

# THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

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"THE Self, smaller than the small, greater than great, is hid in the heart of the creature. A man who has left all grief behind, sees the majesty, the Lord, the passionless, by the grace of the Lord.

"I know this undecaying, ancient one, the self of all things, infinite and omnipresent. They declare that in him all birth is stopped, for they proclaim him to be eternal."

— *Svetâsvatara-Upanishad*, lv, 20-21, translated by Max Müller

## RIGHT ETHICS

H. T. EDGE, M. A.

"No new ethics are presented by Theosophy, as it is held that right ethics are forever the same."— *W. Q. Judge*

**E**THICS, as above used, is definable as "the basic principles of right action." For right action we can find no better definition than "that action which is conformable to our nature." The principles of right action, for man, rest upon existing facts as to his nature. Man has the power of choice within very considerable limits; and two paths ever lie before him. He is endowed with a quenchless thirst for knowledge; and this leads him to the discovery of the facts regarding his own nature, and hence to an apprehension of the principles of right action — ethics. Animals in general follow the laws of their nature without reflexion, and for them we can make no distinction between ethics and instinct. Some animals, partially educated by contact with man, may exhibit something resembling ethics; notably the dog, of which it has been said:

"There are few human passions not shared in by the dog. It is, like him, subject to anger, jealousy, envy, love, hatred, and grief; it shows gratitude, pride, generosity, and fear. It sympathizes with man in his troubles, and there are numerous instances of record of its showing sympathy for the distressed of its own kind. . . . It may almost be said to have a religion, in which man is its god, and his will its rule of conduct, disobedience to which produces an evident feeling of shame and a quiet submission to punishment."— *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition

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And man himself reaches out towards an ideal higher than his present standard.

"Man never was not. If not on this globe, then on some other, he was, and ever will be, in existence somewhere in the cosmos. Ever perfecting, and reaching up to the image of the Heavenly Man, he is always becoming."— *W. Q. Judge*

Man has the choice of acting from personal desire, or from the dictates of his higher nature. For he has within him two centers, the one animal, the other divine. It is futile to try and resolve ethics into a higher or subtler form of self-interest. The very essence of it is that it opposes selfish motives. The watchword of ethics is Duty; that of the lower or personal self, Desire. We all know what these words mean; for, whatever cobwebs we may spin in argument and speculation, the question is always plain enough when it comes to practice and action.

Theosophy presents no new ethics; for none are required. What is wanted is for people to recognise and follow them. All that Theosophy has done in this matter is to restate and re-emphasize the eternal principles of right conduct. It has shown upon what facts in human nature these principles depend; and here again it has not stated anything new, but recalled a knowledge of truths too long forgotten in a materialistic age. Ethics, the science of right conduct, depends on the fact that man's nature is dual, being both spiritual and animal. Right conduct, for man, consists in following the laws of his higher or spiritual nature, while relegating the laws of his lower or animal nature to their proper place of subordination. The important truth, thus restated by Theosophy, is that God is *within*, and that it is to our own Higher Self that we must look for aid and light. This ancient truth, taught by all great religious teachers, is apt to be put out of sight or perverted into other forms; so that man forgets his own divinity and comes to rely on external aid from a source outside himself; while he regards himself as irremediably sinful without such special aid. Therefore we have to get back to the original unperverted teachings of religion, such as we may find in the Christian gospel, among other places. Jesus says that "The kingdom of God is within you." And he bids his disciples seek the light within by obedience to the law of their divine nature, so as to attain the knowledge and power which he himself had attained.

It is important to bear in mind that this path is open to all men, not confined to any special individual. Jesus was one of many Teachers, who, having trod the path of Wisdom themselves, have sought to enable other men to follow it also.

We may observe, as a characteristic sign of recent tendencies in thought, that people are looking within themselves for the source of

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knowledge, power, and peace. But not everything occult and latent in our nature is good and beneficial; there are some harmful things also. There is an untapped fount of selfish desire; and, to judge by the writings and sayings of some who claim to show the path to power, selfish desire is regarded as the inspiring motive. For they hold out to the thirsting aspirant prospects of self-aggrandisement in various familiar forms. But this is surely not the path taught by Jesus, the Buddha, and other Teachers. That path is always based on the idea of self-renunciation — the sacrifice of purely personal ambitions and desires, in order that we attain a more blessed state where our motives are large and impersonal. This is the path that Theosophy teaches. It is a path of freedom and emancipation, because it is our desires and fears and anxieties and passions that bind us; and real freedom consists in liberation from this self-bondage.

Thus Theosophy supplies a genuine motive for living; where too frequently there is no definite motive at all, or else a selfish motive that can bring no lasting satisfaction. The many puzzles of human life, which may sometimes seem to make it a cruel mockery, are due to the fact that man follows shadows, and that his desires drag him in directions contrary to his best interests.

The first step in bringing order into life is to remove the doubt and despair, replacing it by faith and certainty. Having thus a definite ideal to work towards, we find our energies reviving. Nothing can be more calculated to bring about this result than the sense that our life is continuous, that birth did not begin it, nor will death end it. The idea that death ends for ever our career of experience and growth is awful, and is well fitted to cause dread of death. The idea of rebirth, accepted at first intellectually, gradually grows upon us, until it becomes incorporated with our ideas and feelings; and then every question assumes a new aspect, and problems clear up.

We can see, by the actions of some people, that they have no confidence in themselves, no faith in the possibilities of life or in a divine law of justice in the universe. This is at the bottom of vice and crime and wasted frivolous lives. We see the necessity of better education; but before parents and teachers can teach children, they must themselves know. The root of ethics may be said to lie in the words: "Restrain by thy Divine thy lower Self." The parent, realizing this duality in human nature, can appeal to the understanding of the smallest child; for this distinction is understood before the intellect develops, and is defined by the simplest actions. But we find that indulgence, yielding to the child's weaknesses and even encouraging them, failure to give efficient advice and instruction, even when asked — are too often the rule. Truly what is

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everywhere needed is a better comprehension of the essential laws of human life, or, in other words, a revival of ethics.

Right ethics are adequate to all occasions and circumstances; whereas ethics which are based only upon special conditions are apt to be upset when the conditions change. Thus we find that beliefs and faiths may be undermined when people quit civilization and its habits and surroundings, and go into the wilds. Their ethics were not deeply enough grounded. Recent disturbances have unsettled people's beliefs, and the old standards seem gone. This is what happens to people whose morals are rooted no deeper than in convention and social fear. Hence there has been brought home to us the necessity for a more solid anchorage for our morality. It must be grounded in a better knowledge of the mysteries of human nature, and a faith in the greater possibilities yet to be unfolded from that nature. A study of the Theosophical teachings, and a constant endeavor to put them into practice, will lay the basis for those unchanging right ethics.

## GOOD AND EVIL

E. A. NERESHEIMER



ONE great all-pervading principle is at the base of the whole of the Kosmos, namely Consciousness; and allied with Consciousness are its eternal Powers, called Spirit and Matter. In the unmanifested state, *i. e.*, before the opening of a World-Drama — which latter, Theosophically speaking, is but a periodical alternation of activity, development, dissolution, and rest — these three Eternal Factors are quantitatively and qualitatively in perfect equilibrium. That is to say, their measure and extent are irrevocably fixed, and their original, essential, nature cannot be changed by what occurs in any or all of the eternal, periodically recurring periods of existence and dissolution of Universes.

Simultaneous with the beginning of each such cosmic pageant, appear all the numberless contrasting aspects of manifested Life, called the 'pairs of opposites,' such as motion and its antithesis inertia, life and death, heat and cold, and all the numberless dual phenomena implied in action and reaction that relate to life.

The Divine Spark of 'Man,' cast into this sea of contrasts, is destined to encounter therein all the relations of Spirit with the material and formal sides of Nature; but the Law itself, which underlies all the phenomena of manifested being, knows nothing of such distinctions. In the divine realm of unrevealed potency, there is no perception of existence, in the ordinary

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sense. Only the 'gods' and conscious man perceive the many and varied relations of manifested existence.

In due course of time the notion arose in the mind of man that cause and effect, action and reaction, affect him sometimes as pleasant, sometimes as unpleasant; but the same thing does not appeal to all alike uniformly. Many an object or event seems good to one while at the same time it presents itself to another as evil. Who of the two judges aright?

Man is endowed with free will (within certain limits). He initiates thoughts and acts with a particular aim and purpose of his own, namely, that of attaining objects or results, which shall be gratifying to himself alone. In the exuberance of his self-gratification it does not occur to him that the general harmony of other relations may thereby be disturbed. He experiences thereupon either pleasure or pain, as a reaction, which he generally attributes to 'chance,' from the want of better knowledge.

There can, however, be action, the rebound of which does not result in pain. This is 'right action,' performed without attachment to the results thereof. Energy is expended and wasted in the thought of gain, while the best work is done with no other object in view but that of egotistic ends to be achieved. "To work for wealth may be good, to work for the accomplishment of duty is better, but to work for the good of Humanity is best."

Less complex and evolved forms of life than that of man, know and feel but little, if anything, of good and evil; they are not apprehensive of pain, and the very fact of existence is joy to them. A plant shows a natural adaptability for meeting adverse conditions which interfere with, or retard, its normal unfoldment. It may be battered about or damaged by extraneous causes, almost to the point of extinction, but when conditions again become favorable, and if the plant is not utterly destroyed, it puts forth greater energy than ever, and immediately endeavors, with 'might and main,' to reach the best results possible in accomplishing its original purpose. Minerals and stone become 'tired' from overwear, but when left alone for a sufficiently long time, they regain their former strength lasting then fully as long as before under the same strain. Animals do not suffer the same agonies as men, unless they have changed their native characteristics sufficiently through long association with human beings to have gained a sensitiveness unusual to the greater number of their kind.

Nature has her laws and program in the unfoldment of her resources, disclosing an unfailing method by means of which her powers always tend to establish equilibrium, and a perfect balance in all her operations. Man is a conscious Self, plus a conglomeration of millions of other consciousnesses, which he has assimilated and made his own during his long pilgrimage throughout past ages in the crucible of evolution. A

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constant exchange of atoms is ever taking place on all the outer and inner planes of his being, - perpetually changing, rearranging, and adjusting themselves. From the vibrations caused by his thoughts and acts the equilibrium is constantly being modified, according to whether their import is either in harmony with nature, or the reverse.

Incessant action is the inevitable concomitant of imbodyed being, hence life is but a necessity for the constant putting forth of energy. No state of conscious existence would be possible without it. Our choice lies not in submitting to this universal necessity, or in attempts at its evasion, but between the motives that we bring to bear on our efforts by the will. Knowing that it is physically impossible to cease from all action, would it not be wise for us to learn to work in the way that will lead to the greatest good both to ourselves and to the World? Intelligent good work is in itself an ideal; *i. e.*, that of following the path of duty dictated by conscience, not as a slave of our desires, but as their master.

For the aspirant to spiritual Wisdom, success lies in the purity of his motive, translated into acts. Attraction and repulsion, regulated by egoism, are the forces that limit and modify human consciousness, shaping it into certain mind-forms like unto the objects that happen closely to rivet the attention for the time being. In every act of perception the cognitive power of the mind assumes the form of the object perceived, thus molding the trend of mind, and even the body. Indeed, it is quite useless to make happiness the object of so much effort, for worldly happiness is forever linked with pain; our strong likes and dislikes keeping us ceaselessly oscillating, back and forth, between pleasure and affliction.

Nature herself is incessantly active and the results achieved by her are uniformly harmonious, because all her works are selfless, conceived of and executed according to a plan that keeps her powers in absolute and constant equilibrium. Hence, in her realm, there is no disruption during her progressive unfoldment, caused by interference of any kind. With man this is different. In all his thoughts and acts he has an object in view, to be achieved through Will and Intent, namely that of aggregating to himself the results of his acts. This intent enters into his acts without the least consideration as to whether the act is in conformity, in every respect, with universal law, or not. Therefore, in so far as his will enters into his acts, which generally proceed from motives of self-interest, they are contrary to Nature's end and aim. Hence the burden of their effects must solely rebound upon him.

Nature's store of Force, Matter, and Consciousness, is always ample for her every purpose, but may not be made use of to any other end. Whatever is put in requisition for the concord of her own economy returns to the Mother's bosom, after having served its legitimate end,

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for transmutation and rejuvenation. Nothing is added to it, nothing taken away. Nature has nothing to give for personal possession, and outside of her store there is no other source of supply. Puny man desires to have and to hold whatever he can for himself alone, and this is impossible. He goes to great lengths to snatch a morsel that is necessary elsewhere and, having acquired it, he seeks to grasp yet more. **WHAT THEN WILL BE THE RESULT?**

Animals, plants, minerals, or elements, in which the monadic consciousness also ceaselessly acts, are devoid of such individualized intent, and therefore no disquieting results of any kind revert to them. In consequence of this their career runs along smoothly and presumably happily. Potentially, every cosmic element — earth, water, air, fire, as well as every chemical substance,—is of its own nature both good and bad, and therefore liable in the hands of man to life and death, health and disease, action and reaction; yet to the atoms and lives comprising these elements there accrues neither advantage or harm, as such, in the absence of self-initiated causes.

Be it remembered that everything in the manifested universe is dual, *i. e.*, subject to the 'pairs of opposites,' and the Monad manifesting in any of the kingdoms of Nature, whether the mineral, vegetable, animal, or human, encounters, in all these different states of being, this same great fact of the pairs of opposites in nature. Every unit of any of these kingdoms meets its experiences in its own particular way, according to the state of evolution in which it finds itself. The lives of the simpler forms respond but faintly to these stimuli, but in the more advanced kingdoms we can plainly see how conscious perception increases.

Thus consciousness in the mineral kingdom, for example, has been likened to the deepest 'trance'-state, wherein there is no definite cognition of objective life and conditions. In the vegetable, consciousness expands to the rudiments of perception and imperceptibly differentiates towards individual cognition; its condition is comparable to that of deep sleep. The units of the animal domain, with their added power of locomotion and sense-perception, almost reach in their later stages the point of self-consciousness, and a general awareness of existence that may be likened to that of the dream-state. And in man, self-consciousness becomes the dominant faculty; will and desire grow apace with it, and consciousness rises to independent self-directed action, centered in the plane of causes, known as the waking state.

Here we behold the successive awakenings of 'consciousness' out of the darkness into which it had fallen, as a consequence of the descent of the undifferentiated Eternal Monad into manifested and material being. We can see the latent intelligence gradually quickening again into more

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intense life and action from one state to another, after having lain dormant so long and lost to perception during its infolding in matter on the downward arc. Every step of its reawakening can still be observed around us in the elements and lives of the lower kingdoms; and, further, we see how through age-long repetitions of experience, in the same rigid and circumscribed forms of matter, a certain reliable and valuable automatism has been gained, manifesting as instinct, and a keener and keener sense-perception in the more recently developed entities.

From a consideration of this procedure we can safely form for ourselves a picture of how the unfolding selective Nature-impulse gradually expanded so that when the time came for it to do so, it imperceptibly glided into the succeeding advanced stage of development; say, for example, from that of the mineral into the more advanced vegetable form of existence, and so on, through almost incalculable periods of time, up to the stature of man's estate, when the Monadic Essence became ready and fitted to separate into individual units. Thence the dawn in man of self-consciousness, free will, and responsibility, by means of which he may grasp new and invaluable opportunities from his rich store of experience; enabling him to regain the state of primeval spiritual Unity, with the added endowment of individualized consciousness of every phase of objective as well as subjective being.

Some detailed accounts of the Theosophic teachings have been given in several previous sketches, of the complete segregation of the most advanced units of the animal kingdom from the confines of the respective group-consciousnesses, describing the various nature-forces and higher Beings involved in this process, which is one of the most transcendental and momentous events that have taken place in the progress of evolution; showing how well the most intricately sequential and unailing direction was and is provided throughout the mental and spiritual unfoldment of man. This is revealed in accounts given to us of the great sacrifice made by certain hosts of superior Intelligences, coming forth from a previous Life-Cycle, for this express purpose, actually surrendering, therefore, their own prerogatives for advancement in order to radiate abroad their celestial potencies, and thus kindle the Divine Spark in the minds of the incoming human units. Is not this the equivalent of the allegorical "tree of Knowledge of good and evil" planted by the "Lord in the Garden of Eden"?

Prior to evolution in the Human Kingdom, there was neither 'good' nor 'evil,' but only action and reaction. With the knowledge of intelligent being desire arose, and desire begat the notion of possession, and consequent selfishness arose. Yet, as doubt is the forerunner of knowledge, so is 'evil' in the transition-stage the precursor of good. This fact may



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seem strange when first realized. The driving power of Nature (the Rajas-quality) which is chiefly dominant in the human race at this time, causes man to act incessantly, involving him in objectless reactions and illusions. Inevitably, however, meeting thereby countless limitations, he slowly gains knowledge through experience. Knowledge is the precursor of wisdom, which is the only real possession that man can acquire for himself; and that without limit. Were it not for the stern law of reaction, *i. e.*, the effect which is already latent in every cause, man would not only stand still mentally and spiritually, but wear himself out with sensation, pleasure, and pain.

“Man proposes and Karma disposes.” Conscious life should be regarded as a well-earned boon, hewn out from the ‘rough and tumble’ experiences in contact with the limitations set by Nature in the past. Has not man already back of him a priceless store of knowledge, gained in lower forms of existence during his evolution through aeons upon aeons of time? This alone will stand him in good stead, even if it only brings him up to the point where he, at last, becomes absolutely rooted in the knowledge of the invincibility of the laws that regulate life and being. This point attained, the inner life begins, and other, weightier compensations, will reward him for his further efforts in ‘Right Action’ upon the upward path towards Perfect Realization, in which ‘Good’ and ‘Evil’ have no place; for they are replaced, it is said, by Ineffable Bliss.

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R. MACHELL

**I**F asked the question ‘What is the purpose of education?’ I suppose most people would reply that education is intended to prepare the student for life; and this would include the supposition that the education is complete when the pupil leaves school or college or the university.

But, important as the early years of life may be, it is quite evident that education does not cease with the close of actual tutelage; for life is the greatest of all schools, and experience is the great educator. A child may never go to school in the ordinary sense; but he, or she, cannot escape education in the world. The school of life knows no vacations. Experience is pitiless. The failures in that school are ruthlessly cast aside; the punishments are suffering and degradation; discharge is death. Few are the pupils in that school who ‘win out’ unaided.

If then the purpose of our education is to prepare the candidate for

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life, such education must precede the entry into life. There must be preparation; there must be a prenatal education, as well as the training of the young, in order to fit the candidate to profit by the lessons of experience which come upon the pupil at the entry into bodily existence, and cease alone with death.

Some will say "Leave it to Nature, she will take care of her children." She does so, indeed, providing deputies to care for every new-born infant, parents; and makes them responsible. And they — in their crass ignorance of their responsibility — leave everything to Nature.

What the world needs, in order to remedy the ills of human civilizations, is education. But it must be an education based on the knowledge of man's nature, and of his place in the universe. It must be such a system as will enable him to start each life with the assurance of his own divinity and personal responsibility. That is to say, the soul must be recognised, and given a fair opportunity to evolve in harmony with the soul of nature, and in knowledge of the duality of mind, which underlying duality alone explains man's aspirations to spiritual wisdom, and his craving for the gross joys of sense, his hopes and his despairs, his triumphs and his failures.

Such wisdom is not difficult to children, because it is but a statement of the truths of their own nature. And if the parents had this knowledge they could not help but give it to their children almost unconsciously. This would be truly a prenatal education. For education is not separate from life. Both life and education are continuous, although there are periods of various sorts and variable duration. There is birth and there is death; but these concern the body and brain of man; his soul was not born when his eyes first saw the light of day; and it will endure when death has had its way with the 'shadow.' So too the period of one earth-life may be divided into lesser periods of infancy or youth, maturity and old age, and so on; and for each period there is an education suitable; but life goes on, and education does not cease. And each earth-life may be regarded as preparatory to the lives that are to follow, as well as being itself colored and influenced by those that went before. "And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe; and so from hour to hour we rot and rot." And so the education of the soul goes on, even when the training of the body may have ceased, and the mind seems incapable of learning any new lesson in the school of life.

Theosophy is necessary to right education: without it the soul is little better than a prisoner in the dungeon of the body with no outlook beyond the limits of the one short life for which that personality was born and trained. Without Theosophy the soul is robbed of hope, imagining itself eternally condemned to endure the consequences of the thoughts and

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deeds of that one life, which in reality is but a day in the lifetime of the soul.

Educators of the more progressive kind are well aware of the inadequacy of all school-systems now in vogue; they see the urgent need of a more liberal conception of the duties of the teacher; but they do not always see just where the shoe pinches. Schools, colleges, and universities are housed in handsome buildings, are well located, well equipped, even well officered, perhaps; and yet they are inadequate to the requirements of the age. The schools are soulless.

The students are souls, starving for lack of true ideals, true philosophy, true knowledge of the nature of man, and of the purpose of existence. Where are the teachers capable of giving such instruction? Without the knowledge of Theosophy they have naught to give except the empty husks of intellectualism, or the dry bones of dead religious systems, the soul of which has long since passed away. How can the soulless educate the souls? How can a teacher, who believes that one earth-life is all that a human being has of opportunity for progress, be expected to evoke the soul of a student whom the teacher honestly believes to be a soulless animal? How can a teacher help a student to control his lower nature, when he himself believes the vices that destroy the soul are natural and unavoidable? How can he appeal to the higher nature of his pupil when he himself most honestly believes there is no higher nature to appeal to?

Theosophy is needed everywhere, amongst the teachers as well as for the students. Theosophy is more than a mere system of philosophy; it is the outward expression of eternal verities, a formulated utterance of the wisdom of the Gods. Theosophy is spiritual life. What education needs is to be vitalized by true Theosophy.

Those who have seen the development of Katherine Tingley's Râja-Yoga school-system at Point Loma, know that the results obtained are such as to justify the declaration that true Theosophy applied to education is the one answer to the question: "How can our civilization be rescued from the degeneracy that threatens to engulf it?"

Surely the most vital of all social interests is right education.



"THE chief point is to uproot that most fertile source of all crime and immorality -- the belief that it is possible for men to escape the consequences of their own actions. Once teach them that greatest of all laws, *Karma* and *Reincarnation*, and besides feeling in themselves the true dignity of human nature, they will turn from evil and eschew it as they would a physical danger."— *H. P. Blavatsky*

## PALA

KENNETH MORRIS

### I

I SAW the silver cloud hung in the dim blue pass,—  
The morning sun shine down white on its ghostly fleece,—  
The golden upland fields,— the broad blue river glass —  
Wave-broken, rippled through — blue, silver, green, and peace.  
And I saw more than these: the Mystery, the Flame,  
The Greatness with no name whose silence thrills them through;  
And to me strangely through the mountain morning came  
The Gentleness of God that dwells so close to you.  
    (Dear hearts, take heart again! Life is a vaster sphere  
    Than this small round of life so fraught with mourning here!)

### II

And I took thought: Could you make known the things you knew,—  
Were what the mountains knew, and you, and night, but told,  
To lave this fevered age as with some mountain dew.  
Earth might her youth renew, who now hath grown so old.  
Could you but force the doors of this unblest abode  
Where time with wounded wings is sentenced now to be,  
And fearless enter in, and bring the Red Man's code —  
The silence of the stars, the mountains' mystery,—  
    Dear hearts, who knows? who knows? We too might turn again  
    And live our lives redeemed — not beasts with minds, but Men.

### III

Well, but the mountains stand! They speak no word at all;  
Their everlasting calm ingirdles round your plain.  
Come changes, deaths, decays: loud nations rise and fall:  
*They* speak no word at all; men pass, but they remain.  
Is there no Red Man's thought, no timeless dream they brood  
When over Pala fields the night with stars is strewn,  
When that ghost-boat, the Moon, sinks burnished copper-hued,—  
When the mute Sun with peace o'erwhelms the world at noon?  
    Rocks, mountains, silence, sun, night's starry diadem —  
    While these endure, dear hearts, your life endures in them!

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## LEARNING THE LAW

MARJORIE M. TYBERG

**T**HE conception of the reign of law in the universe is comparatively new to the modern world. Ideas of law were long confined to those measures formulated by men or associations of men for the welfare of society and to the decrees of a God. The laws of human life could not be learned under these conditions. Bitter experiences could serve to teach hard lessons and to strengthen mankind in the endurance of painful results, but, with these ideas, it was impossible for men and women to see clearly in the events of life the working of an eternal, just, and compassionate Law.

The transition to the greater conceptions presented by Theosophy is slowly taking place. The old teachings about God and the world and man were a hot-bed in which the sense of injustice and of impotence benumbed the highest powers and aspirations, keeping human beings on a plane of endeavor that gradually became a field where they seized and held all they could because they had learned to distrust the future. The study of Theosophy changes these painful conditions. It shows a universe ruled by a law above personal attributes; it shows also hierarchies of perfected human beings who have learned that law and know its full application to human life. This study encourages each individual to study himself and learn for himself the laws of life. The old teaching was that God alone knew the mysteries of life and of death: the Theosophical teaching is that each man *must learn* the law of his being and by conforming to it, make of himself a God, or, as Jesus said "become perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect."

When we have accepted the Theosophical teaching that in life after life on earth we reap the results of the thoughts and actions of previous incarnations; and learn that, though the Soul of each of us is aware before our birth of the chain of old causes that will reappear in the dawning life-time as events and conditions, the incarnated man does not keep this knowledge and so cannot see in full the justice, there is still very much to learn before we can grasp the idea of Law in relation to our life. It is difficult, for instance, for those whose minds have been clouded by connecting sowing and reaping with the possible intervention of a personal God, to conceive of a Law without attributes, a law which inevitably brings the harvest to the individuals who sowed the seed, whether of good or evil. Clearly to understand that the Law of the universe is absolutely undeviating and without attributes, it is necessary to face the nature of every act and thought more honestly than orthodox teachings demand,

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and begin to see in every act and thought its result, accepting the truth that what we must first learn about the Law is that *it works every time*.

It is useless to pretend that there is as yet a widespread conviction that results from human acts are inevitable. If there were, the whole order of human society would have changed, as scientific investigation and humanitarian methods of treating the sick, the imbecile, the insane, and the criminal, have enabled systematic reports to be made of the conditions under which some human beings live their lives. The causes are not very often too remote to be sought out, though the Theosophical teachings of Karma and Reincarnation are the only explanation for the linking of what now seem to be the innocent with the suffering which falls upon those who have once broken laws of life. Those who give their lives in attempting to mitigate the suffering of their fellows caused by the breaking of, say, the laws of physical life, are an index of those with greater knowledge, who compassionately labor to spread the truth about the responsibility of Humanity for every act and thought, and who have strength to persevere in bringing before human minds little by little, century by century, a deeper knowledge of the real nature of man: its essential divinity and power to regenerate. It is a great thing to recognise an evil effect and labor to lessen the sufferings of those on whom it has fallen. It is a greater to teach the race to face its responsibility and find within itself the power to sow what will bring only a fair harvest. Mercy, compassion, suffering, are all teachers, but wisdom and truth must be present to direct the learning of the Law that will make of man its coworker.

When the impersonal action of the law of cause and result has been studied, and the inevitableness of reaping where there has been sowing is seen, a new difficulty presents itself. We have learned to disassociate the Law that brings us sorrow or joy from the idea of a personal God who might possibly be interceded with to set it aside in special cases; but we have yet to learn to control our own personal feelings in our acceptance of the Law. We have to learn to be glad that the Law is working in our case, and to sound a part of our nature that regards with content the results that come to us from past deeds and thoughts. This is not easy and cannot be done unless there is the willingness to take painful results accruing in this life as merciful reminders carefully to regard the nature of the acts and thoughts we are now starting on a journey which will end in results recognisable by us in a future life. It is evident on all sides that such reminders are needed by every one. The Theosophical teachings enable students to learn to make use of them, so successfully, that, these painful lessons conquered, they are free to take up their divine mission in life, that of helping others.

When one contemplates human life in the light of this teaching, the

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thought comes: "Unthinkingly, unknowingly, Humanity has sown causes it will take mighty ages to experience the results of." This reaping must go on and on — there is no escape. So many have not yet awakened to the truth; they are busy at this very moment, millions of them, sowing tares that must result in suffering yet untold. How is all this to be met? Now that we have learned the truth, what is the outlook?

It is well to recollect that the Law was working, even before *we* woke up to the fact. That we have been aroused means that we have been challenged to assume new responsibilities and work in a new way, and Theosophy at once supplements the glimpse of the truth we have had in accepting the law of cause and effect as applied to human action, by the teaching that all men are bound together, that not until the whole body has been gradually leavened with Wisdom can the burden of sorrow and sin be wholly lifted, and that for him who sees the truth there is but one task — to work for others. Humanity's suffering is yours and mine, no matter what drug inducing the idea of separateness we may be in the habit of dulling our sensibilities with. Learning the Law involves more than an explanation and an acceptance of the individual application of it.

In the light of the Theosophical teachings, then, it is not only breaches of man-made law that will result in imprisonment and painful results of other kinds. By our acts and thoughts of a nature selfish though not criminal, as it might be expressed, we are building houses of confinement for ourselves where we must abide until the nature of the act is finally worn out or exhausted. Karma, this law of adjustment, manifests in several ways, in the physical body, the sensations, the mental powers and tendencies of mind, and even in the abstract ideas that we have. The position in life we occupy, the opportunities we have in childhood, the sudden changes that sometimes alter the whole bent of person, are all the fruit of the past. As we exhaust results, other causes begin to operate to manifest them. The gradual working off of all this accumulated causation must be understood before the significance of a moment of life can be estimated. It is necessary to accept for man's spiritual development vast ages similar to those whose stages have been traced by students of physical evolution. It seems that we must learn to stand firm and constant in the face of all that remains to come back to us and our fellows, never relaxing the efforts so to live that there shall be no more evil to come back to any one. It is well to brace oneself daily for the performance of this duty: it is the duty that we, as human beings, have.

Acceptance of it engenders a great tolerance and brotherliness, and a courageous effort to *let our fellows learn the Law*. In our blind state, willing to avoid results ourselves, we have often the desire to help others merely to avoid them, when the greatest mercy and justice would be in

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being brave enough to support them as they realize the working of the Law. It is here that the Theosophical teaching that "the *duty* of another is full of danger" would be a safeguard to many who in a mistaken sense of brotherhood would misplace those whose selfishness is a great drawback to any spiritual growth. Learning the Law and conforming to it do not signify the forsaking of compassionate acts, but neither do they mean leaving one's brother in ignorance concerning the result of selfishness; and sometimes the most difficult lesson to be learned by students of life is that of having courage to let others face what they themselves have learned to be the truth, though helping them always.

The greatness of the task of thus meeting the results of the past, and gradually strengthening the character so that knowledge of the Law may be applied, is in accord with the greatness of the opportunity the Soul has in repeated lives on earth, and with the vast periods of time that Theosophy names as the cycles during which it is accomplished. Not only this, it is in accord with the greatness of the divine inner nature of man. In the realization of this essential divinity and the exercise of it in dealing with larger and larger issues, as we escape from narrow, selfish paths, is the compensation attained by those who accept the responsibility of learning and living the Law. Here lies the key to happiness, which those who look for it among care-free unawakened, and merely happiness-seeking Humanity, can never find. We have always been told that the key to happiness lies within ourselves, but only those who delve deep enough into their own natures to find the divine strength actually to understand the suffering that teaches them and their fellows the necessary lessons, while laboring manfully to lessen that suffering, and who learn to live in the welfare of the whole of Humanity, *can* experience true and lasting happiness. Narrowness, selfishness, personality, pen in the divine nature, which, once set free, can feel harmony with the onward-moving impulse of human life. The greatest joy can find no home in such limited quarters; it seeks the nature that has awakened to the great issues, the great opportunities, the great powers of its essential divinity.

Learning the Law, therefore, and loving to abide by its decrees, restore in the individual a harmony with all else in the universe, and bring about a consciousness of the rhythm and beauty of the objects and workings of human life. In the Theosophical teachings, more of this Law was revealed than man has had set before him for many ages. The Theosophical Teachers knew that it was a time when many of the souls comprising Humanity could make a definite choice between ignorant stumbling in defiance of existing principles of conduct, and awakened, harmonized, divine allegiance and obedience to the Law. To all who have heard the teachings of Theosophy the challenge has been given.



# DOSTOYEVSKY

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

## I: HIS UNFORTUNATE YOUTH \*

" . . . My brother, I would work for you and for all to the utmost of my poor capacity, and I would not do it just to feel myself rid of my duties towards you; but because it gives me happiness to add to your well-being and to the general welfare; for I love you and I love everyone."

" . . . Advice to all: Be masters of yourselves; know how to conquer yourselves before you take the first step along the new path; set an example before you would convert others. Then only will you be able to go forward. . . ."— *F. M. Dostoyevsky*



DOSTOYEVSKY! At this magical name something seems to throb deep within the Russian heart; a mystic breath comes and goes, touching with velvet wing the inner recesses of the soul. There is a mystery behind this globe-encircling name; a chasm appears to half open before those strange visions of the man; before his seizures, so horrible in their intensity; before his clairvoyance, terrifying in its acuteness and exact beyond all understanding. . . .

Dostoyevsky! The name evokes the sense of an abyss of gloom, an ocean of melancholy, where burns but a spark of hope; it stirs all that is incomprehensible, mysterious, intoxicating, all that is veiled and all that is real, in the depths of the Slavic soul, all that it contains of the mystical, the occult, the infinite. It gives birth to a strange, inexplicable, fantastic feeling, for its essence is that of those infinite steppes, those somber forests and frozen spaces, where is being wrought a future race, a new Russia, a new genius. . . .

Dostoyevsky! There lies in this ever-living name a latent power; the force of a whole people is hidden in these few syllables. Why is this? Because he embodies the psychology of a race, its historic consciousness, its metaphysics and its religion, its ideals and its dreams of the future,— he is the incarnation of the whole gamut of these complicated feelings and prophetic visions. 'Dostoyevsky' is the synonym of 'Russia'!

Feodor Mihailovitch Dostoyevsky, the son of an army surgeon and a merchant's daughter, was born in October, 1821, in an asylum for the poor at Moscow. The first impression of his infancy was one, if not of misery, at least of extreme discomfort. His father, who had five children, and who occupied but two rooms with a kitchen, realized, and never ceased telling his children, that they must prepare themselves to make

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\*Certain data included in this article are taken from information which the writer of this article has himself heard from the lips of the daughter of the eminent Russian, Miss A. Dostoyevsky.

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their own way, for at his death they would all be reduced to beggary.

The letters of the youthful Dostoyevsky, who in time was placed in the School of Engineering — especially those addressed to his father give the impression of his being in a position that was occasionally unbearable from the pecuniary point of view. This poverty, which surrounded the future writer from his earliest years and which was never to leave him save on the very eve of his death, depended not so much on outer circumstances as on inner peculiarities of his own character. There are persons who do not know how to spend money, persons who are naturally predestined, against their own wishes, to amass wealth; and there are others who do not know how to keep anything and yet are none the less doomed to prodigality. To the latter category belonged Dostoyevsky. According to his brother, he never knew what he possessed. When a German doctor, Riesenkampf, who lived with him in St. Petersburg in 1843, tried to teach him German exactitude and set to work to untangle the rather obscure finances of the young student, he found Dostoyevsky without a cent, feeding on bread and milk which he was obtaining on credit in a shop. Forthwith the meticulous Teuton gave up his attempt. One of Dostoyevsky's biographers, D. Merechkovsky, referring to this subject, says that his residence with the doctor became for him a continual source of fresh expenditures; he was always ready to receive, like a genial host, every poor person who came to consult Riesenkampf. Dostoyevsky never had any need to prove to himself that money is an evil and that it is necessary to renounce all possessions, as Tolstoy did it all his life long; dreaming of riches from his youth, he lived in unbroken poverty and would have died in the deepest misery had it not been for the activity of his wife.

After a year of study at the Engineering College, where he had the companionship of his brother Aleksey, to whom he was joined all during life by a sincere friendship and by common interests in literary matters, he asked to resign (1844) and devoted himself to literature.

As is known, the eminent writer was an epileptic from infancy. It is said that his malady resulted from a tragic event that occurred in the family. What this grave occurrence could have been we do not know, but it was probably some cruel domestic scene, due to the father's irascible character, that had a violent effect on the child, who was of a very impressionable nature. This hearsay report, however, seems of slight authenticity to anyone who knows the true cause of epilepsy. In passing, it is of interest, especially when we grant his wonderful ability to fathom the psychology of crime, to mark these few words of Dostoyevsky himself, written to a friend:

"The despondency, which follows my epileptic attacks has the following characteristics.

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I feel myself a great criminal; I feel the consciousness of some unknown fault creeping over me; a criminal deed weighs on my soul."

It was at the age of twenty-four that Dostoyevsky wrote his first novel, *Poor Folk*. In his *Diary of a Writer* published towards the end of his life, he recounts the circumstances attending his first appearance as an author. Not knowing what to do with the book he had just finished, and not being at all acquainted with the necessary steps for its publication, he found an opportunity, through a friend, later the famous writer Grigorovich, to get his novel into the hands of the poet Niekrassov. Next day, at three o'clock in the morning, someone knocked at his door. It was Grigorovich, followed by Niekrassov, who had already read the story and who, moved by profound admiration, wished to show the young debutant his appreciation of the genius disclosed by his maiden effort.

On the following day, with the manuscript under his arm, Niekrassov went straight to the house of the celebrated literary critic Byelinsky, "the oracle of Russian thought, the man whose very name made young aspirants tremble." "A new Gogol is born," cried Niekrassov to Byelinsky upon entering. "Evidently," calmly replied the critic; "they appear nowadays like mushrooms after a rain"; and he regarded the manuscript with disdain. But the effect which a reading of Dostoyevsky's work made upon him was identical with that produced upon Niekrassov. When the author himself shortly afterwards visited the famous critic, the latter said to him enthusiastically: "Being young as you are, do you yourself understand how true it is what you have written? I do not think you do. There is in it real artistic inspiration. Cultivate the gifts that you possess and you will become a great author." When, two months later, *Poor Folk* appeared (1846) Dostoyevsky's literary reputation was established.

While recognising his precocious talent and his unusual ability to seize upon the minutest detail of the life that surrounded him and to fix it immediately in connexion with the many characters with which his writings abound, we must attribute the success of his first work — though perhaps only to a small degree — to the characteristic of Dostoyevsky which shows him to us as a young man who had been devoted to reading since his earliest years. At twelve he had already devoured the writings of Karamzine, the poet *par excellence* of the reign of Katherine the Great, and those of Sir Walter Scott, as well as novels and stories without number. Reading, however, exhausted him, for he had a strange faculty of literally living through all the scenes and situations. As a student at the Engineering School his enthusiasm was aroused by Balzac, particularly by his *Père Goriot*; Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet* he himself translated.

The literatures of Russia and Western Europe were equably accessible to him, and when one compares the intellectual pabulum of the cultured

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classes of Russia at that time with the kind of mental nourishment that appealed to this young writer, one is obliged to admit the independence he showed in his tastes and his literary judgment. When he came to read ancient literature he developed a passion for Homer and the old classics; taking up the modern classics, his fancy was captivated by Shakespeare, Schiller, and Hoffman. He was able to appreciate the French classics of the seventeenth century in a most amazing way, particularly Racine and Corneille. Corneille beyond all others appeared to Dostoyevsky the ideal of perfection, and in one of his letters to his brother he defends Corneille against the latter's attacks. He writes, among other things:

"Have you read *The Cid*? Read it, pitiable man, read it and fall in the dust at the feet of Corneille!"

That Dostoyevsky was entirely free from the religious fanaticism of his time is shown by the following passage in a letter to his brother. Speaking of classic literature, which his brother was not able to appreciate, he wrote:

"Homer, that fabulous man who, perhaps, like Christ, was an incarnation of the divine come down on earth for our sakes, can only be compared with Christ, not with Goethe. Study him thoroughly, brother; seek to understand the Iliad, read it carefully (for you have not read it. Confess!). In the Iliad, Homer gave to the ancient world precepts regarding the organizing of spiritual and material life, with a power equal to that with which, later on, Christ brought his teachings to the modern world. Do you understand now what I mean?"

This passage is certainly remarkable, for it is an evidence of that same fine judgment and marvelous appreciation of universal culture — "universally Human" as he liked to call it,— which Dostoyevsky kept throughout his life.

His second novel, *The Double* was a failure. As usually happens in such cases, his more recently acquired friends turned against him incontinent, feeling that they had been mistaken in praising him as they had done. From this time on, Dostoyevsky's entire literary career was an impassioned struggle against criticism and what was called Russian public opinion, that is to say, the vilest cynicism one can possible imagine. His whole life was nothing but one continual battle, on the one hand against the poverty which gave him no respite, and on the other against the innumerable creditors whose cruel pursuit of him never ceased until towards the very end.

We must note, in passing, one of the essential traits of Dostoyevsky's character, namely his optimism. In spite of all the attacks directed against him during his life-time, in spite of the lack of understanding shown by the public with regard to his works, in spite of loneliness, poverty, sickness, and the thousand and one other evils to which he was subject, he cherished to the last a ray of hope which helped him to bear up

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under the injustices of life. Never did he lose courage, for he accepted whatsoever came as a salutary lesson full of opportunity for developing his consciousness; indeed, it is hard to imagine circumstances sufficient to have crushed him. Certain it is that Dostoyevsky speaks of himself when, in a later work, he puts the following words into the mouth of Dmitry Karamazov:

"I shall conquer all suffering, if I can but say — and repeat it to myself every instant — I am! When under a thousand afflictions, still I am! When shriveled by torture, still I am! Bound to the stake, I yet exist, I see the sun; and even if I do not see it, I know that it exists. *And to know that the sun exists, this is all of life.*"

At this time there occurred the chief event in Dostoyevsky's life. The young writer became involved, contrary to his inclinations, in a political intrigue against the government, and on April 23, 1849, he with other participants in the plot were arrested by order of the Tsar. After having spent eight months in the damp dungeons of the fortress at St. Petersburg he was condemned to the scaffold. At the time of the execution, just a few seconds before the fatal word was to be spoken, a white handkerchief was waved amidst the crowd, announcing that his death-penalty had been commuted by the Tsar to that of penal servitude in the distant confines of Siberia. It was as if the Beyond had refused to receive this man, who was later to write his name in letters of fire on the spiritual screen of the world. Dostoyevsky was deported to Siberia.

Those moments which he had passed in the certainty that death awaited him in 'five seconds' had an enormous effect, not only on all his future intellectual life, but on his whole spiritual consciousness as well. He had just succeeded in grasping something that only one could grasp who had experienced this feeling of the very presence of the death about to dart at him from the mouth of a gun. It was a rare, a unique experience, and it opened his eyes with regard to the burning question, the enigma that he already had put himself to solve: the riddle of life. The impression of that last moment, when the future of a whole existence in process of development was at stake, became engraved in characters of fire on the delicate tissues of his soul. He afterwards makes his 'Idiot' say:

"Think, for example, of torture: it is accompanied by wounds, sufferings, corporeal pain, which keep us from feeling the sufferings of the soul. Wounds alone torment us up to the last moment. However, it may be that the greatest pain does not lie in the wounds themselves, but in the absolute certainty that in an hour, then in ten minutes, then in half a minute, then in an instant, the soul will leave the body . . . and that this is sure; the chief thing is, that it is sure. That moment in which one lays one's head under the knife, when one hears the blade gliding above one's head — that quarter of a second is the most terrible of all. Who says that human nature is capable of enduring it without madness? Of what benefit is this monstrous injury, so useless, so superfluous? Perhaps there is to be found a man to whom has been read the death-sentence, who has gone through all these torments, only to be told, 'Go, you are pardoned.' *That man, perhaps, could recount to us his impressions. . . .*"

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One of the essential traits of Dostoyevsky's nature, one peculiar not only to him but to every writer who arises on the soil of Russia — of that Russia, rightly called "the sorrowful" -- is his submissiveness. Sometimes this feeling approaches so closely to the profoundest apathy that it seems difficult to distinguish any line of demarcation. Besides, both traits are essentially Slavic. It is with submissiveness that Dostoyevsky endured his four years of penal servitude at hard labor; he never complained; all complaint is forever absent from his inner consciousness. According to the statement of a friend of his, no ill-nature or bitterness over the sufferings he had gone through was ever evidenced by him. He never showed the least desire to play the role of a martyr. His *Diary of a Writer* proves this conclusively: not only does he avoid complaining therein of anyone, but he exerts himself to justify and embellish everything that surrounds him, all the circumstances of his environment, all the horrible and unbearable situations into which life has thrown him. He tries to find the ultimate cause of all these misfortunes, of all this infamy, and, laying aside the traditional fatalism of his race, he comes to the conclusion that his present existence, his physical as well as moral sufferings, all are nothing but the tangible effects of causes unknown to him. If he suffers, it is because he has merited suffering; hence his love of it, his appreciation of pain as an experience destined to elevate man and to purify him with its burning flame.

He endeavors to beautify his prison impressions; he sees in them a severe but salutary lesson, without which he would not have been able to arrive at a new manner of life. "I do not complain," he writes from Siberia to his brother. "It is my burden and I have merited it." However, we must not forget what this submission cost him. He wrote of it as follows:

"I am almost reduced to despair. It is hard to tell you how much I have suffered. These four years I consider as a period during which I have been buried alive in a tomb; it has been an indescribable, infinite agony, for each hour, each minute, has weighed like a stone upon my soul. . . . But of what use is it to relate all this? . . . One has at least to see it for oneself, though I do not say to experience for oneself."

Dostoyevsky was reduced to a state of the most abject penury. Everyone knows the story of the alms he received one day from a young girl whose father had died under forced labor. Dostoyevsky himself tells us of the sensations, at once strange and humiliating and yet awakening gratitude and pity. He kept that gift for a long time as a souvenir of his degradation, his sufferings, his extreme poverty.

It was thus that he brought to a close the first half of his life. A mysterious and implacable force had guided him slowly through the mazy labyrinth of a somber and painful youth. This guiding spirit had

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shown him the smile of triumph, as if to inflame his ambition, only to cast him down once more into an abyss more unfathomable, more terrible than any he had ever conceived of. Slipping little by little from poverty to extreme misery, from disillusionment to disappointment, he had felt the chill of death on the very threshold of the great Beyond, and, rejected by It with disdain, had finished his course in the galleys. Truly it seemed as if his part in life had already been played. But this same mysterious force which had guided him since his infancy and which seemed to mock ironically at all his hopes and aspirations -- this same force held in reserve for him a new life, a new path that seemed to arise from out the tomb and to lose itself in infinity.

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### II: FROM EXILE TO GLORY

“ . . . Dostoyevsky’s ideals will never be forgotten; from generation to generation we will hand them down as a precious inheritance from our great, beloved teacher. . . . His memory will never be extinguished in the hearts of the Russian youth, and, as we love him, we will also teach our children to honor and love the man for whom we now so bitterly and disconsolately mourn. . . . Dostoyevsky will always stand bright before us in our battle of life; *we shall always remember that it was he who taught us the possibility of preserving the purity of the soul undefiled in every position of life and in all circumstances. . . .*”

— From an open letter of the Russian students to the widow of Dostoyevsky

“ . . . Truly, I am essentially one with the peasants, for my tendencies spring from the depths of the national soul; *unknown to the present Russian people, I will be known to those of the future. . . .*” — *F. M. Dostoyevsky*

IF one wishes to know Dostoyevsky’s life as it really is: an essential factor in the production of his literary work, one must turn to the second half of it, which commences after his return from penal servitude. The first portion, although the more important from the point of view of outward experience and moral discipline, was but a prelude when seen from the viewpoint of his intellectual activity. Eight terrible years had elapsed, years of indescribable suffering, of cruel disillusionment and deception; they had left their ineffaceable imprint on the consciousness of the man; they were burnt into his soul in letters of blood, like a karmic brand; they had been the instrument of that mysterious force which governed his whole life and which caused him to pass through trials such as none other could have endured. There had been in those trials what men call a ‘fatal destiny’ — which indeed is nothing but the “visible effect of hidden causes,” as Dostoyevsky himself says. He loved to repeat in after years that, just as no man who has never felt physical pain can form any clear idea of it, however hard he may try, so, too, no one who has

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never experienced misery and moral degradation can understand them in all their horror nor realize the tuitional power which they possess.

After having served as a private soldier, at Semipalatinsk in Turkestan, Dostoyevsky was raised to the rank of non-commissioned officer, thanks to the efforts of an old school-friend, General Todleben, and was finally recalled from exile in 1859 by order of Alexander II. He was thirty-nine years of age when he returned from this "sinister burying," where he had been "nailed living into the tomb." His nervous system was wrecked, his health broken, but his vital power, the lever by means of which he was to move the inert masses of a whole world, seemed to increase from day to day, from hour to hour, from moment to moment. A complete change had taken place in the dark depths of his inner nature; a great light had burst forth, and it seemed as though this light were seeking to devour even his frail body. During the four years of his imprisonment, Dostoyevsky had had only one book with him, the New Testament, which he had read over and over again. Now all the rebellion of his spirit seemed to have left him. Not only had he come to realize the small amount of knowledge with which he had started out to reform the world, but he had suddenly gained meekness and humility, submission to the laws governing his life, and obedience to the power that was shaping it. He became conscious of the eternal justice which rules the world and which had caused him to pass through the purifying flame of suffering in order that he might find therein the gigantic power that was to mark his future work. He even felt grateful to the Tsar Nicholas for the experience he had gone through, and declared that merely the indescribable horror he felt at approaching darkness would under ordinary conditions have robbed him of his senses, had not his actual sufferings killed out his fear by bringing him face to face with the shadows of life.

What a difference between Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy! What an abyss separates the two men! — Tolstoy, with his work for the people, making of his labors a kind of sport or pastime, for the most part very pleasant indeed; and Dostoyevsky, to whom physical exertion was never anything but an ordeal fraught with terrible torments, fatigue, and suffering. Ah yes! Dostoyevsky had no need to theorize on the abrogation of private property rights and on the existing conditions of cultivated society. He himself was made an outcast and reduced to penury.

One great advantage which he derived from his prolonged seclusion was an intimate knowledge of the life of the Russian people, of that hidden life which is unknown to the majority of those who have never contacted it, touched it with the finger, so to speak. He had been enabled to realize what an immeasurable gulf yawned at that time between those inert and obscure masses of the people, on the one hand, and the privileged élite.



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He had come to see and understand that in all these pariahs, these outcasts from the ranks of omnipotent society, there exists in spite of everything a basic something that is good, that counts; he had seen the human flame — which is the divine flame — shine forth even among the most depraved and most hideous of his fellows. The moral revolution that can be brought about in the soul of a criminal condemned to suffering and privation had been revealed to him; he had even dreamed of a spiritual change to arise from the deepest abysses of human nature, in the spirit of that eternal Evangel which resides forever in the ultimate essence of man, however degraded he may be.

Thus it was that Dostoyevsky returned to the ranks of cruel society, as the author, the philosopher, the mouth-piece of the outcast. It is precisely his life on the lowest strata of humanity that was to suggest to him the highest notes of his literary music; it is this that gave him the power to scrutinize so unrestrainedly and impartially — one would almost say at times, so cynically — the hearts of men, their instincts, their aspirations, and their propensities.

But if Dostoyevsky was a changed man spiritually, he was none the less so in his state of health, which had undergone a radical change for the worse. Whenever we attempt to analyse the essential and dominant traits of his psychology, to sound the depths of his character in order to find the general lines of its inner structure and the primitive foundations forming the screen whereon were played the scenes, some of them super-human, of his life — when we try to do this, we find it indispensable and inevitable to turn our attention to the frightful malady which devoured and burned up his whole being and which took on an increased activity after his sojourn in Siberia; that is to say, his epilepsy. Without it we cannot grasp the inner life of this writer; without it we cannot understand the keenness of the singular visions that haunted him; without it we cannot comprehend his work, for, as Dostoyevsky himself declared, it was this which racked his nerves and heightened their sensitiveness beyond all limits, and which consumed his body as though some hidden force were at work in him.

This diseased sensitiveness, so incredibly sharpened and highly strung in Dostoyevsky, far from being the cause of his malady, as is the generally and thoughtlessly accepted belief, was on the contrary the mere effect of an internal and constant work of destruction. Present since his early years, epilepsy began to manifest itself in a disquieting fashion during his life in Siberia. In a letter to the emperor Alexander II “the former political offender” (for it was thus he signed the missive) wrote:

“My disease is becoming more and more violent. Each attack makes me lose memory,

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imagination, bodily and spiritual strength. The outcome of my malady is either exhaustion, death, or insanity."

It is known that there were truly moments in his life when his sickness threatened him with the loss of all his mental faculties. The fits occurred once a month with terrifying regularity. Occasionally — not very often it is true — they came more frequently, two in a week. (D. Mereshkovsky)

Strakhoff tells the following:

"It happened one day that I was a witness of an attack, of lesser violence, with which Dostoyevsky was seized. It was in 1863, the very evening before Easter Sunday. Quite late — at eleven o'clock at night — he came to my house and a lively conversation took place between us. I cannot recall the subject, but I know that we were discussing some very important general question. Dostoyevsky was especially excited; he walked up and down the room, while I remained seated at the table. He was giving voice to elevated and comforting ideas, and, I having expressed my approval of his opinion by some kind of remark, he turned towards me an inspired visage glowing with all the inspiration of genius. Suddenly he stopped a moment, as if seeking for a word; he was just opening his mouth to speak. I was watching him with close attention, feeling that he was going to say something extraordinary, that I was about to hear a revelation. But there issued from his mouth a strange sound, prolonged and wild, and he fell unconscious to the floor, in the middle of the room."

In the immortal work to which the author gave the name of *The Idiot*, Dostoyevsky himself describes an attack of his malady:

"At that instant, the face and especially the expression of the eyes become horribly changed. Convulsions and shiverings contract the entire body and all the features of the visage. A shriek, terrible and unimaginable, such as cannot be compared to anything else, escapes from the breast; it seems as if this cry had lost all human traces, and it is impossible, or at least very difficult, for the witness to imagine and to admit that it is a man who is bellowing thus. *It even appears as though there were another being in this man and that it is this other being that shrieks.* At least this is how many people have translated their impression; upon many persons, also, the sight of a man affected with a fit of epilepsy produces an inexpressible, indescribable terror, which carries with it something mystical as well."

The ancients called epilepsy the 'sacred malady.' Oriental peoples saw in it a mystical something, and this idea persists to this day among the Russian peasantry and among many of the sects of Siberia. This something mystical is united, from their viewpoint, with the gift of prophecy, divine or 'diabolic' clairvoyance. We find the malady intimately linked with religious feeling in the innumerable sects which encumber the soil of Russia,— a soil fertile in religious insanity, fits of bigotry, and prophetic visions. Strakhoff's story is very remarkable where he notes this relationship existing between the elevated, comforting, and religious 'something' — the 'revelation' that Dostoyevsky sought in vain to express in words — and the attack that immediately followed.

"Epilepsy," writes D. Mereshkovsky, "had a striking effect on the life of Dostoyevsky, both physically and spiritually: it affected his artistic creation and his philosophic thought. He speaks of it in his works with a restrained emotion, with a mystic fear, so to speak." The

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most important and at the same time the most opposite in character of the heroes of his books — the monstrous Smierdiakov, the 'holy' Prince Mishkin, the nihilist Kirilov, prophet of the *God-Man*: all these characters, as well as many others, are epileptics. "For Dostoyevsky the epileptic attacks were like terrible sinking spells, like an inrush of light, like a window suddenly opened through which he would see the 'light' of the beyond."

Writes Dostoyevsky:

"During several instants I experience a feeling of happiness which does not exist in my ordinary state and of which one can form no idea. I feel a complete harmony in myself and in the entire world, and this feeling is so sweet and so strong that, for a few seconds of such felicity one would gladly give ten years, nay, even the whole, of his life! . . ."

"Then of a sudden something is rent in front of me; an extraordinary *interior light* illumines my soul. . . ."

But after the attack there would come measureless pain, a terrible anguish, which arose from a feeling of being a criminal weighed down by some unknown mistake, some awful crime. (D. M.)

Such were the conditions under which Dostoyevsky wrote his eternally enduring works. From first to last they are psychological, pathological, and religious studies; from beginning to end they form singularly penetrating analyses of epileptic, mentally deranged, and criminal types. They constitute an incursion into the mysterious realms of morbid visions, of undefined feelings, and unimaginable evil-doing. And all this is perfectly Slavic, perfectly Russian, perfectly indigenous to the Russian soil.

From 1849 to 1859, the period of his captivity, Dostoyevsky was entirely dead to literature. The first book that he wrote on his return from Siberia was *The Outraged and the Oppressed*, a work embodying the same essential traits as his first, *Poor Folk*. In Siberia he had married a widow, Mme. Issayev, but his family life was very unfortunate. This situation, which blighted all hopes of happiness for Dostoyevsky, served as the plot of the new book, which he soon published.

At once he threw himself into journalism, which all his life had fascinated him and in which he spared neither time nor energy. He contributed articles and some stories to the newspapers published by his brother Michael, first 'The Times' and shortly afterwards 'The Epoch.' His topic was love and admiration for that Russia which, as he says, "cannot be comprehended by the reason but only by faith."

In 1862 a very strong impression was produced on the public by the publication of the *Recollections of the House of the Dead*. Everything that Dostoyevsky had seen, felt, suffered, and lived through in the houses of correction in Siberia, among the dregs of the people, the destitute, the ignorant, and the criminal — all this he brings before us in these *Recol-*

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lections; they form, both from the point of view of description and from that of psychology, one of his masterpieces. He causes us to witness his experiences, his feelings, the circumstances of his environment as shown in the life of a criminal, whose type is sufficiently disguised and veiled not to arouse the vigilance of contemporary censorship.

In 1865 he lost his first wife and his brother Alexis. Michael's paper suffered bankruptcy and Dostoyevsky left Russia to escape his creditors. His journey across Germany, France, and on through Italy seems to have left only a fugitive impression on his mind. The fact is that he lived very little in exterior scenes; his life, his real life, went on in the depths of his consciousness, in the privacy of his inner world, in that region from which now burst forth the gigantic work, a product of a whole existence of pain and suffering: *Crime and Punishment*. For one to analyse this masterpiece in a few lines is absolutely impossible; it would call for a special and prolonged study. *Crime and Punishment* is the most important work of Dostoyevsky. It is, perhaps,—and the probability amounts almost to a certainty—the profoundest study in criminology, the most impartial and most meticulous analysis of human character, that the entire world produced during the last century. The book created an enormous impression, both in Russia and abroad, and placed its author in the rank of the foremost psychologists, criminologists, and philosophers of his time.

His whole sojourn in foreign parts was nothing but a continual bore to him. The epileptic seizures occurred more and more frequently. Finally he had to return to Russia to obtain new subsidies from his editors. He brought back only one vivid impression from his travels, and that was of an execution he had witnessed at Lyons. This scene, no doubt, had recalled to him the critical moment in his own life, when he had experienced the greatest horror he had ever known, the memory of which continually haunts his writings: that sinister morning on the scaffold.

It was in 1870 that Dostoyevsky reappeared in Russia. Pursued by his creditors, sometimes poor and sometimes better off, sometimes head over heels in debt and depending on his publishers, who cheated him, carrying ever with him the memory of his past miseries, subject to frequent attacks of his malady—in spite of all this, he again set himself to work. From the period between 1866 and 1875 come his sublime creations: *The Possessed*, *The Eternal Husband*, *The Idiot*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, which reflect the crowning tragedy of his life and which attempt to reconcile it with whatever is beautiful and true in human existence, even in the most hideous of lives.

The years between 1870 and 1881 formed the most peaceable time in Dostoyevsky's life. His second marriage, with a Swedish lady, his first wife having died in 1867, helped to bring a little order into his private

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affairs. For a time he was the editor of 'The Russian World.' His literary talent, now developed to the full and shining in its apogee, earned for him an enormous popularity among contemporaneous society and eclipsed the glory of all other Russian writers of that time. His reputation as a psychologist and a thinker conquered not only all Russia but, even during his lifetime, penetrated beyond the frontiers and spread abroad. In 1880, at the inauguration of the monument to Pushkin in Moscow — a day commemorative of all the national literary glory — Turgenieff was applauded at the end of his address, but Dostoyevsky evoked an enthusiastic rapture, an exalted ovation, from the people and was carried off on their shoulders. He had become the national author *par excellence*, preaching a clear-sighted patriotism that was far above the ordinary blind and stupid fanaticism. It was he who attacked, with equal justice, the intellectual class of his country, going as it pleased and forgetful of its sacred duties, and the civilization of western Europe which, according to his words, was no better than another Babel or Sodom.

On February 9, 1881, weakened by a life of misery and privation, consumed by this incurable disease which gradually mastered him, pursued by this implacable force which left him but a few short years of repose and fleeting happiness, Dostoyevsky 'died.'

Died? What did this strange term 'death' mean to him? He had already felt death so many times; he had seen it, lived with it, since infancy, during the furious seizures of his malady; he had stood face to face with it on the heights of the gallows; he had experienced it in its entirety, he who for ten long years had been buried in the ice-plains of Siberia. Indeed, it seems as if this thing death, this passing to another world, did not exist for him, who died continuously during all the years of his life. His sinking spells, the inrush of the light, the attacks of epilepsy — all these had refined the tissue of his animal being and rendered it thin and transparent, so that the inner light might shine through. Could death exist, then, for one who had thus known it within his own self? No! For Dostoyevsky there was no death, since he believed that the light of life and that of death are but flashes from the same fire burning deep within the human soul. For him there was no death; for he had found the secret of existence and, throwing aside the idea of an eternal struggle between life and death, believed only in their eternal unity.

## ALL-ROUND EDUCATION

H. TRAVERS, M. A.



**A** GREAT musician, when asked what influences had helped him most in the development of his powers, replied that he laid most stress on the effect of his general studies, in philosophy, history, science, mathematics, Greek, Latin, and modern languages.

Education is too often over-specialized. By directing our energies too much toward a given point, we narrow our field of view; and the important matter is that, not only do we lose the advantage of the subjects we have not studied, but even our special study is pursued at a disadvantage by being too concentrated and unilluminated by sidelights.

Hence the importance of a general all-round education, whatever may be our proposed calling. An accountant who has had a classical education, not only finds his mind enriched and the sphere of his conscious life enlarged, but there is little doubt that he is a better accountant, because he is capable of seeing everything, even figures, from more points of view.

When we consider how very much of our life is made up of mental occupations and pleasures, we can understand how much richer must be the life of a person of wide culture, than that of one whose interests and powers have been confined to a narrow sphere. Contrast the illiterate man with the man who can read, and some idea will thus be obtained of the difference in mental horizon between an imperfectly educated and a generously educated person.

Education in its broad sense must not be confounded with vocational training. The former is the substructure upon which the latter may be erected. Education teaches us to think and stores our mind with matter to reflect upon. Such studies as history and the classics take us out of the parochial attitude of mind, and thus enable us to view every question from the standpoint of the whole world and the whole range of recorded time, instead of from that of our own local ignorance and prejudices.

The problem of education is made more difficult in our day by the magnitude of the area over which it has to be diffused. A far larger population, and a far greater proportion of it, are being educated. In the United States the problem of education, like that of government, has to be conducted on a far vaster scale — a continental scale — than ever before; and the difficulties are correspondingly great.

It is fitting that, in this magazine, something should be said from the Theosophical point of view. Theosophy goes even deeper than a general

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education; for there is a substratum to that, and Theosophy lays it. Behind attainments lies character. If a general education of the mind gives control over the intellectual faculties, so does a general education of the moral faculties – of the whole nature, rather – give mastery all around. In a word, self-control, self-possession, is the key to success. It is want of due control over wayward impulses and passions that mars the success of our efforts more than does anything else. Such a defect in the character may neutralize any amount of intellectual ability.

This defect must be cured in its first beginnings, and self-control learnt in early years. For as soon as a child is able to act at all, the struggle between impulse and duty begins. It is sometimes asked whether will precedes intellect, or intellect precedes will. Both should be cultivated together. The child's understanding can be appealed to as soon as he has any understanding. The evil and harmful character of selfish impulses and passions can be pointed out, and the child's own experience called in as proof of this fact. The reality of the higher nature can be dwelt upon; and here again experience will bear out the teaching. It is thus that are laid the foundations of right action and self-mastery; and thus is acquired control over the whole nature, moral, mental, and physical. Adaptability and all-around usefulness are the result; so that any special vocational instruction is easily acquired when needed.

By looking too closely at a thing, we miss viewing it as a whole; and by aiming too directly at an object, we narrow to a point the area of our achievement. The plans which our calculating mind forms are not often the best. Another side of education, often overlooked, is shown by the fact that people have hobbies, which consist in pursuits having no utilitarian object and carried out with a pleasurable motive. This serves to indicate that our life is greatly directed by a faculty larger than the calculating reason, and which gathers honey from a variety of sources for its enrichment. We are here to express what is in us and to gain experiences; and to contract the area of our life by trying to confine it to set purposes and definite objects is conducive neither to enjoyment nor to utility.



“BROTHERHOOD is a fact in Nature. It is inherent in all mankind. It is based on the essential divinity and immortality of the human soul, which has been concealed and even killed by the materialism of the past decades. The purpose of evolution is to liberate the divine powers latent in man. This can be accomplished by means of self-discipline and true universal brotherly love of mankind.”— *Katherine Tingley*

## SOWING AND REAPING

RALF LANESDALE

**I**T'S all very well to say that effects follow causes as the furrow follows the plow. That sounds reasonable enough; but if the plow is dragged along a cement paved road, there won't be any furrow. So what becomes of your argument about cause and effect?"

-- It was an argument about fatalism, predestination, and things like that, which I was listening to. I had been quite captivated by the simile of the furrow and the plow, and waited with some curiosity for the reply, which was somewhat in this fashion.

"If the road is too hard for the plow the instrument ceases to be a plow in the true sense, though it may bear that name, and may still act as a plow under suitable conditions: and the same thing is true of causes and effects. If you strike a match in a room full of inflammable gas it may cause an explosion, if you strike the match rightly; but not otherwise. The result of dragging a plow over a pavement will not be to make a furrow in the hard road, but it will grind away the metal of the plow. The cause produces its effect, subject to conditions; and the effect may be quite different to what you expect; but it is an effect all the same."

"Well then," put in a listener, "there is no certainty about anything: if results cannot be counted on, where is justice? You say that a man reaps what he sows. How can that be? Maybe what he sows will never come up at all, and there will be nothing for him to reap: or he may be busy on another job, and someone else will reap what he sowed. What justice is there in that?"

The speaker sat back well satisfied with himself; but his opponent only smiled, as he suggested that if the crop did not come up the sower would reap disappointment, which would be all the harvest possible under the circumstances.

"You seem to think that causes can stand apart and act without conditions. How can that be, in a world full of intelligent beings of all sorts, all creating new causes all the time, and nature with her powers at work too? Why a single cause may be diverted entirely from its intended effect, and yet it has as much effect as circumstances allow. And it is only so far as circumstances allow that it is a cause at all. We are all so tied up one with another, that we cannot act independently, no matter how hard we may try; nor can we get the results we wish for, without being helped and hindered by the influence of others. So that we all share in the effects of one another's acts, whether we want to or not. No man



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can act independently, without influencing others, and being affected by them. Brotherhood is a fact in nature; and we may as well recognise it."

"That is all true enough, no doubt," said the second speaker, "but you seem to say this law of cause and effect is a law of justice, bringing to every man his fair share of good fortune or misfortune, of happiness and misery, and I don't see how that can be if he is not there to reap what he sowed, as you say."

The first speaker nodded his head as if he admitted the difficulty, and said thoughtfully: "Of course an illustration is only of value if it is correctly drawn and correctly applied. I think the sowing and reaping is a good illustration of the action of the laws of life. But you must remember, when the seed is a moral cause, the field is the mind and heart of the sower.

"I mean in this way. A man does an injury to others. You may say the result of his act will be reaped by those injured. Wait a bit. Who is the first person affected by that evil deed? Is it not the man who prepares it in his own heart and mind? Does he not sow seeds of evil there? Has he not got the effect of the deed before it has reached those who are to be later affected by it? Will he not carry that seed in his heart, till the time comes when it shall bring him to trouble, or perhaps ruin his career utterly? And no one can alter that. The injury to others may miscarry, or may prove beneficial to them. He has got his share before the deed was done; and the failure of his intent will not change the nature of the seed he has sown in his own character; and it will work out its effect there even if he seem to escape punishment. The real punishment is internal and is always self-inflicted; thus it can truly be said that we reap as we sow."

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T. HENRY, M. A.

**I**T has long been known that the extremely small wave-length of light enables the physicist to measure extremely small dimensions, such as the thickness of a soap-bubble skin or the distance between two glass plates pressed into what is normally called close contact. But now we have the X-rays, whose wave-length is greatly smaller than that of ordinary light; and by this means we can measure still smaller dimensions. This principle has been applied to the study of the molecular structure of crystals, which may be defined as solid matter in its most regularly organized form. Thus we are enabled

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to be present at a scrutiny of the architecture of the solid universe, in its minute details. We thought for long in terms of the atom, and of the molecule or group of atoms. Later, the atom was severed into those smaller units known as electrons. Now we are introduced to a unit *larger* than the molecule, and called the 'crystal-cell,' which contains a number of molecules, and is the structural unit, or building-stone, of the crystal. The crystal is made up of an indefinite number of such cells. The number of different types of crystal structure has been found to be 230.

The X-rays can also enable us to state the exact distances and relative positions of the atoms and molecules in a crystal; so that the old-fashioned 'structural formula,' which was a symbol, has now become a drawing or plan of actual conditions.

We realize better now that the mineral kingdom is organized; it has 'cells.' We see that 'God geometrizes,' as the ancient Greeks said. Some people seem to think that these discoveries are bringing us nearer to a solution of the mystery of things; others will think that the mystery deepens with each new revelation. It is comforting to see that men of science are now proclaiming that sensation, knowledge, emotion, will, are *reality*; atoms, molecules, electrons — abstractions. Such is what Theosophy has ever taught. Says one writer:

"To attempt to build up our conception of the universe solely from these abstractions, while neglecting the immediate reality of ourselves, is amazingly unscientific; yet it is the method of every materialist. Somehow the synthesis will eventually emerge. But it is most likely to come by our finding that inorganic matter has properties akin to consciousness, and it cannot come by trying to explain away consciousness, for conscious experience is the prime reality."— *Manchester Guardian*, reviewing Professor MacDougall.

How often in these pages have we urged the same thing!

Science is so occupied with externals that it has starved us of experience of the intimate realities of life. A reaction is being provoked. The greater the complication, the stronger the need for simplicity. We console ourselves for the barrenness of our life by hopes of a better life somewhere or somewhen else; but we fail to realize how much there is that we have missed in this life. Depths of feeling and knowledge that come only in silence and simplicity are missed by people who live in externals. The very complexity of the structure we have reared by science renders it all the more needful that we should attend to the foundations.



"EACH life is the outcome of a former life or lives, and every man in his rebirths will have to account for every thought and receive measure for the measure given by him before."— *William Q. Judge*

## SOUL, SIN, SELFISHNESS

REV. S. J. NEILL

“Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”



THE general sense of these words is evident to all; but when we attempt to analyse them we meet difficulties. Men understand well enough, however they may fail to realize it in action, that selfishness makes one an object of dislike. The selfish man is never welcome anywhere; and if he be really selfish at heart he must cunningly assume the appearance of unselfishness in order to put people off their guard, and make them think he is unselfish. Why is this? It is because there is in all men, even in the most undeveloped, an innate feeling, not explainable in words perhaps, that selfishness is something which is at war with humanity. It is like an acid which, when poured into the milk of human kindness, tends to sour the whole. The selfish man, in proportion to his selfishness, is an enemy to all; and not only so, in a higher sense he is an enemy to himself. “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it.” In that sense the words are easily understood; and for the ordinary reader the explanation is correct and sufficient.

Selfishness is sin, whatever extension or particular explanation we may adopt of this word ‘sin.’ One may say that sin is a ‘missing of the mark,’ a coming short of duty; and in this sense the word is sometimes used in the New Testament. And they may regard sin as a moral poison that brings death to the whole system unless it be cast out. And still another may regard sin as a *conscious* violation of the Divine Law by the ‘human being.’ In either sense selfishness, and not ignorance only, is at the root of sin.

Having obtained this general view of the passage quoted we may now look at the words more closely. The circumstances under which the words were uttered were these. Jesus had been telling his disciples how he must suffer at the hands of the chief priests and scribes; whereupon Peter reprovved him and said, “Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.” Then Jesus uttered the memorable words to Peter: “Get thee behind me Satan; for thou savourest not of the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.” Now this strong condemnation sets in clear light the Master’s opinion of Peter. It gives us, also, a clue to what follows. The spirit of Peter was worldly and selfish. It said, ‘Take the easy way, save yourself rather than run the risk of suffering for the sake of principle, truth, or duty.’ This calls forth from the Master

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the teaching we all know, as to the necessity on the part of every true disciple for bearing the cross of suffering. "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it. . . . For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his own soul?"

This passage is given in substantially the same words by all the Evangelists, but Matthew and Mark are the only ones that mention the case of Peter. We see that the words of the Master were called forth by the selfishness and the worldly spirit of Peter. Jesus and Peter stand here in strong contrast as personified altruism and personified selfishness. Jesus represents the higher principle in man, the spirit of love and self-sacrifice: Peter represents the lower self, the selfish spirit in man. It requires but little self-examination to enable men to realize that Christ and Peter are imaged in every human being. We are all conscious that we have a higher nature and a lower nature, and that these are opposed to each other. The lower nature may be designated by the word 'selfishness'; the higher nature manifests kindness, gentleness, unselfishness, self-sacrifice. In most people the two natures are very much mixed, each one is not altogether god or devil, saint or sinner. And if the kingdom of heaven is within us, the other kingdom is often very much in evidence too.

What is this which if we try to save it we lose? The English word 'life' is here given for the same word in the Greek which is afterwards rendered 'soul.' When we read, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul," we have the same word which is rendered 'life' in the clause, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it."

There has been much ambiguity in the use of the terms *mind*, *soul*, *spirit*. H. P. Blavatsky speaking of this matter says:

"The lack of any mutual agreement between writers in the use of this word (spirit) has resulted in dire confusion. It is commonly made synonymous with 'soul,' and the lexicographers countenance the usage. In Theosophical teachings the term 'Spirit' is applied solely to that which *belongs directly to universal Consciousness*, and which is its homogeneous and unadulterated emanation. Thus the higher mind in man or his ego (Manas), is, when linked indissolubly with Buddhi, a spirit; while the term 'soul,' human, or even animal (the lower Manas acting in animals as instinct), is applied only to *Kâma-Manas*, and qualified as the *living* soul. This is the *Nephesh* of the Hebrew, the breath of life."

And in another place she says: "the Nephesh of the Hebrews was the equivalent of the *psuche* of the Greeks."

In the New Testament the distinction between the higher and lower mind is clearly marked. The holy Spirit is called *pneuma* not *psuche*, and it is clearly evident that when Christ spoke of "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it," he meant the lower mind.

The lower mind, or lower Manas, when it rules in man, manifests

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selfishness; and not only is it blind to what is really best for it. It is actuated by desire, and passion, and while it seeks its own, in this lower, selfish sense, it is blind to the higher good.

Now, it is this rule of the lower self which we see so common in the world today. It begins very early in life, and it grows with the growth of the child. The love of pleasure, the desire to have one's own way, the thinking of self rather than of the good or welfare of others: these are some of the qualities of the lower self, the selfish self, which have become marked features of our present civilization.

The selfishness of men consists not so much in a struggle for what is really needed, as in an insane strife for gratification pure and simple. We have departed from a natural and simple life, and have made life to ourselves and to others a thousand times more difficult than it need be by an enormous increase of our *wants*, our longings for gratification in some form or another. The struggle to pile up riches, no matter who suffers; the struggle to become famous, no matter who may be trodden down in the mire; the struggle for gaining power, no matter how many lives of our fellow-men may be crushed — these are some of the forms by which the selfish nature, the lower self in man, shows itself, and fills the world with woe. The selfish nature is at war with itself. Selfish men produce a selfish nation; and strife and war are the natural result.

The world has chosen the course of strife and suffering rather than the way of peace. The gratification of the desires and passions; the worship of selfishness rather than self-sacrifice; this is the root from which the bitter fruit of the world's pain and misery has sprung. The real life, the true life, is lost sight of in the mad rush for selfish pleasure.

The world is wasting its energies, wasting its life, in the pursuit of things that *do not satisfy*. In the misery which is so common, the reckless murders and suicides, we may see the harvest of selfishness. Men have chosen the wrong road, for selfishness leads to pain and death. And, it is to be feared, we may see the loss of the soul not only among those that are notably evil, but also among the great mass of people who have chosen the ways of worldly gratification rather than the gentle path of altruism, self-sacrifice, living to benefit others.

No doubt false teachings of all kinds have had much to answer for in the prevalent condition of selfishness which exists in the world. Men have followed the leading of the lower self only too readily. Heaven has been too often held forth as a bribe; and the scheme of salvation has been too often based on an appeal to human selfishness, though there has been mention of Divine Love, and of sacrifice on the part of another. It speaks much for the inherent goodness of human nature that there is so much honesty and so much unselfishness in the world, when one considers

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some of the teachings that have been given in the name of religion.

It is at this point that we see the contrast between the Theosophical teaching, and the worldly spirit. There is in the latter only too much in evidence the spirit of Peter, which Jesus so severely condemned when he said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Theosophy shows man that his real nature, his true Higher Self, is divine, and, therefore, seeks those things which are godlike. The true nature in man is unselfish; it is like that charity or love about which Paul writes so eloquently: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own," etc. Jesus and the teaching of Theosophy are at one on this point, that in seeking for the lower self we lose that Higher Self. We miss the real purpose, aim, or goal of life, which is the raising of the lower nature so that it may become one with the higher nature. This cannot be done if we remain selfish. Unselfishness, altruism, living to benefit mankind, these are the signs of real life and growth.

It is one of the teachings of Theosophy that devotion to the interests of another is the first test of discipleship. Devotion to the interests of another! How strange, yet how beautiful, that sounds amid the babel of selfish cries in the world, where self, self, self, is heard everywhere! Yet this life of altruism, this devotion to the interests of others, is the only true life; the only lasting good. It is the teaching of the Christian apostle that if we sow to the flesh we shall of the flesh reap corruption, but if we sow to the spirit we shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. The two paths are before every man, the path of selfishness that leads downward, and the path of unselfishness, that purifies and uplifts the whole nature. Whosoever would follow the leading of the lower selfish nature in him, loses that self; loses his soul or *psuche*, though not immediately.

Theosophy explains how it is necessary for the lower self in man to be inspired and guided by the Higher Self in him in order that the lower self (or *psuche*) may be lifted up and made one with the *pneuma*, or spirit, or higher Manas. This is the great, the real atonement. This is the 'saving of the soul.' This is what the old alchemists sometimes meant by the changing of lead into gold. And surely there is no greater wonder or miracle in all creation than the changing of a selfish man into a purely unselfish man. There are degrees in evil, of course, but the nature of evil consists, not in simply making a mistake, or coming short of the mark, or ideal; but in doing what is wrong, *knowing* it to be wrong, and by a deliberate choice of evil for the love of it rather than good. Even our ordinary laws recognise something of this in the way a wrong-doer is treated. Malice aforethought is punished differently from a thing done

## SOUL, SIN, SELFISHNESS

by accident, or in a fit of sudden passion, or during temporary insanity.

The evil of sin lies chiefly *in the will*. And the 'will' is a strange power which we have. It is *sui generis*. We can determine, we can will by the pure and simple action of the self to do it, and without anything as a motive or impulse. Very often, of course, there is an impulse or desire leading the will to do a certain thing, or to adopt a given course, but in that case the will is not *free* in the highest sense, for what is under any impulse, or external influence, is not absolutely independent or free.

But the *higher will* is something as near to creative power as we can well think of. Hence we see what a fearful thing it is to will what is bad *knowing* it to be bad. Knowledge does much; enlightenment will open men's minds to avoid many pitfalls, but knowledge alone is not sufficient. We must *will* to adopt that line of action which knowledge shows us to be right. We must will to do right: we must will to overcome. We must will to lift up, and bless. If the lower nature rules, then it acts selfishly, and the character of the nature is selfish — to save one's self. And selfish people make a selfish world, resulting in strife, wars, and death.

There are but two directions possible in the moral world — a selfish course which leads towards death, and an unselfish course which leads to more abundant life. The unselfish heart is like the sun which is ever radiating life and light upon all. The selfish man's life turns inward upon himself, and that leads toward death. We grow by giving, by radiating forth blessing as the sun does light and warmth. Yet, we are not to act thus because growth, strength, and blessing will in the end be ours — we shall be living but a higher form of selfishness if we do. The true spirit is like that which Jesus speaks of when he says we are to be like our "Father in Heaven" who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

It is, of course, very difficult for us to act without fixing the mind upon results, but, as a teacher has said: "It must be the Eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire for growth. For in the one case you develop in the luxuriance of purity; in the other you harden by the forcible passion for personal stature."

The more clearly we see the nature of the True, the Supreme Life, the more clearly do we see and know how the selfish nature is opposed to the One Life, and, therefore, how it must needs be that, "whosoever will save his life shall lose it," for he is turning in upon himself, which leads to death, and not going forth from himself, as the universal Sun, radiating life, joy, 'blessing.'

The ordinary man who seeks to save his soul that he may go to heaven, or the man who seeks to gain psychic powers for himself, are very much on the same plane, and both are on the wrong road. We should set our

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

faces in the opposite direction. We must strive, it is true, we must fight; we must run like the athlete who puts forth all his strength, but we must center our thoughts all the while on the *good we may bring to others*, and not on our winning the battle or gaining the goal for *self*.

This is not morality in the ordinary use of the word, but something as much higher than mere morals as heaven is higher than the earth. We can conceive that a world of materialists might evolve a code of morals based on not interfering with the happiness of the individual; but the true ethics, the truly religious spirit, can spring only from the realization of the eternal, and that we are children of the Highest, each a spark of the "Spiritual Sun of the Universe."

It is only in the light of this truth that we can hope to see our way to that godlike spirit in which we can bless our enemies, and do good to them that hate us. In this spirit we can overcome evil with good. We can, sun-like, radiate life and blessing, and have no fear as to the results, for we shall have consciously entered into union with the 'Life Indeed.' We shall have lost the selfish self, the lower self, or *psuche*, but found it again, transformed in light and sunshine; at one with the unselfish Self, and raised to life undying.

And though that state, in its perfection and fulness, is not possible for us as yet, still it can be ours to some extent even here and now. For every time we forget self, and think kindly of others, and do good to others, not thinking of any reward, or result, we are giving evidence that the kingdom of heaven is within us; and that, though dwelling for a time in this material prison of the flesh, we belong to another order of things which knows no vicissitude and fears no decay. We can make manifest to others and to ourselves, every day, our essential divinity, by living and speaking, and acting unselfishly. We can lose the lower self: we can lay it down on the altar of perfect devotion, and, purified, as by fire, we shall then find it transformed and glorified in life eternal.



"NOWHERE in the social life of today is the need for reform more manifest than in the drama. In too many directions it has been made to serve the sensationalism and sensualism of the day and to stimulate the vicious thought that it might be so powerful to suppress. . . . We are in sight of the day which will once more restore the drama to its rightful position as one of the great redemptive forces of the age."—*Katherine Tingley*



## THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

RONALD MELVILLE



WHEN a man is born he does not enter into full possession of his body right away, nor can he use it until he has learned its uses. The right use of his body cannot be understood by him without instruction and experience, which is called education. The subject of education is not only the right use of the body, but also of the mind which should control the body: and this subject is so wide in its scope that a man generally dies with his education so far from perfect that it may seem to be hardly begun in earnest when it is cut short by death.

But then the question must arise. "Is this kind of education in reality cut short by death?" So far as the study of the body is concerned it seems certain that it is; but when it comes to the education of the mind we are not able to be so sure, for want of the particular kind of education in the use of the mind that would enable us to keep control of it when passing out of the physical body.

Now it is evident that all the education usually acquired in our schools and colleges is of an intellectual character, and very limited withal. The kind of training that would enable a man to have complete control of mind and body is certainly still out of reach of students in most modern educational establishments; so that it must happen generally that education stops short with its real purpose not only incomplete but almost unbegun. The real object of true education must be self-knowledge; and this great branch of learning is in too many cases left entirely to chance or to the fortune of experience.

Life is the great teacher, no doubt; but only so when the disciple of life has entered the school of life as a disciple, which few men do. Some look upon the school of life as a playground merely, and some consider that its discipline is for the use of other people, while the majority believe its training is intended for the fitting of men to take advantage of their opportunities to get the better of their fellows in every undertaking: that is to say it is looked on as a school of robbery and tyranny, in which the students are taught to value all those possessions that bring disappointment in this life and which cannot be carried out into any other life.

In that school the lesson of selfishness is diligently insisted upon by usurping teachers, while inscribed upon the walls and doorways of its classrooms are such mystic words as 'Brotherhood, Co-operation, Love, Selflessness, Self-knowledge, Renunciation,' and many others that the

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students look upon as merely ornamental, and entirely meaningless.

The right uses of body and mind are generally not understood by those who stand as teachers in the schools; while in the school of life, where men and women struggle for supremacy and self-indulgence, the science most in general demand is that which multiplies men's wants and stimulates desires, and which affords them means to postpone for a little while Nature's inevitable reactions which culminate in bodily death, preceded frequently by death of the mind and separation of the soul still hastening upon its ceaseless quest of bliss.

The maxim of the school of life, written in fire that never dies, shines over all its doors unheeded: "Man, know thyself!" That is the key to education and to life, for they are one. The training and discipline of life is education. Self-knowledge is its full accomplishment.

But in their eagerness to grasp some pleasure more elusive than the rest, or in their fear of losing something gained, the men and women of the world forget to *live*, failing to understand the purpose of existence. Thus in pursuit of new sensations or weary repetitions of some stale abuse they never learn the meaning of another of life's golden maxims, "Life is Joy!" Life, rightly lived, is joy; not otherwise. That is the lesson that life teaches to its true disciples after many fruitless livings in the world, lives that are not worth calling life. How many of these most unprofitable lives must pass before the lesson of the school of life is first begun? — before self-knowledge can be seen to be the goal of life? — before life's playground can be entered as school of Joy? To write about such things would be mere waste of time if the words written were not prompted by experience.

The ideal school is not a dream; it is already in existence; and it is not a mere experiment; for it is the embodiment of eternal principles. The Râja-Yoga School at Point Loma has proved itself a power in the lives of all who have been privileged to come within its sphere of influence. It has accomplished such results as demonstrate the soundness of its principles and justify the hopes of those who see in it the key to education and the mastery of body and mind, that make life worth living.



"THE personal human soul is, in its highest form, a compound of spiritual aspirations, volitions, and divine love. . . . It thus stands as a link and a medium between the animal nature which its higher reason seeks to subdue, and the divine spiritual nature to which it gravitates whenever it has the upper hand in its struggle with the inner animal."— *H. P. Blavatsky*


## THE ROOT-RELIGION

H. T. EDGE, M. A.

“Theosophy reconciles all religions, sects, and nations under a common system of ethics.”

“Theosophy is Religion itself — Religion in the true and only correct sense.”

“Our endeavor has been to uncover the ruin-encumbered universal foundation of religion.”

 HE above quotations from H. P. Blavatsky are but three out of a very great number to the same effect which might be quoted, not only from that teacher, but from her successors and many Theosophical writers. In fact, from the very first, half a century ago, the fundamental unity of all religions has been a characteristic and cardinal tenet of Theosophy.

It must therefore be welcomed as a gratifying sign of the times that a conference is being held in England to consider the various religions professed by peoples under the British flag. This is not being done in the old missionary spirit of superiority, if not intolerance. The several religions are to be expounded by capable speakers from their own ranks; and it is needless to say that a much fairer view is gained of a religion when it is expounded by one who believes in it than when misrepresented (as must inevitably be the case) by an outsider, however impartial he may deem himself. From a leaderette in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, on this subject, we quote the following:

“Everywhere and at all times mankind’s religious experiences are formulated in creeds and occasionally depreciated in dogmas. But all of these creeds tend towards the same ultimate light, the understanding and worship of the essential spirit of the universe. . . .

“It may be that future conferences will discuss the very nature of religious truth itself and help to establish Sir Francis Younghusband’s ideal of a religion of greater depth and wider scope than any man has hitherto known. Clash and conflict of opinion there must be, for without that there is no life; but the spirit of true religion transcends all creeds while it includes all; and by it men and women may be united in common worship.”

It is important to notice that the above-mentioned ideal of “a religion of greater depth and wider scope than any man has hitherto known,” repeats, so far as the first part of it is concerned, what Theosophy has always proclaimed.

“The Wisdom-Religion was ever one and the same; and being the last word of possible human knowledge, was therefore carefully preserved.”

“The Theosophical Society asserts and maintains the truth common to all religions.”

“If the root of mankind is one, there must also be one truth which finds expression in all the various religions.”— *H. P. Blavatsky*

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But the difference is that Theosophy, instead of creating a new religion, to be the synthesis or reconciling basis for other religions, points to such a fundamental Religion as already existing. This Root-Religion is not the result, but the *origin*, of other religions. It has always existed, and to it are given the names 'Wisdom-Religion,' 'Secret Doctrine,' and others. To quote again from H. P. Blavatsky:

"Rescue from degradation the archaic truths which are the basis of all religions."  
"Theosophy reveals the origin of the world's faiths and science."

Obviously the new and great unification of mankind brought about by modern means of intercommunication necessitates the breaking down of religious barriers. We have seen sects striving to unify themselves by agreeing on a common formula; but they seem to aim at this by a process of elimination, which leaves the common basis somewhat dilute and vague. But the real basis of religions is greater, not less, than any of them. It is rather a common multiple than a common factor; for the former includes all, while the latter excludes the greater part. A unification of religions must be more than a mere residue or filtrate.

In the quotation, religions were referred to as "mankind's religious experiences." The great Root-Religion is likewise based on human experience. But here it is all-important to recognise that man's means of knowledge and experience are not limited to what he can attain through his physical senses and through the system of ideas derived from the perceptions of these senses. He has higher faculties. As W. Q. Judge says:

"Knowledge infinite in scope and diversity lies before us."

And again:

"The power to know does not come from book-study nor from mere philosophy, but mostly from the actual practice of altruism in deed, word, and thought; for that practice purifies the covers of the soul and permits that light to shine down into the brain-mind."

Theosophy has been described as the science of sciences. This vast body of knowledge is not an invention, but is the result of the accumulated efforts of the world's seers, teachers, and adepts, from time immemorial. Its precepts and teachings are submitted to the judgment of mankind, and are verifiable by every student through his own proving and experience. And, to quote again from W. Q. Judge:

"This is not the first effort to lead men to look for the one Truth that underlies all religion — which alone can guide science in the direction of real progress."

Not for the evolution of a new religion, then, have we to look; but for a growing recognition of the great Root-Religion that already exists. But it is inevitable that such a study of foreign religions as is proposed, if

## “MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE”

carried out in the hoped-for spirit of open-mindedness, will tend towards a realization of the existence of this Root-Religion. It is when we sound religions to their depths that their essential unity is revealed, and hence we find ourselves on the right road to discover their common origin.

## “MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE”

R. MACHELL



WHEN the world has been torn and devastated by war and the suffering of the people forces them to cry for peace, it is too often for a respite that they beg, a temporary cessation of hostilities in which to recuperate and reorganize their military resources with a view to renewing the struggle under more favorable conditions. This is not peace in any real sense of the word, yet it is all that the people in their discouragement can dare to hope for. Those who look deeper see that there can be but one true peace, and that is permanent.

There is health and there is sickness, there is peace and there is war. Sickness is a disturbance of health; war is a disturbance of peace. Ill health (a contradiction in terms) has become so general that few people ever expect to enjoy perfect health; and the same is true of peace: few dare to dream of universal peace.

Yet peace and health are normal and natural. True, man has so thoroughly upset the natural order that it is hard to know now whether the peaceful course of natural life can be restored except by a complete reconstruction of humanity. Can this be done? Can man be restored to health? Can there be Peace on earth? Theosophy says yes. Humanity can be redeemed on earth. Universal peace can be restored: but man himself must carry out the reconstruction of society and the redemption of the race. How can this be done? By reconstruction of the ideals upon which his life is based.

So long as peace means no more to him than a time in which war can be prepared upon a more destructive scale, so long will permanent or universal peace appear to him impossible; and as the wars are waged by men, so too by men must peace be re-established upon earth.

If man lived rightly there would be health and peace; and life on earth would be more beautiful than any dream of paradise, because it would be real.

Peace is not merely a cessation of disorder in the world. Peace is not merely the establishment of law and order in society. It is not merely international prosperity. Peace is the source from which all law and

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order emanate. Peace is the spiritual center of the universe; and in each man's heart, peace is the ray of spiritual light he calls his soul. It is from this that comes his right to call himself a man; it is from this that comes the power to know himself. It is this ray of spiritual light that can alone redeem him from the false ideals that now hold him bound a wretched conscript in the general 'struggle for existence.' When this interior light illuminates his mind he sees that this dread 'struggle for existence' is but a nightmare. The reality is peace.

But if the 'struggle for existence' is a false ideal born of man's fear, there is another and a worse one born of his greed, and it is worse because it wears a smile more deadly than the other's frown. It is expressed in one word, 'Prosperity,' which impudently claims companionship with Peace. These two are dangerous because the names they wear are false. Together they mean freedom to gather wealth: and in the history of our civilization, wealth is the symbol of rapacity, from which war springs. Even when wealth has been distributed among the people, it has not fostered peace and happiness; but has corrupted virtue, led to luxury, excited jealousy, and ended in disaster to the nation that possessed it.

True peace and true prosperity must both be universal or inevitably they will end in war, which spells destruction.

As a new (or very ancient) reading of the word 'peace' must be restored, so too a new conception of 'prosperity' must be established; and that new conception must be based upon the spiritual principle of Universal Brotherhood which is expressed in one short admonition from a very ancient scripture: "Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?"

We have all heard stories of a Golden Age, in which prosperity and peace were not a mockery; but that age passed, and if not quite forgotten is now called a fable or a myth. But there are those who still believe that what is called the Golden Age on earth was a period in which the spiritual Wisdom of the illuminated and perfected men was recognised, and, as it were, reflected among the masses of the people, who then followed the true principles of health, moral as well as physical, national as well as individual, and who so found peace and prosperity and perfect health the natural order of lives lived in conformity with spiritual law.

It has been said: "Man shall not live by bread alone," and every Theosophist will understand the truth of the saying, for Theosophy reveals the spiritual nature of the Universe and demonstrates the need of spiritual Teachers and a spiritual understanding of the life we live as well as of the world we live in.

If we would have peace in the world we must desire universal peace and peace that shall endure. Anything short of that will be but a breathing

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spell between two wars. Peace is the real foundation of the Universe, the power that orders and controls the forces of creation. In each man's heart that peace is hid while the forces of his nature uncontrolled run riot and play havoc with his peace of mind and health of body. When man shall once more know himself there will be Peace because the spiritual law of life is Brotherhood.

The world is starving for the bread of life even more than for "the bread which feeds the shadow." The bread of life is knowledge of the laws of life; and they are spiritual energies that emanate from the spiritual center of the Universe whose name is Peace. Those who themselves have found within themselves that Peace, can say "Peace to all beings."

## THE ELEPHANTS OF COPAN

T. HENRY, M. A.



T Copan, in Honduras, among the ruins of antiquity, there are four stone elephants, on the corners of a four-sided pillar. Each elephant bears on its head the figure of a mahout, beside whom a turbaned figure is sitting, just as in present-day India. The ornamentation is that of sculptured elephants on Indian shrines. Below the eyes of the elephants are certain spiral designs, not natural to the animal, but found in the carven elephants of India. The Copan elephants bear evidence of having been executed by someone who had never seen the live animal: the eye has been mistaken for a nostril, and the ear for an eye.

These particulars are taken from the account in a newspaper, where also are given conjectures and theories in explanation. What is above all necessary is to avoid theorizing from a single instance; as any theory designed to fit that instance may not fit other instances. We must consider the question of American antiquities as a whole.

In Vol. I, No. 6, of THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH we read:

"The first thing to be realized about the entire group of structures at Copan is their composite unity; then that this is not the result of a single construction, but of growth and successive additions; then that these periods of enlargement are separated by other, more or less long, periods of continued use and occupation, during which the civilization of the people maintained itself, somewhat modified by time, but not broken or interrupted. And finally, this evidence, together with that of the monumental dates, has so far only to do with the ground-plan and the structures we can discover by a few feet of digging on the surface of the plain of Copan; for we have not the slightest means as yet of relating anything we can see at Copan to the various strata of occupation, with intervening silence, marked on the 120 feet of the disintegrating river-wall. Those periods of silence may indeed, for everything we can yet

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tell, be the silence of non-occupation, of civilizations destroyed and forgotten, only to be followed by others. One Copan after another may have been built upon the obliterated site of its predecessor. Whatever evidence there is, read in comparison with similar evidence elsewhere, points to that; a few years ago we disbelieved in a historical Troy, only to find successive Troys, and many like places elsewhere, built one above the other. To *deny* the like or its probability at Copan, would be foolish."

In *The Secret Doctrine* it is stated that the Mayas were coeval with Plato's Atlantis. The real Atlantis, of which Plato's was the last surviving remnant, was the Fourth continent (Lemuria being the Third); America was the Fifth, though the name Fifth is given by the Indo-Aryan Occultists to Europe and Asia Minor, which are almost coeval with America. It is to this common origin of the old- and new-world peoples that we must look for the real explanation of the similarities in culture and symbolism. As H. P. Blavatsky says, the Secret Doctrine was once the universally diffused religion of antiquity, and archaeology is destined to bring proofs of this fact. Even some of the American Indians of today preserve in their rituals the ancient memories of this profound and universal cultus. For the present our archaeologists are considerably hampered by prepossessions in favor of an alleged animal evolution of man.



"UNIVERSAL Unity and Causation; Human Solidarity; the Law of Karma; Reincarnation. These are the four links of the golden chain which should bind humanity into one family, one Universal Brotherhood."

— H. P. Blavatsky


"THE practical Theosophist will do well if he follows the advice of the great Teachers now many years in print, to spread, explain and illustrate the laws of Karma and Reincarnation so that they may enter into the lives of the people. Technical occultism and all the allurements of the Astral Light may be left for other times. Men's thoughts must be affected, and this can only be done by giving them these two great laws. They not only explain many things, but they have also an inherent power due to their truth and their intimate connexion with man, to compel attention."— *William Q. Judge*

"THERE should be in all things one single devotion, one motive, one desire and aspiration. Differences of nature and mind are inevitable; each should therefore accord to all the same toleration he asks for himself, and then the single thread of devotion will unite all into one force. The power would be immense; if this is put into operation it would send to all, along the invisible but real currents, a stream of help for mind, soul, and body, uniting all on the inner plane, and thus showing the world the real power of co-operation on all the planes of force and consciousness."— *Katherine Tingley*



## THE MAYA MYSTERY -- YUCATAN

TALBOT MUNDY

NE must search the pages of *The Secret Doctrine* for true light on the history of Yucatan. The Mayas --- latter-day descendants of the ancient Itza civilization --- themselves preserve a myth, much scoffed at by historians and referred to by the guide-book writers in the smallest print, to the effect that the hero-god Itzamna brought their ancestors *through* the ocean from the east. The thought of the tourist leaps at once to submarines; he laughs. To others, not so eager to class myth as mere absurdity, there occurs at once the story of lost Atlantis.

The Yucatan Peninsula is one vast plain, with an area of nearly a hundred thousand square miles, largely covered with dense jungle and virgin forests, and it is nowhere more than five hundred feet above sea-level. With the exception of enormous plantations of henequen-fiber, laid out comparatively recently, there is very little cultivation, owing mainly to lack of surface-water, and the jungle might have continued unexplored for centuries to come were it not for manufacturers of chewing-gum, who send their agents into the forest in search of chicle, from which chewing-gum is made.

These agents, mostly Mestizos, or half-castes (although some are pure Indian), occasionally bring news of great areas of ancient ruins, and it is to them in the first instance that almost every fresh discovery is due; but they are an uncommunicative breed, and very cautious in their dealings with the alien. From the purely Maya Indian one can learn almost absolutely nothing, his racial recollection of the conqueror's heel having closed his mind against inquisitors.

That conqueror's heel, it may be added, was no imaginary infliction. La Casa del Conquistador Montejo still stands on the south side of the principal public square in Merida, the modern capital. It was the first house built by the Spanish conquerors and its façade bears the escutcheon of the Montejo family; on either side of the entrance, carved in stone and well preserved, are the figures of two Spanish knights, clad in the costume in vogue at the time of the conquest, each with his foot resting on the head of a conquered Maya Indian. That symbolizes well enough what Mayas have had to endure. There is not much room for doubt that they were suppressed, and by methods more drastic than we moderns fortunately can imagine. They have not yet rearsen from the effects of it.

The conqueror did not destroy the Maya buildings, as so often has

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been charged. There were extensive ruins all over Yucatan before the Spaniards came, and it seems probable that great areas had been abandoned to the jungle long before 1570, owing to lack of water, and possibly owing to a pestilence that may have followed in the wake of drought.

There are practically no surface-streams, although there are considerable rivers that flow underground and find their way into the limestone caverns with which the whole country abounds. The principal water-supply is from rain preserved in natural cisterns, and it is easy to imagine how a prolonged period of drought may have forced the ancient inhabitants to abandon city after city.

What the conquerors methodically did destroy was anything in writing or in sculpture that could help to connect the Mayas with their ancient culture and the storied past. So fanatically and so thoroughly did they obliterate whatever they regarded as unchristian, and therefore damnable, that though the Mayas possessed at that time (1527) an extensive literature, consisting mainly of historic records, in a script at a stage of development apparently about midway between pictograph and letter, not one document or carving now remains to provide a key for modern language-students. The agents of the church were 'thorough.' Scientists, comparatively easily, have worked out the system of numbers and dates, and they are continually searching for some carving — enthusiastically hoping for some document — that may explain the code in which the Maya narrative was written. But until now the history, myth, legend, and religion of the Mayas remains for the most part a forgotten mystery, in spite of square miles of monuments that have resisted time and weather — unless it is true, as some say, that among the Indians there are individuals who have preserved the record, handing it on from generation to generation, and who could tell the secret if they chose.

It is certain that no area in the world possesses such a wealth of archaeological antiquity as that part of Central America that includes the Yucatan Peninsula, Honduras, and Guatemala. There are expeditions from a number of scientific foundations and universities now studying the jungle-ruins at widely extended points, but those points are like proverbial drops of water in an ocean; there is such abundance of material that one point seems almost as good as any other at which to begin exploring, and there is no guessing where the most important secrets may be brought to light.

It appears, from what already is uncovered, that the early Maya civilization — subsequent, that is, to the arrival of the Mayas from some continent that *may have been* Atlantis — had its beginnings in what is now called Guatemala, since it is there that are found carvings, photographs of which were long since published in THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH,

## THE MAYA-MYSTERY — YUCATAN

for November 1920, so ancient that few antiquarians have dared to assign a date to them.

From Guatemala the Maya race seems gradually to have extended its civilization northward into Yucatan, the theme and nature of its monuments not changing much but rather evolving slowly toward greater elegance and less solidity, until, as far north as Chichen-Itza, about a hundred miles from Merida, we find well preserved buildings probably not more than three thousand years old, with beams of the time-resisting zapote-wood still supporting the stone arches.

The Chichen-Itza ruins (the name is a Maya word meaning 'by the well of the Itzas') are on the site of the Maya or Itza capital. The well, or cenote, remains a huge, natural pool in the limestone rock, fed by underground springs of extremely cold water that takes on a peculiar jade-green color.

Ever since the arrival of the Spaniards that sacred well has been the center of romantic legends about maidens sacrificed to the rain-god, and prisoners of war permitted rather than obliged to sacrifice themselves by plunging in and drowning. (They say, though, that the principle of mercy was not wholly overlooked: whoever lived from dawn to sunset on the surface of the pool was rescued and allowed to live.) Unlike most legends, these have been checked up and in a large degree confirmed by Mr. E. H. Thompson, formerly U. S. Consul in Yucatan, who has spent the last thirty years in carefully exploring Chichen-Itza and its neighborhood.

Mr. Thompson procured a diving apparatus and spent, in all, more than a month under-water, stirring deep layers of mud with a rake, uncovering treasures of gold and a peculiar jade found nowhere else on earth, besides the bones of young women and warriors. A peculiarity about the jade is, not only that its source is unknown (for nothing like it has been found in Central America or elsewhere) but that every piece of it is broken, as if the priests, who performed the sacrifice, went through the form of releasing its spirit before, as it were, consigning its material shell to oblivion.

Whoever has studied Maya architecture and such fragments as are known of their ancient religion, is impressed by the marked resemblance to the ancient Egyptian culture. It is in the pages of *The Secret Doctrine* that one finds the key to this enigma, and, supposing it to be true that the originators of Maya and Egyptian culture came, before the period of any history we know, from one and the same continent, we might reasonably expect to find a parallel development.

We know, for instance, that the culture of ancient Egypt passed through cycles of adolescence, splendor, and decay. In course of time

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pure doctrine became corrupted as men ceased to aspire to the higher mysteries. What once had been a hierarchy was replaced by an ambitious priesthood; and the sacrifices that had once been imagery of the opulence of life became degraded into superstitious rites.

Why not the same in Yucatan? This key would fit the latter-day discoveries of bones and jewels thrown into the sacred pool -- barbaric practices that otherwise it is impossible to correlate with the unquestionably esoteric nature of the ancient Maya art. It is incredible that men who rose to such artistic heights that they designed those carvings and the chaste, high arches of those dim interiors should condescend to drowning human victims to appease a wrathful rain-god. But it might be that, as in Egypt, men forgot the ancient Key. The hierarchy may have died out from below, for lack of aspirants with moral strength to endure the higher ordeals of the Mystery. And so, while buildings by the thousand stood, that traced the dignity and grandeur of the past; while pictograph and symbol still remained in witness that the men who built those temples knew more than the mere surface-secrets of an ancient Wisdom, a degenerate, though still religious offspring of the builders, taking letter for the spirit of the law, grew morbid and disgraced themselves with human sacrifice.

If so, that would not be the first, nor yet the last, great culture to decay in the gloom of superstitious cruelty. It is at such times of spiritual decadence that races become helpless to defend themselves against the conqueror. Then hundreds, in the vigor of material expansion overwhelm with ease the hundred-thousands, who have lost their spiritual vision yet affect still to despise materiality on which, in fact, they lean. No nation in the growth or the maturity of spiritual grandeur is in danger from the sword of the aggressor. Witness China, that kept peace a thousand years. But let the vision cease and, like a tree whose sap no longer answers to the challenge of the sun, that nation totters to its fall.

These latter days the Mayas, as a whole, display the symptoms of a conquered people. There is no revolt in them. They are a quiet-loving people, hospitable, kind, habitually clean, addicted to no outlandish vices -- hardly even to the vices of their conquerors --- and noticeably honest. But they submit. There is no vigor in their protests against exploitation. They take no part in the recurring revolutions that have boiled across the face of Mexico these fifty years. They are not soldiers; and with very rare exceptions they hold no public office. Courteous, secretive, patient, indifferent to hardship, they resemble in feature the images carved on the ruins that testify to the ancient glory of their race.

Uxmal and Chichen-Itza, where the principal uncovered ruins are, though ages of neglect, of wind and weather and the inroads of the jungle

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have combined to blot them from the memory of man, still mutely vouch for the enlightenment and taste of their forgotten builders. Civilization was there, and at a pinnacle, when Rome, it may be, was a scattering of hovels and the splendors of Nineveh and Babylon were not yet dreamed of.

Strange, and hitherto incomprehensible designs, wrought with consummate artistry, cover the whole face of building after building, alternating with elephants, leopards, leaves, flowers, and conventionalized human faces. Where did the ancient Mayas find their elephants? Who taught them how to carve with such unerring skill? If there was never an Atlantis, as some historians still insist, and if the arts, philosophy, and science, as the same historians maintain, derive from what they call the Old World -- Rome, Greece, Egypt -- whence came the Maya arts and sciences?

The predominant character of all the larger ancient Maya structures is that they are built on artificial elevations: a pyramid or truncate cone, approached by magnificent stone stairs, supports a building that thus crowns the view, suggesting elemental dignity and a conception of life's grandeur. The walls are usually of tremendous thickness, so that the silence which today reigns over that unpeopled wilderness was more than probably essential to existence when the thinkers lived who wrought that artistry.

Interiors are quiet, oftener than not devoid of any other contribution to their beauty than the sheer simplicity of strong design, but sometimes carved, like the exteriors, with hieroglyphic cornices or adorned with paintings that permit no other comparison than with those of ancient Egypt.

The finest workmanship is displayed in the broad and elevated cornices; and whether the artists excelled more in the skill with which they assembled prodigious numbers of small pieces with which to construct their effect, or in the accuracy to nature of the scenes they represented, is a matter solely of opinion. Certainly their craftsmanship has never been surpassed on the American continent.

The Mexican authorities have wisely ruled that no more plunder shall be taken from the ruins, and no foreign collections shall be enriched by specimens from Yucatan. Facilities are given to qualified archaeologists and to expeditions from foreign universities, who are allowed to fence off areas and dig, uncover, reconstruct; but what antiquities they find must remain in their proper surroundings, so that some day it will be possible to study the whole scheme of ancient Maya life and culture where it had its being.

But the study of it is unlikely to lead men far until they search *The Secret Doctrine's* pages and so reconstruct the past and read it with

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the Key that H. P. Blavatsky provided. The world, men say, is full of mysteries; but far the greatest of them all, most baffling and least suggestive of intelligence in *homo sapiens* is this: that after fifty years, with *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled* almost anywhere obtainable, men still search blindly for a key with which to solve the riddles of the past. Men still deny the 'fable' of Atlantis --- still search for the source of light among the shadows --- and, when H.P. Blavatsky's authoritative statements month after month become confirmed still prefer to ignore her teaching instead of making use of what she taught for the uncovering of more.

### A LAND OF MYSTERY

BY H. P. BLAVATSKY

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WHETHER one surveys the imposing ruins of Memphis or Palmyra; stands at the foot of the great pyramid of Ghizeh; wanders along the shores of the Nile; or ponders amid the desolate fastnesses of the long-lost and mysterious Petra, however clouded and misty the origin of these pre-historic relics may appear, one nevertheless finds at least certain fragments of firm ground upon which to build conjecture. Thick as may be the curtain behind which the history of these antiquities is hidden, still there are rents here and there through which one may catch glimpses of light. We are acquainted with the descendants of the builders. And, however superficially, we also know the story of the nations whose vestiges are scattered around us. Not so with the antiquities of the New World of the two Americas. There, all along the coast of Peru, all over the Isthmus and North America, in the canyons of the Cordilleras, in the impassable gorges of the Andes, and especially beyond the valley of Mexico, lie, ruined and desolate, hundreds of once mighty cities, lost to the memory of men, and having themselves lost even a name. Buried in dense forests, entombed in inaccessible valleys, sometimes sixty feet under ground, from the day of their discovery until now they have ever remained a riddle to science baffling all inquiry, and they have been muter than the Egyptian Sphinx herself. We know nothing of America prior to the Conquest — positively nothing. No chronicles, not even comparatively modern ones survive; there are no traditions, even among the aboriginal tribes, as to its past events. We are as ignorant of the races that built these cyclopean structures, as of the strange worship that inspired the antediluvian sculp-

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tors who carved upon hundreds of miles of walls, of monuments, monoliths and altars, these weird hieroglyphics, these groups of animals and men, pictures of an unknown life and lost arts; scenes so fantastic and wild, at times, that they involuntarily suggest the idea of a feverish dream whose phantasmagoria at the wave of some mighty magician's hand suddenly crystallized into granite, to bewilder the coming generations for ever and ever. So late as the beginning of the present century, the very existence of such a wealth of antiquities was unknown. The petty, suspicious jealousy of the Spaniards had, from the first, created a sort of Chinese wall between their American possessions and the too curious traveler; and the ignorance and fanaticism of the conquerors, and their carelessness as to all but the satisfaction of their insatiable greediness, had precluded scientific research. Even the enthusiastic accounts of Cortez and his army of brigands and priests, and of Pizarro and his robbers and monks, as to the splendor of the temples, palaces, and cities of Mexico and Peru, were long discredited. In his *History of America*, Dr. Robertson goes so far as to inform his readers that the houses of the ancient Mexicans were "mere huts, built with turf, or mud, or the branches of trees, like those of the rudest Indians";<sup>1</sup> and, upon the testimony of some Spaniards he even risked the assertion that "in all the extent of that vast empire," there was not "a single monument or vestige of any building more ancient than the Conquest"! It was reserved to the great Alexander von Humboldt to vindicate the truth. In 1803 a new flood of light was poured into the world of archaeology by this eminent and learned traveler. In this he luckily proved but the pioneer of future discoverers. He then described but Mitla, or the Vale of the Dead, Xoxichalco, and the great pyramidal Temple of Cholula. But after him, came Stephens, Catherwood, and Squier; and, in Peru, D'Orbigny and Dr. Tschudi. Since then, numerous travelers have visited and given us accurate details of many of the antiquities. But, how many more yet remain not only unexplored, but even unknown, no one can tell. As regards prehistoric buildings, both Peru and Mexico are rivals of Egypt. Equaling the latter in the immensity of her cyclopean structures, Peru surpasses her in their number; while Cholula exceeds the grand pyramid of Cheops in breadth, if not in height. Works of public utility, such as walls, fortifications, terraces, water-courses, aqueducts, bridges, temples, burial grounds, whole cities, and exquisitely paved roads, hundreds of miles in length, stretch in an unbroken line, almost covering the land as with a net. On the coast, they are built of sun-dried bricks; in the mountains, of porphyritic lime, granite, and silicated sandstone. Of the long generations of peoples

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1. See Stephens' *Central America*.

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who built them, history knows nothing, and even tradition is silent. As a matter of course, most of these lithic remains are covered with a dense vegetation. Whole forests have grown out of the broken hearts of the cities, and with a few exceptions, everything is in ruin. But one may judge of what once was by that which yet remains.

With a most flippant unconcern, the Spanish historians refer nearly every ruin to Inca times. No greater mistake can be made. The Hieroglyphics which sometimes cover from top to bottom whole walls and monoliths are, as they were from the first, a dead letter to modern science. But they were equally a dead letter to the Incas, though the history of the latter can be traced to the eleventh century. They had no clue to the meaning of these inscriptions, but attributed all such to their *unknown* predecessors; thus barring the presumption of their own descent from the first civilizers of their country. Briefly, the Inca history runs thus:

Inca is the Quichua title for chief or emperor, and the name of the ruling and most aristocratic race or rather *caste* of the land which was governed by them for an *unknown* period, prior to, and until, the Spanish Conquest. Some place their first appearance in Peru from regions *unknown* in 1021; others, also on conjecture, at five centuries after the Biblical 'Flood,' and according to the modest notions of Christian theology. Still the latter theory is undoubtedly nearer truth than the former. The Incas, judged by their exclusive privileges, power, and 'infallibility' are the antipodal counterpart of the Brâhmanical caste of India. Like the latter, the Incas claimed direct descent from the Deity, which, as in the case of the Sûryavansa dynasty of India, was the Sun.

According to the sole but general tradition, there was a time when the whole of the population of the now New World was broken up into independent, warring, and barbarian tribes. At last, the 'Highest' deity — the Sun — took pity upon them, and, in order to rescue the people from ignorance, sent down upon earth to teach them his two children Manco Capac, and his sister and wife, Mama Ocollo Huaco — the counterparts, again, of the Egyptian Osiris, and his sister and wife, Isis, as well as of the several Hindû gods and demi-gods and their wives. These two made their appearance on a beautiful island in Lake Titicaca — of which we will speak further on — and thence proceeded northward to Cuzco, later on the capital of the Incas, where they at once began to disseminate civilization.

Collecting together the various races from all parts of Peru, the divine couple then divided their labor. Manco Capac taught men agriculture, legislation, architecture and arts; while Mama Ocollo instructed the women in weaving, spinning, embroidery, and house-keeping. It is from this celestial pair that the Incas claimed their descent; and yet, they were



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utterly ignorant of the people who built the stupendous and now ruined cities which cover the whole area of their empire, and which then extended from the equator to over 37 degrees of latitude, and included not only the western slope of the Andes, but the whole mountain chain with its eastern declivities to the Amazon and Orinoco.

As the direct descendants of the Sun, they were exclusively the high priests of the state religion, and at the same time emperors and the highest statesmen in the land; in virtue of which they, again like the Brâhmans, arrogated to themselves a divine superiority over the ordinary mortals, thus founding, like the 'twice-born,' an exclusive and aristocratic caste --- the Inca race. Considered as the son of the Sun, every reigning Inca was the high priest, the oracle, chief captain in war, and absolute sovereign; thus realizing the double office of Pope and King, and so long anticipating the dream of the Roman Pontiffs.

To his command the blindest obedience was exacted; his person was sacred; and he was the object of divine honors. The highest officers of the land *could not appear shod in his presence*; this mark of respect pointing again to an Oriental origin; while the custom of boring the ears of the youths of royal blood and inserting in them golden rings "which were increased in size as they advanced in rank, until the distention of the cartilage became a positive deformity," suggests a strange resemblance between the sculptured portraits of many of them that we find in the more modern ruins and the images of Buddha and of some Hindû deities, not to mention our contemporary dandies of Siam, Burma, and Southern India. In that, once more like in India, in the palmy days of the Brâhman power, no one had the right to either receive an education or study religion except the young men of the privileged Inca caste. And, when the reigning Inca died, or, as it was termed, was "called home to the mansion of his father," a very large number of his attendants and wives were made to die with him, during the ceremony of his obsequies, just as we find in the old annals of Rajesthân, and down to the but just abolished custom of Sutti.

Taking all this into consideration, the archaeologist cannot remain satisfied with the brief remark of certain historians that "in this tradition we trace only another version of the story of the civilization common to all primitive nations, and that imposture of a celestial relationship whereby designing rulers and cunning priests have sought to secure their ascendancy among men." No more is it an explanation to say that "Manco Capac is the almost exact counterpart of the Chinese Fohi, the Hindû Buddha, the terrestrial Osiris of Egypt, the Quetzalcoatl of Mexico, and Votan of Central America"; for all this is but too evident. What we want to learn is, how came these nations so antipodal to each other as India,

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Egypt and America, to offer such extraordinary points of resemblance, not only in their general religious, political and social views, but sometimes in the minutest details. The much-needed task is to find out which one of them preceded the other; to explain how these people came to plant at the four corners of the earth nearly identical architecture and arts, unless there was a time when, as assured by Plato and believed in by more than one modern archaeologist, no ships were needed for such a transit, as the two worlds formed but one continent.

According to the most recent researches, there are five distinct styles of architecture in the Andes alone, of which the Temple of the Sun at Cuzco was the latest. And this one, perhaps, is the only structure of importance which, according to modern travelers, can be safely attributed to the Incas, whose imperial glories are believed to have been the last gleam of a civilization dating back from untold ages.

Dr. E. R. Heath, of Kansas (U. S. A.), thinks that "long before Manco Capac, the Andes had been the dwelling-place of races, whose beginnings must have been coeval with the savages of Western Europe. The gigantic architecture points to the cyclopean family, the founders of the Temple of Babel, and the Egyptian pyramids. The Grecian scroll found in many places is borrowed (?) from the Egyptians; the mode of burial and embalming their dead points to Egypt." Further on this learned traveler finds that the skulls taken from the burial-grounds, according to craniologists, represent three distinct races: the Chinchas, who occupied the western part of Peru from the Andes to the Pacific; the Aymaras, dwellers of the elevated plains of Peru and Bolivia, on the southern shore of Lake Titicaca; and the Huancas, who "occupied the plateau between the chains of the Andes, north of Lake Titicaca to the 9th degree of south latitude."

To confound the buildings of the epoch of the Incas in Peru, and of Montezuma and his Caciques in Mexico, with the aboriginal monuments, is fatal to archaeology. While Cholula, Uxmal, Quiché, Pachacamac and Chichen were all perfectly preserved and occupied at the time of the invasion of the Spanish *banditti*, there are hundreds of ruined cities and works which were in the same state of ruin even then; whose origin was unknown to the conquered Incas and Caciques as it is to us; and which are undoubtedly the remains of unknown and now extinct peoples. The strange shapes of the heads, and profiles of the human figures upon the monoliths of Copan are a warrant for the correctness of the hypothesis. The pronounced difference between the skulls of these races and the Indo-European skulls was at first attributed to mechanical means, used by the mothers for giving a peculiar conformation to the heads of their children during infancy, as is often done by other tribes and peoples.

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But, as the same author tells us, the finding in "a mummy of a foetus of seven or eight months having the same conformation of skull, has placed a doubt as to the certainty of this fact." And besides hypothesis, we have a scientific and unimpeachable proof of a civilization which must have existed in Peru ages ago. Were we to give the number of thousands of years that have probably elapsed since then, without first showing good reasons for the assumption, the reader might feel like holding his breath. So let us try.

The Peruvian *guano* (*huano*), that precious fertilizer, composed of the excrement of sea-fowls, intermixed with their decaying bodies, eggs, remains of seal, and so on, which has accumulated upon the isles of the Pacific and the coast of South America, and its formation, are now well-known. It was Humboldt who first discovered and drew the world's attention to it in 1804. And, while describing the deposits as covering the granite rocks of the Chincas and other islands to the depth of 50 or 60 feet, he states that the accumulation of the preceding 300 years, since the Conquest, had formed only a few lines in thickness. How many thousands of years, then, it required to form this deposit of 60 feet deep is a matter of simple calculation. In this connexion we may now quote something of a discovery spoken of in the *Peruvian Antiquities*.<sup>2</sup>

"Buried 62 feet under the ground, on the Chinca islands, stone idols and waterpots were found, while 35 and 33 feet below the surface were wooden idols. Beneath the *guano* on the Guanapi islands, just south of Truxillo, and Macabi just north, *mummies, birds, and birds' eggs, gold and silver ornaments were taken*. On the Macabi the laborers found some large valuable golden vases, which they broke up and divided among themselves, even though offered weight for weight in gold coin, and thus relics of greater interest to the scientist have been forever lost. He who can determine the centuries necessary to deposit thirty and sixty feet of *guano* on these islands, remembering that since the Conquest, three hundred years ago, no appreciable increase in depth has been noted, can give you an idea of the antiquity of these relics."

If we confine ourselves to a strictly mathematical calculation, and then allowing 12 lines to an inch, and 12 inches to a foot, and allowing one line to every century, we are forced to believe that the people who made these precious gold vases lived 864,000 years ago! Leave an ample margin for errors, and give two lines to a century — say an inch to every 100 years — and we will yet have 72,000 years back a civilization which — if we judge by its public works, the durability of its constructions, and the

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2. A paper published by Dr. E. R. Heath in the *Kansas City Review of Science and Industry*, Nov. 1878.

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grandeur of its buildings — equalled, and in some things certainly surpassed our own.

Having well defined ideas as to the periodicity of cycles, for the world as well as for nations, empires and tribes, we are convinced that our present modern civilization is but the latest dawn of that which already has been seen an innumerable number of times upon this planet. It may not be exact science, but it is both inductive and deductive logic, based upon theories far less hypothetical and more palpable than many another theory, held as strictly scientific. To express it in the words of Professor T. E. Nipher, of St. Louis, “we are not the friends of theory, but of truth,” and until truth is found, we welcome every new theory, however unpopular at first, for fear of rejecting in our ignorance the stone which may in time become the very cornerstone of the truth. “The errors of scientific men are well nigh countless, not because they are men of science, but because they are *men*,” says the same scientist; and further quotes the noble words of Faraday — “occasionally and frequently the exercise of the judgment ought to end in *absolute reservation*. It may be very distasteful and a great fatigue to suspend a conclusion, but as we are not infallible we ought to be cautious.” (*Experimental Researches*, 24th Series.)

It is doubtful whether, with the exception of a few of the most prominent ruins, there ever was attempted a detailed account of the so-called American antiquities. Yet in order to bring out the more prominently a point of comparison such a work would be absolutely necessary. If the history of religion and of mythology and — far more important — the origin, developing and final grouping of the human species are ever to be unraveled, we have to trust to archaeological research, rather than to the hypothetical deductions of philology. We must begin by massing together the concrete imagery of the early thought, more eloquent in its stationary form than in the verbal expression of the same, the latter being but too liable, in its manifold interpretations, to be distorted in a thousand ways. This would afford us an easier and more trustworthy clue. Archaeological Societies ought to have a whole cyclopaedia of the world's remains, with a collation of the most important of the speculations as to each locality. For, however fantastic and wild some of these hypotheses may seem at first glance, yet each has a chance of proving useful at some time. It is often more beneficial to know what a thing *is not* than to know what *it is*, as Max Müller truly tells us.

It is not within the limits of an article in our paper that any such object could be achieved. Availing ourselves, though, of the reports of the Government surveyors, trustworthy travelers, men of science, and even our own limited experience, we will try in future issues to give to our

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readers, who possibly may never have heard of these antiquities, a general idea of them. Our latest informations are drawn from every reliable source; the survey of the Peruvian antiquities being mostly due to Dr. Heath's able paper, above mentioned.

Evidently we, THEOSOPHISTS, are not the only iconoclasts in this world of mutual deception and hypocrisy. We are not the only ones who believe in cycles, and, opposing the Biblical chronology, lean towards those opinions which secretly are shared by so many, but publicly avowed by so few. We, Europeans, are just emerging from the very bottom of a new cycle, and progressing upwards, while the Asiatics — Hindûs especially — are the lingering remnants of the nations which filled the world in the previous and now departed cycles. Whether the Aryans sprang from the archaic Americans, or the latter from the prehistorical Aryans, is a question which no living man can decide. But that there must have been an intimate connexion at some time between the old Aryans, the prehistoric inhabitants of America — whatever might have been their name — and the ancient Egyptians, is a matter more easily proved than contradicted. And probably, if there ever was such a connexion, it must have taken place at a time when the Atlantic did not yet divide the two hemispheres as it does now.

In his *Peruvian Antiquities*, Dr. Heath, of Kansas City — *rara avis* among scientific men, a fearless searcher, who accepts truth wherever he finds it, and is not afraid to speak it out in the very face of dogmatic opposition — sums up his impressions of the Peruvian relics in the following words: “Three times the Andes sank hundreds of feet beneath the ocean level, and again were slowly brought to their present height. A man's life would be too short to count even the centuries consumed in this operation. The coast of Peru has risen eighty feet since it felt the tread of Pizarro. Supposing the Andes to have risen uniformly and without interruption, 70,000 years must have elapsed before they reached their present altitude.

“Who knows, then, but that Jules Verne's fanciful idea<sup>3</sup> regarding the lost continent Atlanta may be near the truth? Who can say that where now is the Atlantic Ocean, formerly did not exist a continent, with its dense population, advanced in the arts and sciences, who, as they found their land sinking beneath the waters, retired, part East and part West, populating thus the two hemispheres? This would explain the similarity of their archaeological structures and races, and their differences, modified by and adapted to the character of their respective climates and countries.

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3. This “idea” is plainly expressed and asserted as a fact by Plato in his *Banquet*; and was taken up by Lord Bacon in his *New Atlantis*.

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Thus would the llama and camel differ, although of the same species; thus the algaroba and espinosa trees; thus the Iroquois Indians of North America and the most ancient Arabs call the constellation of the 'Great Bear' by the same name; thus various nations, cut off from all intercourse or knowledge of each other, divide the zodiac into twelve constellations, apply to them the same names, and the Northern Hindûs apply the name Andes to their Himâlayan mountains, as did the South Americans to their principal chain.<sup>4</sup> Must we fall into the old rut, and suppose no other means of populating the Western Hemisphere except 'by way of Behring's Strait'? Must we still locate a geographical Eden in the East, and suppose a land, equally adapted to man and as old geologically, must wait the aimless wanderings of the 'lost tribes of Israel' to become populated?"

Go where we may to explore the antiquities of America — whether of Northern, Central, or Southern America — we are first of all impressed with the magnitude of these relics of ages and races unknown, and then with the extraordinary similarity they present to the mounds and ancient structures of old India, of Egypt, and even of some parts of Europe. Whoever has seen one of these mounds has seen all. Whoever has stood before the cyclopean structures of one continent can have a pretty accurate idea of those of the other. Only, be it said, we know still less of the age of the antiquities of America than even of those in the Valley of the Nile, of which we know next to nothing. But their symbolism — apart from their outward form — is evidently the same as in Egypt, India, and elsewhere. As before the great pyramid of Cheops in Cairo, so before the great mound, 100 feet high, on the plain of Cahokia, near St. Louis (Missouri), which measures 700 feet long by 800 feet broad at the base, and covers upwards of eight acres of ground, having 20,000,000 cubic feet of contents; and the mound on the banks of Brush Creek, Ohio, so accurately described by Squier and Davis, one knows not whether to admire more the geometrical precision, prescribed by the wonderful and mysterious builders in the form of their monuments, or the hidden symbolism they evidently sought to express. The Ohio mound represents a serpent, upwards of 1000 feet long. Gracefully coiled in capricious curves, it terminates in a triple coil at the tail. "The embankment constituting the effigy, is upwards of five feet in height, by thirty feet base at the center of the body, slightly diminishing towards the tail."<sup>5</sup> The neck is stretched out and its mouth wide-opened, holding within its jaws an

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4. "The name America," said I, in *Isis Unveiled* (Vol. I, p. 591) three years ago, "may one day be found closely related to *Meru*, the sacred mount in the center of the *seven* continents." When first discovered, America was found to bear among some native tribes the name of *Atlanta*. In the states of Central America we find the name *Amerih*, signifying, like *Meru*, a great mountain. The origin of the *Kamas* Indians of America is also unknown.

## A LAND OF MYSTERY

oval figure. "Formed by an embankment four feet in height this oval is perfectly regular in outline, its transverse and conjugate diameters being 160 and 8 feet respectively," say the surveyors. The whole represents the universal cosmological idea of the serpent and the egg. This is easy to surmise. But *how* came this great symbol of the Hermetic wisdom of old Egypt to find itself represented in North America? How is it that the sacred buildings found in Ohio and elsewhere, these squares, circles, octagons, and other geometrical figures, in which one recognises so easily the prevailing idea of the Pythagorean sacred numerals, seemed copied from the *Book of Numbers*? Apart from the complete silence as to their origin, even among the Indian tribes, who have otherwise preserved their own traditions in every case, the antiquity of these ruins is proved by the existence of the largest and most ancient forests growing on the buried cities. The prudent archaeologists of America have generously assigned them 2,000 years. But by whom built, and whether their authors migrated, or disappeared beneath victorious arms, or were swept out of existence by some direful epidemic, or a universal famine, are questions "probably beyond the power of human investigation to answer" they say. The earliest inhabitants of Mexico of whom history has any knowledge — more hypothetical than proven — are the Toltecs. These are *supposed* to have come from the North and *believed* to have entered Anahuac in the 7th century A. D. They are also credited with having constructed in Central America where they spread in the eleventh century, some of the great cities whose ruins still exist. In this case it is they who must also have carved the hieroglyphics that cover some of the relics. How is it then, that the pictorial system of writing of Mexico, which was used by the conquered people and learned by the conquerors and their missionaries, does not yet furnish the keys to the hieroglyphics of Palenque and Copan, not to mention those of Peru? And these civilized Toltecs themselves, who were they, and whence did they come? And who are the Aztecs that succeeded them? Even among the hieroglyphical systems of Mexico, there were some which the foreign interpreters were precluded the possibility of studying. These were the so-called schemes of judicial astrology "given but not explained in Lord Kingsborough's published collection," and set down as purely figurative and symbolical, "intended only for the use of the priests and diviners and possessed of an esoteric significance." Many of the hieroglyphics on the monoliths of Palenque and Copan are of the same character. The 'priests and diviners' were all killed off by the Catholic fanatics, the secret died with them.

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5. Smithsonian *Contributions to Knowledge*, Vol. I.

(To be continued)