, but to ourselves, because "it increases the bond between us and the person to whom we have given; it also tells us about ourselves and generally increases our feelings of competence." (*Psychology Today*, November-December 2000)

Most of us want to be loved [Langer observes], but it is actually the act of loving that is rewarding. Being loved is important mostly because it facilitates our opportunities to love. When we love, we give. Every time we do something for someone else we feel effective, useful and generous....

We usually think that the more we care about someone, the more we want to give to them. This is probably true. But what is even more interesting is that the more we give, the more we come to care about the person to whom we are giving. We feel alive in the activity. And it is the receiver who has provided the opportunity for us to feel this good, so we feel loving in return....Attending to someone else's needs leads to affection for that person...

Consider the bond between mother and child. Faced with the responsibility for a helpless infant, no one will argue that mothers give—and give a *lot*. With all the giving a mother has before her, it is no wonder the bond with her child grows stronger and stronger as the baby grows. And in this giving, a mom feels effective—perhaps tired, but effective.

Perhaps the best way to counter loneliness, depression and the feeling of being unloved is to find someone to *give* to. There is real joy in such giving.

Mr. Judge offered the following advice to a friend and correspondent, and it is equally applicable to all of us:

I think that you will be helped if you will try to aid some poor, distressed person by merely talking and expressing your sympathy if you are not able to help in money, though the very fact of giving...to someone who needs it is an act which, if done in the right spirit, that of true brotherliness, will help the one who gives. I suggest this because you will, by doing so, set up fresh bonds of sympathy between you and others, and by trying to alleviate the sorrows or sufferings of others, you will find strength come to you when you most need it.

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Flushed with the promise  
Of marvels dimly guessed  
Tomorrow beckons;  
Today's children  
Will see the sunrise  
In all its splendour  
But we alone  
Can bless it with a meaning.

—HERBERT BLUEN

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