

THEOSOPHY IN ACTION

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Quarterly Official Organ of The Theosophical Society in Europe—Federation of National Societies

CHAIRMAN AND EDITOR—Mrs. Claire Wyss, Bruderholz str. 88, 4000 Basle, Switzerland.
ASSISTANT EDITOR—Mrs. Greta Eedle, 35 Stile Hall Gardens, London, W.4, England.

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Theosophical Action

G. A. FARTHING
(General Secretary in England)

How we regard our Theosophy determines what we do about it. To some it is a subject to be learned by reading and attending lectures. To others it is a way of life. This latter group might be called the active Theosophists and the others the passive ones. The activities of the active Theosophists cover a wide range which we need not examine in detail, but it is worth while to look and see to what extent those activities are peculiarly theosophical. They can be justified as Theosophical in so far as they fulfil the claims of brotherhood and tolerance by help to the poor, needy and sick regardless of the usual distinctions. Some other activities can be justified in that they further our spiritual development. But is either of these kinds of activity peculiarly Theosophical? Are they not in line with the aspirations of many other well-based and well-meaning organizations? My own personal view is that whereas we may have acted from a sense of helping we have often done that which has appealed to our natures. We did it in a way we may have felt appropriate, but possibly in the line of least resistance for us or even out of desire. Perhaps we did what we wanted to do or enjoyed doing. May it not be that in too many cases it has been a substitute for discovering what was required of us theosophically and doing that. I think perhaps many members of the Theosophical Society genuinely feel that there is nothing specially Theosophical. May I suggest that there is, and that this is something that should very much concern those who read *Theosophy in Action*. What is this special "thing"? (The inverted commas are for the purists). In my view it is what was given to the world, publicly, for the first time, by the founders in their message to humanity in the Society's early literature.

A reading of *Isis Unveiled* with any degree of attention soon gives the impression that the writer knew something that neither the scientists nor the religionists of those days knew. There is an air of authoritative criticism and sound, challenging thinking which implies a look at these things from a superior vantage point. The breadth and depth of view is enormous, even as evidenced by the number of other works referred to. The discussion is of a maturity which makes the so-called experts, particularly on religious matters, that we hear on our broadcast systems, appear ignorant, prejudiced and even childish. In some instances, outside their particular subject, the views of scientists are little if any more impressive.

These are the leaders of present-day human thought. They are setting our standards. Do they beget the confidence they should? Do we really think they, or our politicians, or trade union leaders, are gifted with the wisdom to guide our destiny? Does any of them know in what direction to lead us, or what we really want, apart from a high standard of living in terms of material things? Do our public discussions on race, sex, crime, youth, religion, economics, internationalism, reassure us?

On the other hand, do we not sense the difference when reading *Isis*, *The Secret Doctrine*, and even the works of Sinnett and Olcott? Were not those works better inspired? They appear to rest on a bedrock of wisdom where our underlying knowledge seems to embrace the whole picture: where judgment is really

free and unbiased; where vision is open-eyed and fearless and where wisdom and bright intelligence are unobscured by personal limitations or self-interest.

In my terms, then, Theosophy in action necessarily means, first, a close acquaintance with our original literature, a living with it until we are freed from our preconceptions and prejudices and until a certain feeling of certainty is born. This certainty is nothing to do with dogmatism. It is a feeling of having at least come to a realisation of something of the nature of the Life of the Universe, if not a conscious union with it. We sense something of how this life is working through us. We are actually of its nature and processes. As we continue to read, the detail begins to fill in. We begin to sense the quality of the life in the plant and animal kingdoms. We see ourselves in others and understand them in terms of our own being and feelings.

The innumerable allusions to symbols and the names of deities, mythical heroes and so on, which make up so much of the content of *The Secret Doctrine*, begin to apply to realities for us. We begin to know that we really know something of our nature, the nature of the Universe, and their relationship. We too begin to understand. We begin to see humanity as a family. We certainly see its imperfections but we see its possibilities. We see our own possibilities too. This is the dawn of responsibility. We are becoming adult. In so far as we do this are we not acting as foci for truth and sanity? The little area of our sphere of influence is that much more healthy—and happy. In the light of our own assurance, can we not then act as rocks in the shifting seas of expediency and opinion which can justify any thing or behaviour? Without any external rules of conduct, we know how we must act. Belief has no part in this. Truth is real for us and integrity results. Putting on an act, creating an impression, consciously, could not happen. In that we have allied ourself even to the spirit that pervades these great works, we are stabilized, assured beyond any conviction. Fear as to our future disappears. All this showing through us, commands respect. Something of what Theosophy, as particularly conveyed in H.P.B.'s writings, bestows, is present in other systems and religions but in none so completely, so explicitly nor so broad-based. *The Secret Doctrine* uses all other systems as illustration, as example.

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Dante's "Worlds" and the Theosophical Cosmogony

SUMMARY OF A LECTURE TO THE SWISS CONVENTION BY PROFESSOR EMMA CUSANI

If, after 700 years, the *Divine Comedy* can still give food for thought to poets, historians, sociologists, theologians, scientists, intellectuals and the man in the street, it is because it contains the sacred essence of the Divine Wisdom which places it at the side of the Bible, the Sayings of Buddha, the Gospel of Christ, the Book of the Dead and the Bhagavad Gita.

In my book, *The Great Journey into the Worlds of Dante*, I have tried to show that Dante is more than a poet. His *Divine Comedy* reveals the laws of nature which engender life and determine the evolution both of the Macrocosm of the Universe and of the Microcosm of Man, the latter being seen as a reflection of the Logos who manifests in his Universe, and therefore as a Consciousness of which the spiritual essence is intimately related to the essence of Nature.

The gradual expansion of human consciousness to include the superphysical realms of nature corresponds to the inevitable states of the 'great journeys' of the literature dealing with initiation. This concerns the sacred writings which predict, from era to era, a new stage in human evolution. For the 'great journey' of this poet of our era, which presages our scientific mentality, joins both the pagan tradition which tells of the descent into hell of Ulysses, Aeneas, Orpheus and Hercules, and the religious tradition which tells first of a descent into hell and then an ascent into heaven of Krishna and Mahomet, Jesus, Paul and John.

In fact, we cannot comprehend intellectually our relationship with 'God' without having an idea, however vague, of our relationship with the 'All.' Whilst some students content themselves with working in the sphere of the visible universe, leaving aside the higher places of life, others feel the need to enter into their inner stronghold in order to realise within themselves the invisible universe, so that the consciousness of man may find its true place again.

This fundamental need of man to expand his own consciousness in order to perceive the inner side of evolution has always been recognized by the spiritual guides of humanity, who have constantly tried to describe the Cosmos from the occult point of view in the sacred books. It is astounding to discover how the poet who was to be the pioneer of our scientific era had included the Ancient Wisdom in a poem which emerges from the obscurity of the Middle Ages to shed its light on our most recent conquests. Dante revealed in large measure more than 700 years ago his knowledge of the solar system which reflects its structure in every atom of matter, when he conceived the nine heavens of his Paradise, which are reflected invertedly in the nine circles of hell.

The teachings dealing with initiation have always called for a knowledge of the structure of our solar system, and in particular of the fact that it is reflected in every atom of matter. It is this knowledge which is the core of the marvellous symmetry of the poem; for whether dealing with spirit or with form, one sole Life animates the *Divine Comedy*, which develops and evolves, passing from the consciousness of the damned to that of the blessed, and through the form from the circles of hell to the heavens of paradise.

Consider the physical evolution of our solar system; today it contains nine principal planets, but when in the 15th century Copernicus proclaimed his heliocentric system, only six planets had been discovered: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. It was only in 1781 that Uranus was discovered, followed by Neptune in 1846 and Pluto in 1930. Is it too absurd to ask whether we are dealing here with belated discoveries or rather with planets which became visible during the slow manifestation of the Logos in his System, passing gradually from the state of latent life to a state of activity?

What is certainly less absurd, since it is incontestable, is that 735 years ago Dante constructed his system on the nine heavens of his Paradise; and such anticipation means that to complete his heavens he had to add to the seven planets of Copernicus (among which the sun figured) a further two imaginary planets: the stellar heaven and the primum mobile or crystalline heaven. Further, to represent a tenth planet, already known to esoteric science since archaic times, he added a tenth heaven outside his system: the immaterial heaven, outside space and time, which he called the heaven of light and love.*

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
IN EUROPE
FEDERATION OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES
Theosophy in Action

SPACE TRAVEL

WORLD OPINION IS DIVIDED ABOUT THE ethics of space exploration, particularly by men, which is immensely more costly than by machines. Would not the huge sums of money used for space projects be more usefully employed in doing a host of things urgently needed to improve the lot of human beings on this planet, great numbers of whom exist in squalor and perpetual hunger? A strong case can be made out for this view. Yet there is no guarantee that money saved on space programmes would be devoted to social and economic reform. It was not made available for dire need before space schemes loomed up.

Moreover, an inquiring mind and an adventurous spirit to explore the unknown are of man's nature. These cannot be stopped. They have given much stimulus to his development and must always do so. No man can be unaffected by the sight, actual or in photographs on television, of our globe as a little ball in space, however much he knew it to be true as a mental concept. Similarly, every discovery gives a wider view, a truer perspective, a better sense of proportion in all things.

But why should not the opposing arguments on space travel be reconciled? Why not carry out both programmes, social and spatial? Impossible, one may say; there isn't enough money. This is not true. There is always enough money when a situation gets desperate — when men care enough about getting something done. This is shown in any war where national existence is at stake. Usually we will not recognize that affairs are desperate until we are afraid. Fear causes the space race. And, alas, it is only fear of the underprivileged that makes the rest of the people wake up to the urgency of their demands.

Again, it is man's inventiveness, his restless search for knowledge, that has caused the present position. Without modern communications, without artificial satellites, one half of the world would still not know what the other half was doing—at any rate not so quickly or vividly. Events and problems are brought home to us by screen and radio. We know how others feel, what they are doing, and we are stimulated to play a hand too. During the coming decades the masses of mankind are likely to make their influence felt in the affairs of the world. It is constantly said that man has to be responsible for his future. This may well come true in ways quite other than either the thinkers or those in power have envisaged.

The evolutionary trend could be aided greatly by some realization of the theosophical principle of unity: mankind is one and is also an integral part of the whole process of evolution and not separate. This would bring cooperation instead of selfish competition. Politics, prestige and power could give way to international cooperation—in space and on earth. Money would not be wasted on armaments and in duplicating space efforts and would be economically applied to human welfare and every possible scientific investigation without detriment to either. Scientists will then make their discoveries available to all, as is the desire and instinct of seekers for the truth in every sphere.

COMPETITION

Participants and persons interested in the international competition organized by the Theosophical Society in Switzerland, the object of which is original theosophical works, are asked to note that the closing date for the submission of entries has been postponed at the request of several persons to 30th June, 1971 (instead of 31st December, 1970).

From the Chairman

Fundamental Principals of Theosophy

C. WYSS

If we are to do justice to this subject, "Fundamental Principles of Theosophy," we must first of all examine the word Theosophy. What does it mean? Theosophy or the Ancient Wisdom contains teachings which have existed and been known for untold ages. They formed the basis for the teachings of the Mystery Schools in the past and it is said that they were revealed to earlier races by superhuman teachers who are still their custodians. It is said that the validity of the doctrines handed down has been examined and confirmed by generations of learned investigators. Madame Blavatsky states in *The Secret Doctrine* that it would be difficult to deny that such men existed, considering the world-wide traditions, the inscriptions on monuments which are still in existence and the prehistoric buildings which have to a great extent fallen into ruin today, not to mention other testimony which the ignorant would not accept. The sacred books of the East are themselves the best proof of the greatness of their authors. And if we feel that these books contain teachings regarding God, man and the Universe which, although they differ outwardly, are the same in essence, it does not seem unreasonable to trace them back to an original ancient teaching. We call this ancient teaching the "Divine Wisdom" or, to use the term derived from Greek, "Theosophy."

One of the fundamental principles of Theosophy is our unity with all lives and with all things. All that lives is impregnated by a principle which gives life to all and which is called the One Life. Every form of existence has its common root in this spiritual principle. Man is, according to this teaching, a spiritual being who unites spirit with matter. In the course of his descent from higher worlds into ever coarser matter he loses the feeling for unity, which he however recovers in the course of countless incarnations. If we consider the situation in the modern world, we see that, although the world has outwardly almost grown together in unity, this is not the case in the spiritual field. If modern man were conscious of his wholeness we should all be in a much better position. A. Gardner says that the purpose of every religion is to ensure that man remains aware of his spiritual nature and the aim of his earthly existence. In times of spiritual enlightenment this purpose has often been very successfully fulfilled. But when religious leaders at any time forget the meaning of the esoteric teachings of their faith, the result is a general sinking into materialism, and the further evolution of man is severely hampered. It is necessary for man always to have the light of truth before him, otherwise he will tend to lose his direction and wander about aimlessly in the search for peace and happiness, which he then seeks in ways leading neither to peace of heart nor to the common good.

Does not this also apply to our modern world? Modern man is too possessed by his longing for a high standard of living for him to think of his divinity. The

THE VICE-PRESIDENT

Mr. J. Perkins, with Mrs. Perkins, will tour Europe this summer. They will be the guest speakers at all the Summer Schools except in Finland, Holland and Austria. They will tour Switzerland from 15th to 30th September and Austria from 1st to 7th October. We look forward very much to their presence.

MR. FRITZ KUNZ

This member of the Society in the U.S.A. will be in Geneva in October or November on his way to India. He is bringing with him scientific demonstrations and films and slides on the fundamentals of Theosophy. He could spend a day or weekend in Geneva showing and explaining this material if sufficient members are interested. Will those willing to go please write to Mrs. C. Wyss, Bruderholzstrasse 88, 4000 Basle, Switzerland.

In Perspective

There are one or two glimmers of hope amid the dim materialism of our computer world — a world in which the greatest possible pleasure, the best possible standard of living, and the quickest possible profit, regardless of others' interests or needs, are the highest good most men can envisage. This world is the outcome of loss of faith in existence beyond physical death and lack of purpose other than avarice, power and prestige. Even if the life of man is not now always poor or short, yet, as Hobbes averred, it is still solitary, for all his gregariousness, nasty and brutish.

A small ray of light in lands that are nominally Christian may be seen in the critical attitudes of many eminent ecclesiastics and theologians to traditional dogmas. The challenge of men of science to church doctrine last century was strongly reinforced by H. P. Blavatsky with *Isis Unveiled* in 1877. But this was all from without. Only a few brave men within the Church dared voice doubts that considerable numbers felt. Now the whole matter has come into the open within the Christian fold. As usual, the various establishments are set against change, but the pressure is likely to build up and force reforms. This applies even in the Roman Catholic Church, where the supreme authority and control is probably more deeply entrenched than in any other body.

Insistence on beliefs that insulted intelligence was the biggest cause of widespread loss of faith in religion, which has given us generations of men and women with no guiding principles in life who have produced the rebellious and psychically insecure youth of today. Whether any ecclesiastical changes that are made will come quickly enough to help these young people seems doubtful, but the longer-term effects might be favourable.

An Experimental Approach

Perhaps a more promising bright spot is what is called an experimental approach to religion. One cannot but wonder why this did not appeal to thoughtful men well over half a century ago, after the publication of William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1902. This invaluable work, which he called a study in human nature, seems never to have been followed up except sporadically by a few people, until now when a special research unit has been set up at Oxford University under the inspiration of Sir Alister Hardy. Such investigation should lead to such a wealth of evidence as will show the skeptic, the cynic and the scientist that religious experience is a fundamental need of human beings, because in its true sense religion is an aspect of man's deepest nature.

What Religion Really Is

Such genuine religion will be no dogmatic faith, and it will not demand involvement in any organized religion. One must hope that the research unit will come to realize the truth of what H.P.B. wrote in *Lucifer* in 1888. After stating that Theosophy was not a religion, she defined religion, *per se*, in its widest meaning, as 'that which binds not only all men, but also all beings and all things in the entire universe into one grand whole. This is our theosophical definition of Religion.' She added 'Theosophy . . . is . . . Religion itself, the one bond of unity, which is so universal and all embracing that no man, as no speck — from gods and mortals down to animals, and the blade of grass and atom — can be outside of its light.'

The Spirit of Man

A third source of hope lies in young people themselves, for they are the makers of our tomorrow. All over the world they are rejecting the world of their parents with its selfish rat-race attitudes. They want a different earth on which to live. Most of them are possessed of or by ideals that they cannot yet formulate. This is a spiritual urge, from their inmost centre. If their passionate desire for values other than material can be sustained, and their enthusiasm does not ooze away into cynicism and defeatism, then tremendous things may happen. We could see unexpected and wonderful turns of the wheel of living in the next 25 years. For it is always true, 'Seek and ye shall find,' if the search be in earnest. L.H.L.S.

religious leaders of our day have lost their influence since they also are strongly inclined to materialism and make promises which they do not keep. Yet man has in the depths of his soul never lost the longing for his spiritual home. This longing is expressing itself, if we observe carefully, in an increasing measure among young people who are seeking their true home in sometimes rather curious ways.

We theosophists, who can be numbered among those who know, should have much to give—not by imparting advice (unless we are asked for it) but by our behaviour and attitude to events. Because we know—and not only know but are convinced—that we are one with all and therefore with God, we also know that everything that happens on this earth is so to speak Maya—illusion—and that the ego is untouched by it.

What should be our attitude towards our fellow men? I may say that in *At the Feet of the Master* is indicated everything we should do in order to play our rôle as theosophists worthily in the modern world which is almost losing its head. We must practise discrimination, self-control and dispassion and always remember that the final goal of all humanity is union with the Divine. It could be objected that it might be better to help others directly rather than waste time in such self-training. But, as long as one has not acquired by means of study or practical experience a certain amount of knowledge of the principles of human behaviour and the laws governing evolution, one might by means of well-meant help be of more harm than use. One would certainly lose much time and energy on unimportant things, matters which are not essential. Let us assume that something happens which causes our lower bodies to vibrate. Our first reaction is mostly to take sides. In the second place only do we realize that we did not have ourselves under control and that our lower bodies acted independently. (If I refer to lower bodies, I mean lower in comparison with the spiritual part of man). Tolerance and understanding for those who have other views than we do are also theosophical principles. By practising them we widen our horizon, we learn to think independently, which was perhaps never as important as it is today, when so many opinions and views are being spread by our mass media. If we would all allow others their own opinions, their own thought, there would—we might expect—be no hunger, no persecution of those who are not of our opinion. Here again we must test ourselves by trying always to see the whole and not only the facade. We must always remember the divine plan and remember that it must be carried out. Man has the freedom to cooperate in this work or to hinder it. Let us join those who help actively to advance evolution by building the theosophical principles into our lives and radiating them in our relations with our fellow men. Let us rely on our divinity; then we can be sure that we act wisely and well and contribute to making the world happier in future than it is now.

AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASTRLOGY. C. E. O. Carter, T.P.H., London, 25s.

This work, by a well-known astrological author, should please all, whether students or otherwise, or just those interested in medical astrology, for much time and thought has been given to the subject, which is well presented. The various interpretations should not be taken too literally, as they are more or less general in outlook; for precise reading, it is necessary to have the individual chart of the native before one, so all positions, aspects of the planets and their placement in the houses, can be more properly assessed. H.S.

THE ROOTS OF PEACE. Viva Emmons, T.P.H., London, 16s.

The author discusses certain ancient traditions and scientific laws and their bearing upon the possibility of peace in our time. She emphasises man's own responsibility for his progress and his difficulties.

The Immediate Task

B. R. MULLIK

During the course of my visit to the various centres of the Theosophical Society in Europe, which has given me an opportunity of coming in direct contact with many earnest theosophists, I have discovered that there is an urgent demand within them to know what is their immediate task, through which they can attain self-fulfilment or realise within themselves the state of perfect peace, love, bliss, beauty, wisdom, truth or by whatever name it may be called. Most of them are keen students of theosophical literature, both old and new, and some are also acquainted with and attracted by the teachings of Krishnamurti and of modern Indian sages, especially Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharishi, and Shri Aurobindo. But in spite of having acquired all this knowledge from various sources, there is a lack of surety as to what is to be done individually by each one of them right now, to break through the barrier, and set their foot on the path.

Believing that every individual soul, in whatever state of development it may be, has its own message to give to his fellow-men, I would like to remind them of the very significant saying of Christ: "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life . . . and ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life." (John, v. 39, R.V.).

To read great books, to be inspired by their sublime teachings, to admire the greatness of the writer, to hold discussions about the lofty thoughts contained in them, to meditate about them, and even to repeat them again and again and remember them by heart, may prepare a mental background and create a beautiful atmosphere, but the soul of man has to take the final plunge itself without any external aid. It must put on its own wings and try to reach out to its Higher Self, the Christ within, and only then can it have life. It is entirely an individual task, the immediate task, which each soul has to perform for itself, without losing too much time in simply preparing itself for the task. Here I am reminded of a beautiful poem in Tagore's Gitanjali, in which he says that hearing that his Lord was coming that way, his soul which was desirous of singing before Him, remained only occupied with the tuning of the instrument, and the Lord had gone away. What is required in spiritual life, as it is also in material life, as the same laws obtain in Nature and Super Nature, is courage to step forward. So let not the scriptures, or the beautiful teachings of the great become fetters in our way. Not even the highest and most sublime teaching can be a substitute for the work which has to be performed by the individual self alone. And that task, the immediate task is the task of self-regeneration, and each one has to decide the method, the path he follows for himself, because it differs from individual to individual. The spiritual growth is the flight of the alone to the Alone. We can learn from the example of others, we can take the help of others, but ultimately each one has to come to his own individual decision, and having done so start treading the path with courage, without hesitation, and with faith and confidence in one's own self. If once we do so, the guidance will come from within, because Life itself is the greatest teacher.

Another thing which is worth remembering is that no teacher or prophet, however great he might be, can give us any help unless we help ourselves. An attitude of reverence or admiration may be useful to a certain extent, but to look upon anyone as a superman, to give too much importance to him or his teachings and to parade about them, is to defeat the very purpose of his teachings. We should never forget that the great soul whom we try to worship is simply following his own line of development, which is entirely his, and through no amount of reverence for him can we be the sharer of his spiritual power, unless we climb the ladder ourselves. I end here with the famous lines of a poet:

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Theosophy and Modern Wisdom

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Some Theosophical Concepts in a Modern Light

Within the broad definitions of Theosophy, given by H. P. Blavatsky, it is useful to select some basic concepts of its teachings and examine them in the light of modern thought. The most fundamental theosophical concept is that of the Unity of Life and the profound spiritual source and origin of Cosmos and of man.

The realisation of the profound truth of the Unity of the Self in man with that source which emanated and sustains the Cosmos has been the experience of deeper thinkers and mystics of all ages, and in recent times many wise men have reaffirmed this truth as personal experience. Each of us can check for himself that this is the fundamental teaching of the Vedas, the Upanishads, of the Neo-Platonic philosophers, of the mediaeval Christian mystics, in the now widely-available cheap editions of such writings. In our own time, scholars such as Radhakrishnan, Sri Krishna Prem, Lama Govinda, Aldous Huxley, Sidney Spencer and C. F. Haggard, to name but a few, have reaffirmed and restated this ancient truth. Man as potential divinity has his future in his own hands and in the realisation of that divinity lies the hope for the future of the evolutionary scheme. Among an increasing number of scientific writers to realize this deeper element within the objective world studied by science, one of the earliest was the physicist Erwin Schrödinger. In *What is Life?*, a series of lectures published first by the Cambridge University Press in 1944, he gives first a strict scientific analysis of the statistical laws which govern the energy relationships of the atomic and molecular systems forming the basis of the living cell, the building brick of living organisms. He then gives an Epilogue headed 'Determinism and Free Will' to show the inadequacy of the ordinary scientific analysis. It can give no insight into the facts of consciousness which man knows by direct experience. Each of us can state two paradoxical propositions: "(1) My body functions as a pure mechanism according to the Laws of Nature; (2) yet I know, by incontrovertible direct experience that I am directing its motions, of which I foresee the effects, that may be fateful and all-important, in which case I feel and take full responsibility for them." The first proposition we know from scientific study; the second from immediate experience.

Other more recent writers with a scientific training are noting the complementary character, familiar to students of theosophical philosophy, notably that of *The Secret Doctrine*, of science, art and religion (or theology). An American social scientist, Lawrence K. Frank, perceives in an essay, 'Science as a Communication Process,' a new emergent scientific humanism, in which 'science is man's attempt to communicate with the Universe.' Art and theology are likewise attempts to communicate with the Universe, but these rely on 'revelation, faith and individual personal insight and imagination for the interpretation of the messages for which man had a vital concern.' The three approaches to the Universe, science, art and theology, have the common assumption that the Universe is orderly and meaningful. In this we may see the recognition of the underlying unity of man, the microcosm, with the Universe, the macrocosm. Science needs the other two approaches, as it is 'unable to explain the whys, as theology has attempted to do, or provide values, images and patterns as art does.' Yet 'it may help us to gain a feeling of belonging to the Universe in which man exists as an organism but lives as a personality in a symbolic cultural world.' The author concludes that science 'will continue to discover ever larger possibilities for knowing and communicating with nature and with man himself.' (*Main Currents*, 1968).

As well as this change in general thought about the nature of man and the Cosmos and their relationship, other specific aspects of theosophical philosophy are being developed by modern thinkers. Thus, the second fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* con-

cerns 'the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed in all departments of nature.' In the same work, we have it stated that 'the absolutely eternal universal motion, or vibration, that which is called in esoteric language the GREAT BREATH, differentiates into the primordial, first manifested ATOM.' This, which may be summed up in the phrase 'all is vibration' is one of the deep insights of theosophical philosophy, and it is thus a real advance to find it portrayed verbally and pictorially in the December, 1969, issue of UNESCO's magazine *Courier*. The theme is 'The Sculpture of Vibrations' and the beauty and design generated by vibrations acting within various plastic media is shown and explained in the text. A new science, that of CYMATICS is being developed to study this truth that indeed 'all is vibration.' Three components (comparable with the three Logoi of our philosophy?) are recognised as essential to these vibrational constructs: (a) a superposed vibration or energy impulse, (b) a medium in which is thus set up an interplay of forces in dynamic movement and (c) a resultant manifested form expressing rhythm, order and harmony. This recalls the 'Ray,' the movement, engendered by its impact on the 'Virgin Deep,' and the resultant manifested Universe, of the early stanzas of *The Stanzas of Dzyan*.

Finally, mention should be made of modern developments in astronomy, where new and powerful optical and radio telescopes are taking us increasingly deeper and further back in time into the history of the Cosmos. A further article in the same number of *Courier* suggests that we live in an evolving Universe, which is expanding, having started from an infinitely dense and condensed state by an explosion. Can we see here Malaparkiti, energised by the one force 'Fonak,' which scatters the 'curds'? The article suggests that the primordial state must have been of 'packets (photons) of intense radiation' intensely concentrated and at a very high temperature, confirming the statement that all is indeed vibration.

As the vistas open out through man's imagination and the technical applications of scientific discovery, we find modern man losing his absoluteness and dogmatism of thought. We are no longer certain that we know the answers, but we can know that we are on a voyage of discovery—discovery of the inner nature of ourselves and of the Cosmos within which we live and develop. Modern man is deeply interested in 'Becoming' as a process. This, in the words of Mrs. Rhys Davids, is also the true teaching of the Buddha. He is shown (in the deeper aspects of Buddhism) not just as 'a teacher of man-in-the-less, that is, of man as just body and mind,' but as teaching 'Becoming as Growth,' 'growth, not of the impermanent body and mind, but of the very Man, of whom we have no scientific right to say he must, after growing, decay.' (*The Birth of Indian Philosophy and its Development in Buddhism*, concluding words).

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Some Theosophical Concepts in a Modern Light

H. P. Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy* defines Theosophy in two senses. 'Theosophy, in its abstract meaning, is Divine Wisdom, or the aggregate of the knowledge and wisdom that underlie the Universe — the homogeneity of eternal GOOD; and in its concrete sense it is the sum total of the same as allotted to man by nature on this earth, and no more.' Thus in one sense, the abstract, we cannot limit Theosophy just to the teachings given in the last century by H. P. Blavatsky, teachings which have afforded such a stimulus to human thought. In this abstract sense it is the essential spiritual wisdom which has inspired the great thinkers and teachers of mankind in all ages.

In the concrete sense, however, the introduction of a limiting condition into the definition helps to explain why throughout the history of the Theosophical Society there have been almost as many opinions of what is should teach as there are theosophists. The limitation of man by 'nature' implies that each individual is able only to appreciate that aspect of the Divine Wisdom which his past evolutionary progress and present conditioning allow. Each of us can have but a limited vision and so 'some members earnestly endeavour to realize and, so to speak, to objectivize Theosophy in their lives; while others desire only to know of, not to practise it; and others still may have joined the Society merely out of curiosity, or a passing interest, or perhaps again, because some of their friends belong to it.' Such differences in the individual's endowment by 'nature,' his degree of evolutionary unfoldment, temperament, *karma* and *dharma*, will inevitably colour the appeal that one or other aspect of Theosophy makes to him. Thus, limited as each of us must be by nature, we cannot judge whether one person's vision of Theosophy is better, more correct, more wise, than that of another, except in the measure it can be tested by the criterion of universality and the quality of spiritual insight, implicit in the first part of the definition. It is perhaps for this reason that tolerance is required of us and universal brotherhood has been made the first object of the Theosophical Society, the only object to which all members must subscribe.

Within the above broad definitions of Theosophy, H. P. Blavatsky goes on to define the Theosophical Society: "The Society can be regarded as the embodiment of Theosophy only in its abstract motives; it can never presume to call itself its (i.e. Theosophy's) concrete vehicle so long as human imperfections and weaknesses are all represented in its body . . . Theosophy is divine nature, visible and invisible, and its Society human nature trying to ascend to its divine parent."

The Cosmic Basis of the Two-Tier Definitions

This two-tier or two-level definition of Theosophy is a consequence of the fact that the Universe, during its periods of manifestation (manvantaras), and therefore man within it, is both eternal and temporal, formed of spirit and matter (substance). These are the fundamental eternal poles of the Cosmos and man's being, consciousness being sparked by the tension between them. The material and temporal is of profound value in establishing a base or focus so that the spirit may become aware of itself. It is a useful meditation on this to focus the consciousness first upon the 'now' and on the physical plane of earth with its activities and all that is going on, perhaps while in a busy street or railway station, and then to shift the focus, imagining consciousness as moving out into space; seeing the moon moving around the earth; the earth and other planets around the sun; the stars and galaxies around the pole of the Universe. In this exercise one can realise the value of both aspects of consciousness; the intensity of the present moment, so important in personal living, yet from the wider view but 'a wink of the eye of eternity.' Our human Being is marvellously spun between these two poles.

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The realisation of the profound truth of the Unity of the Self in man with that source which emanated and sustains the Cosmos has been the experience of deeper thinkers and mystics of all ages, and in recent times many wise men have reaffirmed this truth as personal experience. Each of us can check for himself that this is the fundamental teaching of the Vedas, the Upanishads, of the Neo-Platonic philosophers, of the mediæval Christian mystics, in the now widely-available cheap editions of such writings. In our own time, scholars such as Radhakrishnan, Sri Krishna Prem, Lama Govinda, Aldous Huxley, Sidney Spencer and C. F. Happold, to name but a few, have reaffirmed and restated this ancient truth. Man as potential divinity has his future in his own hands and in the realisation of that divinity lies the hope for the future of the evolutionary scheme. Among an increasing number of scientific writers to realize this deeper element within the objective world studied by science, one of the earliest was the physicist Erwin Schrödinger. In *What is Life?*, a series of lectures published first by the Cambridge University Press in 1944, he gives first a strict scientific analysis of the statistical laws which govern the energy relationships of the atomic and molecular systems forming the basis of the living cell, the building brick of living organisms. He then gives an Epilogue headed 'Determinism and Free Will' to show the inadequacy of the ordinary scientific analysis. It can give no insight into the facts of consciousness which man knows by direct experience. Each of us can state two paradoxical propositions: "(1) My body functions as a pure mechanism according to the Laws of Nature; (2) yet I know, by incontrovertible direct experience that I am directing its motions, of which I foresee the effects, that may be fateful and all-important, in which case I feel and take full responsibility for them." The first proposition we know from scientific study; the second from immediate experience.

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