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Vol. X No. 2

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December 17, 1939

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We are in the Winter Solstice, the period at which the Sun entering the sign of Capricornus has already, since December 21st, ceased to advance in the Southern Hemisphere, and, cancer or crab-like, begins to move back. It is at this particular time that, every year, he is born, and December 25th was the day of the birth of the Sun for those who inhabited the Northern Hemisphere. It is also on December the 25th, Christmas, the day with the Christians on which the "Saviour of the World" was born, that were born, ages before him, the Persian Mithra, the Egyptian Osiris, the Greek Bacchus, the Phœnician Adonis, the Phrygian Athis. . . .

Sad derision of human destiny. So many Saviours of the world born unto it, so much and so often propitiated, and yet the world is as miserable—nay, far more wretched now than ever before—as though none of these had ever been born !

—H. P. B.



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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour ;
- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study ; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।



*There is no Religion Higher than Truth*

BOMBAY, 17th December, 1939

VOL. X. No. 2.

### CONTENTS

Living Movement	... ..	17
Progress and Culture—By H. P. Blavatsky	... ..	18
The Signs of This Cycle—By W. Q. Judge	... ..	24
The New Style of Thinking	... ..	25
Courage	... ..	27
Questions Answered	... ..	29
Democracy and Theosophy	... ..	30
In the Light of Theosophy	... ..	31



AUM

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

BOMBAY, 17th December 1939.

VOL. X. No. 2.

## LIVING MOVEMENT

One of the tasks of the Theosophical student-server is to assist in the liberalizing of the world's thought, which task is proceeding in different ways. While the promulgation of Theosophy is the most important contribution he can make to changing the Manas and Buddhi of the race, there are other ways which, though minor ones, he cannot afford to neglect. To assist in cosmopolitanizing the world, where political, social and religious creeds keep human groups divided, is a necessary help to others in the realization of Universal Brotherhood. In numerous ways H.P.B. showed not only how the light of Theosophy can be shed to increase the power of true knowledge, but also how that light should be used to guide movements which tend to unify thought-developments which support the idea of Brotherhood *in actu*. While our foremost duty is to "be Theosophists, work for Theosophy" we cannot afford to neglect the study and the examination of the tendencies of thought and the active movements which can aid men and women to come nearer to Theosophy.

In that spirit H.P.B. wrote many articles, of which the one we reprint below is an example; "Progress and Culture" was the opening editorial in *Lucifer* for August 1890. It examines certain current positions and events to evaluate the real progress made by the European humanity of the day. The article criticizes and exposes as false several claims that were being made for developments which she declared did not represent real progress and real culture. Thus the article examines the position of the Christian churches, the status of European womanhood, the attitude assumed by important Jewish leaders towards their own creed and community, the relations between Asiatics and Europeans, etc. Half-a-century has gone by and certain changes have taken place, but in spite of those changes the problems then remain problems still.

Thus, for example, the Christian churches have lost further ground during the period; the war of 1914-18 presented the spectacle of the churches publicly and openly abandoning Christ and His teach-

ings to support the prestige and the lust of power of their respective nationalistic governments. The failure of the churches, of organized religions with their salaried and money-demanding priests, is a distinct gain to the cause of Universal Brotherhood.

Similarly, the status of European women has changed; especially in Britain they have won, after hard struggle and great suffering, the power of the vote, in which respect English women are now the equals of English men. But the vote has not brought them emancipation. Even politically English women are not the equals of their fathers, husbands, or sons. In the Cabinet, in the House of Commons and so forth women are conspicuous by their absence and by the poverty of their influence. The position of the enfranchised English women shows that the vote is not in reality so powerful an instrument as is supposed.

Here in India, women did not have to undertake the struggle for political power because Indian culture and tradition regard woman as the equal of man in her usefulness to society and to state. Indian women have already occupied seats in cabinets, secretariats and legislatures with credit to themselves and to their country and have set a fine example to the world. But Indian women have still to perform a task to the greater glory of their sex and of their country. Mr. Judge has referred to the innate conservatism of women, especially in religious matters. Women as the natural custodians of religious lore should not abandon the living of the spiritual life, though they should abandon the conservatism and the dogmatism of creedal and ritualistic practices.

Theosophical students in female bodies have a solemn duty to uphold spiritual ideals by living them, especially in the home. The home, as an institution, needs to be liberated from the fetters of religious orthodoxy, ritualistic conservatism and social cant. We need religion, we need ritual, we need social order; but we should free the home from their distorted shadows—orthodoxy, conservatism and cant. The tendency in India is to be-



come irreligious, to disregard the existence of the invisible and the spiritual, and to copy the humbug and the hypocrisy of Occidental society. In India neither the elderly orthodox nor the young materialistically inclined reformers are quite in a position to set an example of true womanly living. Spirituality in religion ; rites and rituals which acknowledge the debt of human beings to the powers of nature and which endow human living with grace and beauty ; intellectual honesty ; sober hospitality ; judicious charity ;—these, Indian women can easily cultivate ; but, at the moment, some friendly help and especially a good example have to be given. This is a task to which the attention of women students of Theosophy is pertinently drawn.

The reprinted article refers also to manners and customs : aping the West in eating with knife and fork, in dressing and dancing, etc., come in for stringent but true criticisms. If anything, during the last fifty years, habits, manners and morals have deteriorated. Unclean living encouraged by unclean thinking on sex and other matters prevails on a larger scale. Indian youths of to-day have more of a Eurasian mentality than had the youths of fifty years ago and this is a danger not only to India, but to the world.

On young Indian Theosophists, male and female, rests the heavy responsibility of setting the proper example of chastity, of parenthood, of tolerance and of brotherliness. In their keeping is the future progress of India and, through her, of the world.

In the following article Carlyle's definition of progress as "living movement" is accepted as true but with this proviso : "only on the condition that no dead weight, no corpse shall impede the freedom of that 'living movement'." Uncompromising conservatism and lack of spirituality form a pair and the task before all Theosophists of both sexes and of every land is to free human institutions of its power and to make them liberal and friendly not to one section or group but to humanity as a whole. Let us see to it that human progress is made real everywhere by keeping our own work living and moving.

The second reprint in this issue "The Signs of This Cycle" first appeared also as an editorial in Mr. Judge's *Path* for October 1892. It contains ideas on which students will do well to reflect. The article describes the conditions :—

We have very great progress to note in conquests of nature, in mechanical arts, in the ability to pander to love of luxury, in immense advancements with wonderful precision and power in the weapons made for destroying life. But side by side with these we have wretchedness, squalor, discontent, and crime ; very great wealth in the hands of the few, and very grinding poverty overcoming the many.

Neither in modern science, nor in political and socialistic programmes is there any remedy. Only in Theosophy will men and women of our era find solace in the struggle for existence and strength to change the destitution which abounds in every country of the world.

## PROGRESS AND CULTURE

"Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime ?

I, the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

\* \* \* \*

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward,  
forward let us range

Let the great world spin for ever down the  
ringing grooves of change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep  
into the younger day

Better fifty years of Europe, than a cycle of  
Cathay"....

TENNYSON

We, of the century claiming itself as the XIXth of *our* era, are very proud of our Progress and Civilization—Church and Churchmen attributing both to the advent of Christianity—"Blot Christianity out of the pages of man's history", they say, "and what would his laws have been?—what his civilization?" Aye ; "not a law which does not owe its truth and gentleness to Christianity, not a custom which cannot be traced in all its holy and healthful parts to the Gospel."

What an absurd boast, and how easily refuted !

To discredit such statements one has but to remember that our laws are based on those of Moses—life for life and tooth for tooth ; to recall the laws of the *holy* Inquisition, *i.e.*, the burning of heretics and witches by the hecatomb, on the slightest provocation ; the alleged right of the wealthiest and the strongest to sell their servants and fellow men into slavery, not to carry into effect the curse bestowed on Ham, but simply "to purchase the luxuries of Asia by supplying the slave market of the Saracens",<sup>1</sup> and finally the *Christian*

<sup>1</sup> *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, by H. H. Hallam, LL.D., F.R.A.S., p. 614. The author adds : "This trade was not peculiar to Venice. In England, it was very common, even after the Conquest, to export slaves to Ireland ; till in the reign of Henry II, the Irish came to a non-importation agreement which put a stop to the practice." And then, in a footnote : "William of Malmesbury accuses the Anglo-Saxon nobility of selling their female servants, even when pregnant by them, as slaves to foreigners." This is the Christian mode of dealing as Abraham with Hagar with a vengeance !



laws upheld to this day in England, and called women's *disabilities*, social and political. Moreover, as in the blessed days of our forefathers' ignorance, we meet now with such choice bits of unblushing *blague* as this, "We speak of our civilization, our arts, our freedom, our laws, and forget entirely *how large a share of all is due to Christianity*" (Rose).

Just so! "our laws and our arts", but neither "our civilization" nor "our freedom". No one could contradict the statement that these were won in spite of the most terrible opposition by the Church during long centuries, and in the face of her repeated and loud anathemas against civilization and freedom and the defenders of both. And yet, notwithstanding fact and truth, it is being constantly urged that even the elevated position (?!) of the Christian woman as compared with her "heathen" sister, is entirely the work of Christianity! Were it true, this would at best be but a poor compliment to pay to a religion which claims to supersede all others. As it is not true, however—Lecky, among many other serious and trustworthy writers, having shown that "in the whole feudal legislation (of Christendom) women were placed *in a much lower legal position than in the Pagan Empire*"—the sooner and the oftener this fact is mentioned the better it will be for plain truth. Besides this, our ecclesiastical laws are honey-combed as has been said, with the Mosaic element. It is *Leviticus* not the Roman code, which is the creator and inspirer of legislation—in Protestant countries, at any rate.

Progress, says Carlyle, is "living movement". This is true; but it is so only on the condition that no dead weight, no corpse shall impede the freedom of that "living movement". Now in its uncompromising conservatism and unspirituality the Church is no better than a dead body. Therefore it did and still does impede true progress. Indeed, so long as the Church—the deadliest enemy of the ethics of Christ—was in power, there was hardly any progress at all. It was only after the French Revolution that real culture and civilization had a fair start.

Those ladies who claim day after day and night after night with such earnest and passionate eloquence, at "Woman's Franchise League" meetings, their legitimate share of rights as mothers, wives and citizens, and still attend "divine" service on Sundays—prosecute at best the unprofitable business of boring holes through sea-water. It is not the laws of the country that they should take to task, but the Church and chiefly themselves. It is the *Karma* of the women of our era. It was generated with Mary Magdalene, got into practical

expression at the hands of the mother of Constantine, and found an ever renewed strength in every Queen and Empress "by the grace of God". Judean Christianity owes its life to a woman—*une sublime hallucinée*, as Renan puts it. Modern Protestantism and Roman Catholicism owe their illegitimate existence, again, to priest-ridden and church-going women; to the mother who teaches her son his first Bible lesson; to the wife or sister who forces her husband or brother to accompany her to church and chapel; to the emotional and hysterical spinster, the admirer of every popular preacher. And yet the predecessors of the latter have for fifteen centuries degraded women from every pulpit!

In *Lucifer* of October, 1889, in the article "The Women of Ceylon", we can read the opinion of Principal Donaldson, LL.D., of the University of St. Andrews, about the degradation of woman by the Christian Church. This is what he said openly in the *Contemporary Review*.

"It is a prevalent opinion that woman owes her present high position to Christianity. I used to believe in this opinion. But in the first three centuries I have not been able to see that Christianity had any favourable effect on the position of women, but, on the contrary, that it tended to lower their character and contract the range of their activity."

How very correct then, the remark of H. H. Gardener, that in the New Testament "the words sister, mother, daughter, and wife, are only names for degradation and dishonour"!

That the above is a fact, may be seen in various works, and even in certain *Weeklies*. "Saladin" of the *Agnostic* gives in his last "At Random" eloquent proofs of the same by bringing forward dozens of quotations. Here are a few of these:—

"Mrs. Mary A. Livermore says: 'The early Church fathers denounced women as noxious animals, necessary evils, and domestic perils.'

"Lecky says: 'Fierce invectives against the sex form a conspicuous and grotesque portion of the writings of the fathers.'

"Mrs. Stanton says that holy books and the priesthood teach that 'woman is the author of sin, who [in collusion with the devil] effected the fall of man.'

"Gamble says that in the fourth century holy men gravely argued the question, 'Ought women to be called human beings?'

"But let the Christian fathers speak for themselves. Tertullian, in the following flattering manner, addresses woman: 'You are the devil's gateway', the unseater of the forbidden tree; the first deserter from the divine law. You are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed God's image—man.'



"Clement of Alexandria says: 'It brings shame to reflect of what nature woman is.'

"Gregory Thaumaturgus says: 'One man among a thousand may be pure; a woman, never.'

"'Woman is the organ of the devil.'—St. Bernard.

"'Her voice is the hissing of the serpent.'—St. Anthony.

"'Woman is the instrument which the devil uses to get possession of our souls.'—St. Cyprian.

"'Woman is a scorpion.'—St. Bonaventure.

"'The gate of the devil, the road of iniquity.'—St. Jerome.

"'Woman is a daughter of falsehood, a sentinel of hell, the enemy of peace.'—St. John Damascene.

"'Of all wild beasts the most dangerous is woman.'—St. John Chrysostom.

"'Woman has the poison of an asp, the malice of a dragon.'—St. Gregory the Great.

Is it surprising, with such instructions from the fathers, that the children of the Christian Church should *not* "look up to women, and consider them men's equals"?

Withal, it is emotional woman who, even at this hour of progress, remains as ever the chief supporter of the Church! Nay it is she again who is the sole cause, if we have to believe the Bible allegory, that there is any Christianity or churches at all. For only imagine where would be both, had not our mother Eve listened to the tempting Serpent. First of all, there would be no sin. Secondly, the Devil having been thwarted, there would be no need of any Redemption at all, nor of any woman to have "seed" in order that it should "bruise under its heel the serpent's head"; and thus there would be neither Church nor Satan. For as expressed by our old friend Cardinal Ventura de Raulica, Serpent-Satan is "one of the fundamental dogmas of the Church, and serves as a basis for Christianity". Take away that basis and the whole struggle topples overboard into the dark waters of oblivion.

Therefore, we pronounce the Church ungrateful to woman, and the latter no worse than a willing martyr; for if her enfranchisement and freedom necessitated more than average moral courage a century ago, it requires very little now; only a firm determination. Indeed, if the ancient and modern writers may be believed, in real culture, freedom, and self-dignity the woman of our century has placed herself far beneath the ancient Aryan mother, the Egyptian—of whom Wilkinson and Buckle say that she had the greatest influence and liberty, social, religious and political among her countrymen—and even the Roman matron. The late Peary Chand Mitra has shown, "Manu" in hand, to what supremacy and honour the women of

ancient Aryavarta had been elevated. The author of the "Women of Ancient Egypt" tells us that "from the earliest time of which we can catch a glimpse, the women of Egypt enjoyed a freedom and independence of which modern nations are only beginning to dream." To quote once more from "At Random":—

"Sir Henry Maine says: 'No society, which preserves any tincture of Christian institutions, is ever likely to restore to married women the personal liberty conferred on them by the Roman law.'

"The cause of 'Woman's Rights' was championed in Greece five centuries before Christ.

"Helen H. Gardener says: 'When the Pagan law recognised her [the wife] as the equal of her husband, the Church discarded that law.'

"Lecky says: 'In the legends of early Rome we have ample evidence both of the high moral estimate of women and of their prominence in Roman life. The tragedies of Lucretia and of Virginia display a delicacy of honour and a sense of the supreme excellence of unsullied purity which no Christian nation can surpass.'

"Sir Henry Maine, in his 'Ancient Law', says that 'the inequality and oppression which related to women disappeared from Pagan laws', and adds: 'the consequence was that the situation of the Roman female became one of great personal and proprietary independence; but Christianity tended somewhat, from the very first, to narrow this remarkable liberty.' He further says that 'the jurisconsults of the day contended for better laws for wives, but the Church prevailed in most instances, and established the most oppressive ones.'

"Professor Draper, in his 'Intellectual Development of Europe', gives certain facts as to the outrageous treatment of women by Christian men (the clergy included) which it would be exceedingly indelicate in me to repeat.

"Moncure D. Conway says: 'There is not a more cruel chapter in history than that which records the arrest, by Christianity, of the natural growth of European civilization regarding women.'

"Neander, the Church historian, says: 'Christianity diminishes the influence of woman.'

Thus, it is amply proved that instead of an "elevated" position, it is a degraded one to which Christianity (or rather "Churchianity") has brought woman. Apart from this, woman has nought to thank it for.

And now, a word of good advice to all the members of Leagues and other societies connected with Woman's Rights. In our days of culture and progress, now that it is shown that in *Union* alone lies strength, and that tyrants can be put down only by their own weapons; and that finally we find that nothing works better than a "strike"—let all the champions of women's rights strike, and pledge themselves not to set foot in church or chapel until their rights are re-established and their equality with men recognised by law. We prophesy



that before six months are over every one of the Bishops in Parliament will work as jealously as themselves to bring in bills of reformation and pass them. Thus will Mosaic and Talmudic law be defeated to the glory of—WOMAN.

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But what are really culture and civilization? Dickens' idea that our hearts have benefited as much by macadam as our boots, is more original from a literary, than an aphoristical, standpoint. It is not true in principle, and it is disproved in nature by the very fact that there are far more good-hearted and noble-minded men and women in muddy country villages than there are in macadamised Paris or London. Real culture is spiritual. It proceeds from within outwards, and unless a person is naturally noble-minded and strives to progress on the spiritual before he does so on the physical or outward plane, such culture and civilization will be no better than whitened sepulchres full of dead men's bones and decay. And how can there be any true spiritual and intellectual culture when dogmatic creeds are the State religion and enforced under the penalty of the opprobrium of large communities of "believers". No dogmatic creed can be progressive. Unless a dogma is the expression of a universal and proven fact in nature, it is no better than mental and intellectual slavery. One who accepts dogmas easily ends by becoming a dogmatist himself. And, as Watts has well said: a dogmatical spirit inclines a man to be censorious of his neighbours... He is tempted to disdain his correspondents as men of low and dark understandings because they do not believe what he does."

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The above finds its demonstration daily in bigoted clergymen, in priests and Rabbis. Speaking of the latter and of the Talmud in connexion with progress and culture, we note some extraordinary articles in *Les Archives Israelites*, the leading organ of the French Jews, at Paris. In these the stagnation of all progress through fanaticism is so evident, that after reading some papers signed by such well-known names of *men of culture* as F. Crémieux (*Clericalisme et Judaïsme*), A. Franck, a member of the Institute (*Les Juifs et l'Humanité*), and especially an article by Elie Aristide Astruc, "*Grand rabbin de Bayonne, grand rabbin honoraire de la Belgique*", etc.—("Pourquoi nous restons Juifs")—no one can detect the faintest trace of the progress of the age, or preserve the slightest hope of ever witnessing that which the Christians are pleased to call the moral regeneration of the Jews. This article (not to mention the

others), written by a man who has an enormous reputation for learning and ability, bears on its face the proofs of what is intellectual culture, *minus* spirituality. The paper is addressed to the French Jews, considered as the most progressed of their race, and is full of the most ardent and passionate apology for Talmudic Judaism, soaked through and through with colossal religious self-opinionatedness. Nothing can approach its self-laudation. It precludes every moral progress and spiritual reformation in Judaism; it calls openly upon the race to exercise more than ever an uncompromising exclusiveness, and awakens the darkest and the most bigoted form of ignorant fanaticism. If such are the views of the leaders of the Jews settled in France, the hotbed of civilization and progress, what hope is there left for their co-religionists of other countries?

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The article, "Why we remain Jews", is curious. A. Astruc, the learned author thereof, notifies his readers solemnly that the Jews have to remain *no-lens volens* Jews, as not one of the existing religions could "satisfy the genius of the nation". "Were we forced to break with Judaism", he argues, "where is that other creed which could guide our lives?" He speaks of the star that once arose in the East and led the Magi to Bethlehem, but asks, "could the East, the cradle of religions, give us now a true creed? Never!" Then he turns to an analysis of Islamism and Buddhism. The former, he finds too dry in dogma and too ritualistic in form, and shows that it could never satisfy the Israelitish mind. Buddhism with its aspirations towards *Nirvana*, considered as the greatest realisation of bliss and "the most abstruse consciousness of non-being" (?) seems to him too negative and passive.

We will not stop to discuss this new phase of metaphysics, *i.e.*, the phenomenon of *non-being* endowed with self-consciousness. Let us rather see the author's analysis of the two forms of Christianity—Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The former with its Trinitarianism, and the dogmas of Divine Incarnation and Redemption, are incomprehensible "to the free mind of the Israelite"; the latter is too much scattered into innumerable sects to ever become the religion of the future. Neither of these two faiths "could satisfy a Jew", he says; therefore, the Rabbi implores his co-religionists to remain faithful to Judaism, or the Mosaic law, as this faith is *the best and the most saving of all*; it is, in short, as he puts it, "the ultimate as the highest expression of human religious thought".



This ultra-fanatical article has drawn the attention of several "Christian" papers. One of these takes its author to task severely *for his fear of dogmas only because human reason is unable to comprehend them*; as though, he adds, "any religious faith could ever be built upon reason"! This is well said, and would denote real progressive thought in the mind of the critic, had not his definition of belief in dogmas been a *bona fide* defence of them, which is far from showing philosophical progress. Then, the Russian reviewer, we are happy to say, defends Buddhism against the Rabbi's assault.

"We would have our honourable friend understand that he is quite wrong in undervaluing Buddhism, or regarding it, as he does, as infinitely below Judaism. Buddhism with its spiritual aspiration heavenward, and its ascetic tendencies, is, with all its defects, most undeniably more spiritual and humanitarian than Judaism ever was; especially modern Judaism with its inimical exclusiveness, its dark and despotic *kahal*, its deadening talmudic ritualism, which is a Jewish substitute for religion, and its determined hatred of all progress" (*Nov. Vremya*.)

This is good. It shows a beginning, at any rate, of spiritual culture in the journalism of a country regarded hitherto as only *semi-civilized*, while the press of the fully civilised nations generally breathes religious intolerance and prejudice, if not hatred, whenever speaking of a *pagan* philosophy.

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And what, after all, does *our* civilization amount to in the face of the grandiose civilizations of the Past, now so remote and so forgotten, as to furnish our modern conceit with the comforting idea that there never were any true civilizations at all before the advent of Christianity? Europeans call the Asiatic races "inferior" because, among other things, they eat with their hands and use no pocket-handkerchiefs. But how long is it that we, of Christendom, have ceased eating with our thumb and fingers, and begun blowing our noses with cambric? From the beginnings of the nations and down to the end of the XVIIIth century Christendom has either remained ignorant of, or scorned the use of, the fork. And yet in the Rome of the Cæsars, civilization was at the height of its development; and we know that if at the feasts of Lucullus, famous for their gorgeous luxury and sumptuousness, each guest chose his succulent morsel by plunging his fingers into a dish of rare viands, the guests of the Kings of France did the same as late as the last century. Almost 2,000 years rolled away, between Lucullus and the Pagan Cæsars on the one hand and the latest Bourbons on the other, yet the same personal habits prevail-

ed; we find the same at the brilliant courts of Francois I, Henry II, Louis XIII, and Louis XIV. The French historian, Alfred Franklin, gives in his interesting volumes *La Vie privée d'autrefois du XII au XVIII siècles, les Repas*, etc., a mass of curious information, especially as to the etiquette and the laws of propriety which existed in these centuries. He who, instead of using daintily his three fingers, used the whole hand to fish a piece of food out of the dish, sinned as much against propriety in those days, as he who puts his knife to his mouth while eating, in our own day. Our forefathers had very strict rules on cleanliness: e.g., the three fingers being *de rigueur*, they could be neither licked, nor wiped on one's jacket, but had to be cleaned and dried after every course "on the table cloth". The VIth volume of the work named acquaints the reader with all the details of the sundry customs. The modern habit of washing one's hands before dinner—existing now in truth, only in England—was strictly *de rigueur*, not only at the courts of the French Kings, but was a general custom, and had to be repeated before every course. The office was performed at courts by chamberlains and pages, who holding in their left hand a gold or silver basin, poured with their right hand out of a similar jug, aromatic, tepid water on to the hands of the diners. But this was in the reign of Henry III and IV. Two centuries later, in the face of progress and civilization, we see this custom disappearing, and preserved only at the courts and by the highest aristocracy. In the XVIth century it began to fall into desuetude: and even Louis XIVth limited his ablutions to a wet napkin. In the midst of the *bourgeoisie* it had almost disappeared; and Napoleon Ist washed his hands only once before dinner. To-day no country save England has preserved this custom.

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How much cleaner are the primitive peoples in eating than we are—the Hindus, for instance, and especially the Brahmans. These use no forks, but they take a full bath and change entirely their clothes before sitting down to dinner, during which they wash their hands repeatedly. No Brahman would eat with both his hands, or use his fingers for any other purpose while eating. But the Europeans of the eighteenth century had to be reminded, as we find in various works upon etiquette, of such simple rules as the following: "It is considered improper, and even indecent, to touch one's nose, especially when full of snuff, while eating one's dinner" (*loc. cit.*). Yet Brahmans are "pagans" and our forefathers Christians.



In China, native forks (chop-sticks) were used 1,000 years B.C., as they are now. And when was the fork adopted in Europe? This is what Franklin tells us :

Roasted meats were eaten with fingers as late as the beginning of this century. Montaigne remarks in his *Essais* that he more than once bit his fingers through his habitual precipitation in eating. The fork was known in the days of Henry III, but rarely used before the end of the last century. The wife of Charles le Bel (1324) and Clemence of Hungary had in their dowry each one fork only ; and the Duchess of Tours had two. Charles V (1380) and Charles VI (1418) had in their table inventory only three golden forks—for fruit. Charlotte d'Albrey (1514) three likewise, which were, however, never used.

Germany and Italy adopted the fork at their meals a century earlier than did the French. Cornet, an Englishman, was much surprised, while travelling in Italy in 1609, to find "a strange-looking, clumsy, and dangerous weapon called a fork", used by the natives while eating. In 1651 we find Ann of Austria refusing to use this "weapon", and eating together with her son (Louis XIV) with her fingers. The fork came into general use at the beginning of our own century.

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Whither then shall we turn to find a corroboration of the mendacious claim, that we owe our civilization and culture, our arts, sciences, and all, to the elevating and benign influence of Christianity? We owe to it nothing—nothing at all, neither physically nor morally. The progress we have achieved, so far, relates in every case to purely physical appliances, to objects and things, not to the *inner* man. We have now every convenience and comfort of life, everything that panders to our senses and vanity, but not one atom of moral improvement do we find in Christendom since the establishment of the religion of Christ. As the cowl does not make the monk, so the renunciation of the old Gods has not made men any better than they were before, but only, perhaps, worse. At any rate, it has created a new form of hypocrisy—*cant* ; nor has civilization spread as much as is claimed for it. London is civilized, but in truth—only in the West-end. As to the East-end with its squalid population, and its desolate wildernesses of Whitechapel, Limehouse, Stepney, etc., it is as uncultured and almost as barbarous as Europe was in the early centuries of our era, and its denizens, moreover, have acquired a form of brutality quite unknown to those early ages, and never dreamt of

by the worst savages or modern heathen nations. And it is the same in every Christian metropolis, in every town and city ; outward polish, inward roughness and rottenness—a Dead Sea fruit indeed !

The simple truth is that the word "civilization" is a very vague and undefined term. Like good and evil, beauty and ugliness, etc., civilization and barbarism are relative terms. For that which to the Chinaman, the Hindu, and the Persian would appear the height of culture, would be regarded by the European as a shocking lack of manners, a terrible breach of Society etiquette. In India the traveller is disgusted whenever he sees the native using his fingers instead of a pocket-handkerchief. In China, the Celestial is profoundly sickened at perceiving a European storing carefully into his pocket the product of his mucous glands. In Bombay the Puritan English woman regards, suffused with blushes, the narrow space of bared waist, and the naked knees and legs of the native woman. Bring the Brahmanee into a modern ball-room—nay, the "Queen's Drawing-room"—and watch the effect produced on her. Several thousand years B.C., the Amazons danced the Circle Dance around the "Great Mother", at the Mysteries ; the daughters of Shiloh, bare to the waist, and the prophets of Baal divested of their clothes, whirled and leaped likewise at the Sabeian festivals. This was simply symbolical of the motion of the planets around the Sun, but is now branded as a *phallic dance*. How then will future generations characterize our modern ball-room dances and the favourite *waltz*? What difference is there between the ancient priestesses of the God Pan, or the Bacchantes, with the rest of the sacred dancers, and the modern priestesses of Terpsychore? We really see very little. The latter, nude almost down to their waists, dance likewise their "circle dance", while whirling round the ball-room ; the only distinction between them being, that the former performed their dance without mixing with the opposite sex, while the waltzers are clasped in turn in the arms of strangers, of men who are neither their husbands nor their brothers.

How unfathomable are thy mysteries, O sphinx of progress, called modern civilization !

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Victory breeds hatred for the vanquished is stricken with suffering ; but the tranquil man lives in happiness, disregarding both victory and defeat.

—*Dhammapada*.



## THE SIGNS OF THIS CYCLE

Men of all nations for many years in all parts of the world have been expecting something they know not what, but of a grave nature, to happen in the affairs of the world. The dogmatic and literal Christians, following the vague prophecies of Daniel, look every few years for their millennium. This has not come, though predicted for almost every even year, and especially for such as 1000, 1500, 1600, 1700, 1800 and now for the year 2000. The Red Indians also had their ghost dances not long ago in anticipation of their Messiah's coming.

The Theosophists too, arguing with the ancients and relying somewhat on the words of H. P. Blavatsky, have not been backward in respect to the signs of the times.

But the Theosophical notions about the matter are based on something more definite than a vague Jewish priest's vaticinations. We believe in cycles and in their sway over the affairs of men. The cyclic law, we think, has been enquired into and observations recorded by the ancients during many ages; and arguing from daily experience where cycles are seen to recur over and over again, believing also in Reincarnation as the absolute law of life, we feel somewhat sure of our ground.

This cycle is known as the dark one; in Sanscrit, Kali Yuga, or the black age. It is dark because spirituality is almost obscured by materiality and pure intellectualism. Revolving in the depths of material things and governed chiefly by the mind apart from spirit, its characteristic gain is physical and material progress, its distinguishing loss is in spirituality. In this sense it is the Kali Yuga. For the Theosophist in all ages has regarded loss of spirituality as equivalent to the state of death or darkness; and mere material progress in itself is not a sign of real advancement, but may have in it the elements for its own stoppage and destruction. Preëminently this age has all these characteristics in the Western civilizations. We have very great progress to note in conquests of nature, in mechanical arts, in the ability to pander to love of luxury, in immense advancements with wonderful precision and power in the weapons made for destroying life. But side by side with these we have wretchedness, squalor, discontent, and crime; very great wealth in the hands of the few, and very grinding poverty overcoming the many.

As intellectualism is the ruler over this progress in material things, we must next consider the common people, so called, who have escaped from the chains which bound them so long. They are not exempt from the general law, and hence, having been freed, they feel more keenly the grinding of the claims of circumstance, and therefore the next

characteristic of the cycle—among human beings—is *unrest*. This was pointed out in the *PATH* in Vol. I, p. 57, April, 1886, in these words:—

The second prophecy is nearer our day and may be interesting; it is based upon cyclic changes. This is a period of such a change, and we refer to the columns of the *Sun* (of the time when the famous brilliant sunsets were chronicled and discussed not long ago) for the same prognostications.... This glorious country, free as it is, will not long be calm; *unrest is the word for this cycle. The people will rise*. For what, who can tell? The statesman who can see for what the uprising will be might take measures to counteract. But all your measures cannot turn back the iron wheel of fate. And even the city of New York will not be able to point its finger at Cincinnati and St. Louis. Let those whose ears can hear the whispers and the noise of the gathering clouds of the future take notice; let them read, if they know how, the physiognomy of the United States whereon the mighty hand of nature has traced the furrows to indicate the character of the moral storms that will pursue their course no matter what the legislation may be.

This was not long after the riots in Cincinnati, and New York was warned, as well as other places inferentially, that the disturbances in Ohio were not to be by any means the end. And now in 1892, just six years after our prophecy, three great States of the Union are in uproar, with the poor and the rich arrayed against each other, arms in hand. Pennsylvania at the works of a great factory almost in a civil war; New York calling her militia out to suppress disorder among workmen and to protect the property of corporations who have not taken a course to inspire their workers with love; and Tennessee sending military and volunteers to do battle with some thousands of armed miners who object to convicted lawbreakers being allowed to take the work and the wages away from the citizens. We are not dealing with the rights or the wrongs of either side in these struggles, but only referring to the facts. They are some of the moral signs of our cycle, and they go to prove the prognostications of the Theosophist about the moral, mental and physical unrest. The earth herself has been showing signs of disturbance, with an island blown up in one place, long inactive volcanoes again erupting, earthquakes in unaccustomed places such as Wales and Cornwall. All these are signs. The cycle is closing, and everywhere unrest will prevail. As lands will disappear or be changed, so in like manner ideas will alter among men. And, as our civilization is based on force and devoid of a true philosophical basis, the newest race—in America—will more quickly than any other show the effect of false teachings and corrupted religion.

But out of anger and disturbance will arise a new and better time: yet not without the pain which accompanies every new birth.



# THE NEW STYLE OF THINKING

## II.—KNOWLEDGE AND METHOD OF LEARNING

In adopting his profession in life a young man readily and naturally undertakes the course of study necessary to his future vocation. Strange it is that people who desire to improve their character and to begin to lead a better life often do not see the absolute necessity for determining where right knowledge for such a serious venture is to be found. Or, having come upon Theosophy, they do not pursue its study regularly and with assiduity and so their effort to eliminate weaknesses from the personal self produces no tangible results and they are unable to radiate the light of the higher soul-nature. This instalment is not written for either of these two classes; it is meant for the small group of those who have taken to study, have resolved to fight the faults, the frailties and the foibles of the personality, and have taken the solemn vow to follow the Light on the Path shed by the Wise Ones and which can be perceived only by the aid of the "great Master" within. The teachings awaken us to our responsibility to that Master and from these we come to the Great Gurus.

Esoteric Philosophy is *sui generis*; it is a consistent body of knowledge which is the source of all sciences, philosophies and religions; it is accurate and exact and has "no two beliefs or hypotheses on the same subject", and therefore has been described as the Mathematics of the Soul. Naturally, therefore, it has two aspects for the student, the first of which sometimes is given undue importance. The Esoteric Philosophy has information to supply on problems of ordinary knowledge, especially of modern scientific knowledge. This extension in information reveals that the Esoteric Philosophy knows more, much more, than ordinary science. If a serious-minded student picks out and compares the teachings of this philosophy about such phenomena of life as ordinary science is unable to explain, or explains partially and haltingly, he will soon conclude that this philosophy offers instruction which is not available in modern universities. This is apt to distract the student, who instead of proceeding straight to the study of the Esoteric Philosophy goes to it in a roundabout way; thus he not only wastes time but also runs the risk of being caught up in the maze of scientific and other fallacies. Esoteric Philosophy cannot be truly known if it is studied in the light of modern knowledge. This very attempt by one who belongs to the group for which this is written makes him untrue

to his own previous vision and undertaking. That which we call the second aspect of the Esoteric Philosophy should be made the basis of study, that which is implicit in the words—Esoteric Philosophy is *sui generis*.

Next, it will save heart-burning later if the student at the very start reflects upon this proposition—True knowledge comes slowly and is not easily acquired. The acquisition of it depends not only upon present effort but also upon past Karma. What is involved in that acquisition? What is implied in the phrase of the *Gita*, "progress of time"? True knowledge comes slowly because the co-operation of the Inner Manasic Ego is necessary. "He who is perfected in devotion findeth spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously in himself in the progress of time." We will lose some of our impatience with our slowness in increasing our store of knowledge if we clearly recognize that the Ego within is hampered by the weaknesses of our Personality; once the latter is cleansed what we read and reflect upon is understood and assimilated.

The gathering of knowledge of the Esoteric Philosophy cannot be done by the ordinary methods of modern education. Modern knowledge shapes and polishes the man of flesh; it creates the Personal man. But—true knowledge is of Spirit and in Spirit alone. Theosophical text-books tell us of spirit but it is not understood till what we read is responded to by the Spirit within. The plane of the Spirit is touched by ordinary knowledge exceedingly rarely; if real knowledge is to be acquired that plane of Spirit has to be touched often.

Because true knowledge is of Spirit and in Spirit alone it comes slowly and is not easily acquired. What is the way to take? We have to note that: (1) Spiritual knowledge has to be acquired through the Higher Mind, not the lower; (2) there is no other way save that of the Higher Mind, because it is the only channel through which the Spirit can be known. When this is recognized the student encounters a subtle temptation, to run away from the outer world and to be wholly and solely engaged on the plane of the Higher Mind. False *vairagya*,<sup>1</sup> indifference to the world in the

<sup>1</sup> See "The Higher Indifference" in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for July, 1939.



wrong sense, attacks him. The very cultivation of the Higher Mind is frustrated : it is not the outer world which is troublesome ; it is from our world of lower mind that withdrawal must take place. Out of this attack—attraction to false *vairagya*—an important lesson has to be mastered. Let us clearly understand that performance of duties on the objective transient plane is necessary, should not be neglected and that such performance has an objective. First, we should learn to distinguish between the outer personal living, where duties and destiny—dharma and karma—have brought us, and the inner, spiritual and permanent living in the Monad. We thus see that the temporal and the spiritual are the two poles of our being. In the Chela-life these two poles have to work conjointly : the Inner Ego must guide the man of flesh to discharge duties and thus purify the man of flesh—which H. P. B. calls “unclean matter” !

We have to learn not merely to abandon the personality and to say, “What have I to do with the mighty magic of prakriti ?” We are here to discern the meaning of that magic, to sublimate the grossness of matter and to raise it nearer to the plane of Spirit. Our Esoteric Philosophy teaches that man’s responsibility to his fellows and to the whole of Nature must be seriously assumed as a real religious obligation. The religion of responsibility has to be practised, and the holy temple of that religion is built of our duties—small and great, none of which are so trivial that they can be neglected.

View this particular line of teaching in the light of the grave recommendation to every would-be chela to learn so to live that it will become unnecessary for him to spend the long period of Devachanic existence between two incarnations. This is only preparatory to the great renunciation—“Nirvanas gained and lost from boundless pity and compassion for the world of deluded mortals”. But the point which we should note in reference to the subject under consideration is that the Esoteric Philosophy does not despise incarnated existence ; it shows its importance and its purpose.

The task before each, then, is to destroy the selfishness in the Personality and to know oneself as one is behind the veil of physical maya. Through this achievement one establishes a perfect concord between the Inner Ego and his instrument—the Personality.

In this we find the real motive (which should be ours) for desiring to acquire the higher knowledge. If the motive is not clean and clear we will never succeed in obtaining it ; wrong motives lead

us away from right method. Both the understanding and the assimilating of teachings greatly depend on motive and motives.

If our motive for desiring knowledge is the Service of Nature through every conceivable form of sacrifice, the method of gaining it is through the assimilation of the teachings which push out non-spiritual qualities from the Personality and draw in the spiritual radiance of the Higher Self. If the teachings are not assimilated and woven into the fabric of our consciousness the two poles of our being will not healthily coalesce. How then shall we assimilate the teachings ?

The first requisite is to free the mind which is full of ideas derived (1) by heredity, (2) from education at school and college, (3) from surroundings and (4) from other teachers. When the mind is freed from thoughts of worldly vocation our period of study proves fruitful. The study of Esoteric Philosophy is “deciphering a profound cipher” and this implies “reading not between the lines but within the words”. We have to impress our consciousness with inner ideas which are clothed in words—living words. We have to guard against colouring those ideas with our preconceived notions. We are the children of Kali Yuga ; for us concentration on the True is very difficult and unless we learn the art of careful concentration of mind upon the duties of life in the discharge of which acts are to be performed we will not succeed in being concentrated in the period of study. Further, what is learnt in that period of study has to be used in the discharge of duties and in the acts of life. Our personal self must be given the habit of looking for the Wisdom light ; its tendency must be to lean towards spiritual knowledge.

The reader must have noted the two basic ideas presented above : the probationer’s task is to cleanse the personality by the greatest of purifiers, spiritual knowledge, using the latter in the discharge of duties and the performance of deeds. The coalescing process between the two poles of our being is thus brought about. But self-study and self-examination quickly reveal that most of the time we are centred in the Personal Self and that we are not cultivating the Higher Mind as much as it is possible for us to do. What particular subjects of study should we prosecute to bring about the desired results ? The gap between the Inner Individuality and the Outer Personality has to be bridged ; the motive of service and the method of concentration are the necessary instruments for the constructing of the bridge, but the material of which it is to be made has to be considered. To that topic we must now turn.



## COURAGE

"A soldier of the Kshatriya tribe hath no duty superior to lawful war, and just to thy wish the door of heaven is found open before thee, through this glorious unsought fight which only fortune's favoured soldiers may obtain."—*Bhagavad-Gita*.

The fifth of the qualifications to be acquired by one who has resolved to tread the Path of Chelaship is given by H. P. B. as "a courage undaunted in every emergency, even by peril to life".

In *Isis Unveiled* (II. 586) H. P. B. wrote :—

Primitive peoples have disappeared, but primitive wisdom survives, and is attainable by those who "will", "dare", and can "keep silent",

It is the daring diver who, having plunged into the depths of the ocean, comes up with the pearl of great price. There is no danger that courage cannot conquer, but it must be the right kind of courage. There are emotions which have a semblance of courage and which sometimes delude the student. In the world the soldier who carries a gun, and at his superior's order shoots a fellow man, is called courageous; but his is the lowest kind of courage. The mood of "cowardice" which came upon Arjuna on the field of battle is a species of courage far superior to that of the soldier, and especially of the "sportsman" for whom the animal is beaten within range of the safe position from which he shoots. There is the emotion which is felt and expressed by Lady Macbeth to instil it into her husband's blood :—"Screw your courage to the sticking-place, and we'll not fail", and then there is the obstinacy of Satan himself into whose mouth Milton puts these words :—

What though the field be lost?  
All is not lost; th' unconquerable will,  
And study of revenge, immortal hate,  
And courage never to submit or yield.

There is that which might look like and be described as courage—the demoniac feeling, but is not really the spiritual courage of the White Adept. The Lost Soul, in the limbo of loneliness called Avitchi, endures amazing suffering which to a neophyte beholder may appear as courage. One fact, therefore, we have always to keep in mind about courage is that it is an active effort, not a passive endurance, which effort finds ways and means to overcome obstacles *without* injury to any being. What gave Arjuna heart to kill the Kauravas was his clear perception that their lot was to be *improved* and that Krishna was serving them with compassion when He asked Arjuna to take courage and let the arrows fly. Addison brings out this aspect of courage—compassion :—

Unbounded courage and compassion join'd,  
Tempering each other in the Victor's mind,  
Alternately proclaim him good and great,  
And make the hero and the man complete.

This factor of compassion, which throbs at every point of space as *paramartha satya*, gives us a metaphysical glimpse which enables us to evaluate correctly the ethical truth about courage.

The Theosophical practitioner has ever been compared to a soldier. Not only in the *Gita* is this aspect of *chela*-life brought out. The myth of Heracles-Hercules also depicts the same truth.

Truth has ever demanded fearless votaries—that is why her devotees are negligible in number. Even those who attempt to follow the inner dictates of Truth represented by their Voice of Conscience, require courage. How much more then does the student-practitioner-server of Theosophy and of its Living Embodiments need fearlessness: (1) to accept the Truth perceived, (2) to apply the Truth accepted, (3) to promulgate the Truth applied. Many a candidate fails because he is not courageous enough to face the opposition both from within and from without.

Let us see how the disciple has to master a double set of elementals while engaged in the triple task of study-application-promulgation.

In examining any teaching we are prone to accept and hold only such ideas as are in accord with our personal desires. Next, on realising the strength of our own lower nature we lose courage: every disciple-soul is a Kshatriya, and has to courageously fight, not only his own lower self, but also the vast host of elemental forces which swarm in the astral light. The inner battle is the longest and the most difficult of all enterprises. Only steadfast, persevering effort can sustain the struggle.

To comprehend the nature of the courage required we have to study the phenomenon of what is known as the "Dweller on the Threshold", of which there is more than one kind. The man of sin, *papa-purusha*, is not even formed in most students: the force of evil circulates as an inchoate mass. The resolve to displace it awakens it to life and the awakened tanhaic elementals galvanize into a shape which ultimately has to be faced as an objective elementary and which is made alive by the powers



of darkness to overthrow if possible the would-be Adept of Light. Many are the falls and failures that each Kshatriya soul experiences, but, remembering that he is fighting for man's liberation and not only for his own, he continues his fight till he "wins its reward in time". It is to this ever-strengthening struggle against the Dweller and the Dwellers that the reference is made—"The more thou dost advance, the more thy feet pitfalls will meet."

But let us confine our study to the lower stages appropriate to the struggling soul who has begun to exercise his courage.

It will serve our purpose well if we reflect upon the three aspects of courage necessary for the three steps of our interior life. We require courage :—

to accept the truth perceived,  
to apply the truth accepted,  
to promulgate the truth applied.

Let us study these.

What can give us true Spiritual courage? Fear and doubt are rooted in the lower self. They spring from ignorance of our Higher Nature. Knowledge and Faith are necessary—not intellectual acquaintance or blind belief, but inner conviction. The student must realise in an ever-increasing measure that the Inner Immortal Ego is the Real Man; the personality is but a mask, the physical body the latter's most transitory aspect. "The Self of Matter and the SELF of Spirit can never meet. One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for both." Humanity is constantly sacrificing the Self of Spirit to the self of matter. The disciple has to completely reverse that process. We should regard our duty to the Higher Self as superior to all else. By disregarding the behests of Truth we betray the Higher Self. Better to sacrifice the personal man, even physical life, than to live in a body and remain dead to our higher possibilities. Faith in the Higher Self alone can give us true Spiritual courage—the recognition that the Spirit in the body is unaffected by anything that may come to pass.

How are we going to recognise Truth among its numerous claims and claimants? In the last article (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for October 1939) we saw that Theosophy is not a speculative but a verified philosophy—Truth itself. As such it claims no authority but demands close examination. Study alone can reveal to us the Universality and Impersonality of the Wisdom Religion. Having perceived the Truth, our minds must be made ready to accept it. Here a great obstacle lies in the grooves already formed in our brains through past thinking. These prevent us from adopting ideas of a different

kind. We have to learn to get out of the rut each one has fallen into by nature and by training and to fill up the old grooves. For this, mental adaptability is needed. Dogmatic thinking in any direction leads to rigidity and hinders the power of perception. The mind should be in a fluidic condition—not vacillating—but ready to adapt itself to the truth wherever it may be found, clothed in any garb and by whomsoever uttered.

Having accepted the Teachings of Theosophy it becomes our duty to apply the truths perceived. For this we need first and foremost intellectual honesty. The lower self is a clever lawyer who brings forward a hundred excuses to justify a wrong course of action. If we listen to its wiles, the mind is subject to delusion from which result loss of memory, loss of discrimination, and ultimately loss of all. To face ourselves as we really are—that is the first step on the path of application. But sincerity, though a prime requisite, is not enough. Even a soldier in battle needs to know where and how the enemy is to be attacked and his success depends on the right directions received from his generals. The student-practitioner likewise needs wisdom in action. To remain indifferent to any idle reflection the silly world may make upon us is right. But to give cause for useless criticism which could well be avoided is unwise.

The laugh of the scoffer and the condemnation of the indifferent looker-on are sure to follow, and generally to outweigh the admiring praise of the friendly. Do not despise the opinion of the world, nor provoke it uselessly to unjust criticism. Remain rather as indifferent to the abuse as to the praise of those who can never know you as you really are, and who ought, therefore, to find you unmoved by either, and ever placing the approval or condemnation of your own *Inner Self* higher than that of the multitudes.

We can best use our discrimination if we remember our position—not as individuals responsible to ourselves alone—but as representing the principles of the United Lodge. Any indiscretion on our part is bound to reflect on Theosophy. Impulsive actions are to be avoided. Even the Divine Paramitas, excellent virtues though they be, have to be applied with discrimination. Altruism is an indispensable requisite in the true student but if our unselfish conduct makes another selfish it is worse than useless. Only such service as tends to uplift humanity is truly beneficial.

Dissemination of the teachings should always be preceded by some practice. We are to promulgate the *truths applied*. Those who preach what they themselves do not practise serve not the Cause. Nothing can injure the Movement so vitally as hypocrisy practised within its ranks. This does not



mean we must wait till perfection is reached before attempting the service of the Cause—if that were intended the United Lodge of Theosophists would not be in existence. We may not succeed in embodying the philosophy in its entirety but we can and should make a sincere and serious attempt to live up to the truths perceived. If the disciple is doing his best hour by hour and from day to day, he should consecrate his knowledge and capacity on the altar of human service. Those who learn the philosophy without teaching it to others soon part company with Theosophy. But even while engaged in the service of other human Souls the student is apt to push his personality forward and thus to stray away from the path of Impersonal presentation. This has caused the ruin of Spiritual efforts in the past and was also responsible for the failure of the parent Theosophical Society. The desire for power increases with our growth and only courageous Souls who remain loyal to the Teachings and the Teachers pass the test successfully.

H. P. B. exemplified undaunted courage. From the beginning to the end of her career she met with opposition which increased as the Movement grew stronger. The present generation of students has likewise to face attacks made by the enemies of truth on every hand. But therein lies the power of Theosophy. The disciple has to make a brave declaration of principles, regardless of personal opposition, nay, even when life itself is threatened.

Courage, however, is not born when we are faced with peril to life. We must prepare for any emergency now and here by cultivating true *Shraddha*—faith in the Inner Ruler. By learning to rely on our Higher Self in all things, we obtain faith in the Law of our own Being and Trust in the Masters who are the embodiments of Spirit and of Divine Law.

As H. P. B. has written :—

A ray from the absolute truth can reflect itself only in the pure mirror of its own flame—our highest SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

Such reflections, caught and preserved in the living consciousness of high and holy Men, form the basis of the ancient Wisdom-Religion, of which modern Theosophy is a partial restatement. Its logical coherence and consistency, its close adherence to Nature and its following of the laws of uniformity and analogy constitute its claim to rank in the eyes of modern science at least on a par with the "working hypotheses" which the latter so freely accepts. The scientist who would accept the Theosophical tenets on such a basis, as a guide to his own investigations, would find that he held in his hand the true Ariadne's thread which would lead him out of the labyrinth of hypotheses into the free plains of Truth.

## QUESTIONS ANSWERED

"Let us compare all things, and, putting aside emotionalism as unworthy of the logician and the experimentalist, hold fast only to that which passes the ordeal of ultimate analysis."—H.P.B.

चित्रं वटरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्युवा ।

गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु चिन्तनसंशयाः ॥

"Ah! the wonder of the Banyan Tree. There sits the Guru Deva, a youth, and the disciples are elders; the teaching is silence, and still the disciples' doubts are dispelled."

Q. Mr. Judge says: "Getting back memory of past lives is really the whole of the process, and if some people don't understand certain things, it is either because they have not got to that point in their other lives or because no glimmer of memory has yet come." What about experience in this life? Doesn't that give us understanding? This passage seems to discount it altogether.

Ans. The statement quoted brings out two very important points. It does not discount present experience, but it does point out the fact that experience, like food, must be assimilated before it can be of real use in sustaining life. The energy we are using now is not the product of the food we have just eaten but of some we ate long enough ago to have assimilated it and built it into our system. So also understanding, heart response, is not born of experience which is new in the present incarnation, but from experience which has been digested and assimilated. And this suggests the second point brought out in the passage cited, namely, that experience is not assimilated in the life that brings it to us for the first time. We assimilate what we have gone through only in the inter-incarnation period of Devachan. At least this is true in the vast majority of cases. Lack of understanding of a particular idea means that we have not tapped the experience relating to it in the reservoir of our past accumulations. Either we have not probed deep enough and no glint of the memory could therefore come through; or there is no latent memory to be awakened because in other lives we have had no experience on this point. At first sight this statement affects us a little unpleasantly. Must we indeed always wait so long before being able to make real use of our experience? Theosophy answers that we need not. Although at our present stage the facts are as just explained, it is possible so to live that we shall really take in and assimilate our life experience as we go along. When we have learned to do this the extracted essence will be available very soon after the lesson has been presented and we shall no longer postpone the necessary process until Devachan.



## DEMOCRACY AND THEOSOPHY

Several important points emerge in Mr. John Middleton Murry's analysis of democracy's war problems which appeared in three successive issues of *The Times Literary Supplement*. Going beyond the external aspect of democracy as a system of political machinery, Mr. Murry defines democracy as "the political expression, however imperfect, of a religious conviction and of a way of life". While honestly disavowing the delusion that "because we are fighting against evil things, we, as we are, embody the good", he visualizes the present war as fundamentally "the struggle between two conceptions of Man".

The Nazi conception of Man subordinates him entirely to the State as a war-machine; the democratic conception of Man regards him as the member of a civil society whose aim is the maximum of individual freedom compatible with social coherence.

Neither side in the present conflict can truthfully claim to be the exemplar of the latter concept, of democracy in all its implications, which include the recognition of human beings as souls and the letting go of every kind of distinction of sex, of creed and of caste; of race and religion; of colour and nationality. Mr. Murry approaches this even more closely when he declares that the basis of democracy is "that the members of the society are not abstract units but individual persons" and urges that we retain uncorrupted the power to see the individual man.

He rightly emphasizes that we cannot trust to the outcome of the physical struggle to decide the moral and spiritual issues involved.

The idea of eradicating Nazism without creating a new social and international order is like the idea of curing the symptoms and not the disease. Unless we make up our minds to the necessity of this creative change... we may win the war, but we shall have lost the cause.

We agree with Mr. Murry on the necessity for mankind's advancing its social morality so as to control the physical energies now at its disposal as being one way of stating the problem, but we cannot concede that only a *Christian* social morality can control these powers to human ends. A sound social morality or true democracy can rest only on the spiritual concept of the unity of all life and the brotherhood of mankind, but such a concept is not peculiar to any religion; it is the very substratum of them all, a fundamental tenet of the ancient Wisdom Religion from which they all derive.

The world is suffering from false ideals and partial brotherhoods. The concept of brotherhood is dynamic. Its energy flows in any channel provided by the mind of man. As the ideal of universal brotherhood it flows as a steady, beneficent stream; as the idea of the brotherhood of any group, national, racial or religious, as separate from and opposed to the rest of mankind, it can and often does wreak havoc as a positively destructive force. Mr. Murry recognizes as the most powerful of the Nazis' weapons "their ecstasy of subservience to the unitary state"—which in fact is rooted in a false, because a partial, view of human brotherhood.

The position of Theosophy on the problem was defined in a lecture at the United Lodge of Theosophists on "Democracy—False and True". Democracies in name have failed. False democracy has been hiding behind false patriotism—"a commercial venture directed by self-interest", encouraging the worship of the idols of race, power and armed force. Democracy implies that the supreme power is vested in the people that compose the State. But a true democracy can never be a closed corporation, run for the benefit of its shareholders without regard to the good of other peoples. In true democracy, as in true patriotism, the foremost thought is not of rights but of duties.

What is implicit in the spiritual and idealistic views of patriotism and democracy? First and foremost—self-sacrifice....Our patriotism should be such as to take into account the whole of mankind....Any nation, great or small, whose foreign policy is not founded upon that self-discipline which takes cognizance of neighbouring and therefore of all nations does not deserve to enjoy its own liberty....True democracy, therefore, begins with the concept of Fraternity. Humanity is one and the solidarity of man is a fact in Nature....Unless we perceive and sincerely recognize that not by the sword but by the ploughshare, not by hatred but by love, not by competition of group against group, but by co-operation of each with all can peace come, can liberty be enjoyed and progress achieved, we shall not gain anything at all.

A new concept of patriotism must arise in India, a recognition that to seek the good and the progress of one's own country at the expense of any other country, however small or however weak, is false patriotism, a vicious patriotism. If India cannot preach to the world this new Patriotism, then she will have failed in her primary spiritual mission to the world.



## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The average human being has no conception of the extent to which he is the creature of suggestion. The man who has thought a subject through and holds an independent, reasoned conviction upon it is rare. Most men take their opinions ready-made from the priests of their religion, the editor of their newspaper, the people with whom they associate.

Some experiments devised by several Universities in the U. S. A. to test the extent to which the average individual is influenced by suggestion are summarized in a recent publication, *Public Opinion*, by Prof. William Albion (McGraw-Hill, New York. \$4.00). In one test, students were asked to state whether they favoured China or Japan in the present crisis in the Far East. Then those who had favoured either country were subjected to intensive propaganda in favour of the other and both groups changed their minds!

In another test a hypothetical proposition was chosen, thus avoiding the possibility of minds having been made up on it in advance. Fifteen editorials favouring this proposition were prepared and fifteen others condemning it. The first fifteen editorials were shown to one group of college students and the other fifteen to a second group. Their opinions on the proposition were then taken. Only 2% of the first group had failed to be convinced by the affirmative propaganda while of the second group, which had been exposed to the negative propaganda, 86% expressed a bias against the proposition.

Theosophy warns most solemnly against the deliberate attempt to interfere with the free mental action of another. Is it wrong then to state one's convictions frankly? No. Is it wrong to try to convince others of the rightness of our views, if we are satisfied that the general acceptance of those views would be for the good both of those individuals themselves and of the race as a whole? No again, provided the attempt is free from selfish motive and there is no desire to browbeat another into agreement with us. But even the promulgation of Theosophy is a wrong use of the power of suggestion if the spirit of proselytism or the desire to lead is present in the promulgator. Hence the insistence in the U. L. T. on study for oneself, on the exercise of individual judgment; hence the reiterated warning against accepting blindly the Teachings themselves.

The suggestibility of individuals to the written or the spoken word, great as it is in most cases, is still but a very small part of the vast subject of the power of suggestion. Owing to the solidarity of the

human race and the omnipresence of the Astral Light, that superphysical tenuous medium for the interchange of thought, every one of us is constantly, from birth to death, influencing others, consciously or unconsciously, and receiving impressions in his turn from every unit of the human family whom he approaches. There is no man except a genuine blockhead, whose opinions, emotions and actions cannot be influenced by others.

The implication for the Theosophical student is dual. On the one hand he must make himself impervious to lower influences and open to higher ones and, on the other hand, he has to make the influence which willy-nilly he constantly exerts upon others a beneficent one. The method? The purification of his own thoughts and feelings. The universal law of consubstantiality will be his ally in protecting him, to the extent that he succeeds in that task, from all ignoble influences, and as he perseveres in his effort he will make himself more and more a centre of light from which will in his measure flow out the potentialities for good that from the adept come in large and affluent streams.

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Henry J. Baylis's *The Portal of the Unseen World* (obtainable from the author at 128 High Street, Teddington, Middlesex, at 1s.) reports a psychic experience in which, lulled into passivity by a musical rendering of twenty minutes duration, Mr. Baylis fell into a trance in which he visited celestial spheres and was instructed as to the meaning of what he saw by an "Angel-form" who cast his instruction in the familiar phraseology of Christian orthodoxy. The subtitle, "The Mystical—Philosophically Applied" is a misnomer. There is no transcendent realization of unity, that invariable concomitant of true mystical experience, and there is no philosophy worthy of the name, only a moral homily which stresses commendably the Law of Karma without naming it and an eschatological scheme of gradual purification of the soul after death and its progress toward the "Everlasting Celestial Home 'to be'". The "wonderful porcelain screen" which "Angel-form" likens to "a sensitive plate which truly records, not only words and deeds, but thoughts become materialised" seems to be a concretized conception of a supersensual reality, the Astral Light.

The fact that Mr. Baylis does not describe his condition as trance or himself as an unfortunate psychic sensitive does not prove those designations in-



accurate. Even "Angel-form" bears a suspicious resemblance to the "Spirit Guide" of the ordinary medium and there is the tell-tale and irritating garbling of words so characteristic of psychic effusions, e.g., "soulical bodies". The author seems sure of the transcendent nature of his experience though not of what actually happened; he will be well advised to inform himself of the dangers involved in slipping into trance and to cultivate the positiveness that alone can protect against mediumship. Theosophy gives many warnings on this subject, one of the most vivid of which appears in *Raja-Yoga*, pp. 72-3.

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Sir Ernest Bennett's *Apparitions and Haunted Houses: A Survey of Evidence* (Faber and Faber, Ltd., London 12s. 6d.), which presents over one hundred cases which have been investigated by psychical research is reviewed by Mr. Desmond MacCarthy in *The Sunday Times* (London) for 17th September. The reviewer is frankly sceptical and finds few of the cases striking. Without impugning the good faith of the eye-witnesses he writes that "it is nearly always possible to question either (1) the accuracy of their memories, or (2) the objective reality of what they describe". Mr. MacCarthy invokes "collective hallucination", "infectious hallucination" and "thought transference" to explain many of the happenings—*clichés* as little understood by Western psychologists as the phenomena to which they are applied. The reviewer cautiously admits that the influence of one mind upon another seems in some cases to pass between a living person and a dead person and that "collective hallucination" cannot account for one case he cites "in which a doctor returning from his rounds one night sees a little child on the landing as he goes upstairs, who is afterwards seen by his daughter in her own room and also by her sister entering that room".

Mr. MacCarthy does well to recognize that "purposeful apparitions are rare" but a case which he finds one of the least convincing may be one such and, if *bona fide*, quite explicable in the light of Theosophy. It is a story of a man's father appearing to warn him against embarking on a rather shady transaction. The fact that the recipient of the warning testified that the words were spoken proves nothing either way. Stimulus from within might cause the ear to report to the brain, thus throwing the image without.

We are not told whether this apparition appeared almost immediately after the father's death. If it did, the apparition might have been the conscious objectivization of the soul itself. If the occurrence

was long after the father's death, the Editor's Note in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, pp. 65-6 (December 1883-January 1884) may offer a clue applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to this happening.

That note was based on an account of an apparition seen by a young girl alone in the mortuary chamber of her cousin, who had been killed in a duel. She saw the young man's dead father enter the room, open a secret panel in the wall and write in a book which he placed behind it. Then he closed the panel and withdrew. Subsequently the panel was opened and behind it were found lines penned revealing thefts committed by the dead son, giving the address of a creditor and begging the living son to pay the debt and save the family honour. The Editor's Note, written on the assumption that, as the account suggested, the father had died when the son was quite young, reads in part as follows:—

It is but natural that the father should have felt unusually strong solicitude for the future of his young son, deprived, at a tender age, of both his parents; and the more so if his apprehensions for the continued honour of the family, of which, like all German aristocrats, he must have been extremely jealous, were roused, by early indications of the vicious habits which subsequently developed in his son so strongly. After this, the explanation becomes easy enough. The dying thought of the father, worked up to its highest pitch, under the circumstances described, established a magnetic link between the son and the astral shell of the father in *Kamaloka*. It is a well known fact that fear or great anxiety for every thing left behind on earth is capable of retaining a shell, which must have otherwise dissolved, for a longer period in the earth's atmosphere than it would [in] the event of a quiet death. Although the shell when left to itself is incapable of acquiring any fresh impression, yet, when galvanized, so to say, by *rapport* with a medium, it is quite capable of living for years a vicarious life and receiving all the impressions of the medium. Another fact must always be borne in mind in seeking for an explanation of the phenomena of mediumship—namely, that the average stay of shells in *Kamaloka* before final disintegration is sometimes of very long duration. 25 to 30 years would not be too long, with a medium to preserve its vitality. With these preliminary observations, the present problem becomes easy of solution. The young man who met with such a tragic end was probably a medium to his father's shell, and thereby gave it a knowledge of all the incidents of his wild and sinful career. The mute witness of the shell's materialisation in the mortuary chamber must also have been a medium herself, and thus helped that phenomenon to take place. The dying young man's contrition for his vicious life and anxiety to save the honour of the family, were reflected upon the father's shell with all the intensity of dying energy, and gave rise to all that followed.



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# The United Lodge of Theosophists

## DECLARATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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