



THE THEOSOPHIST

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CONTENTS

On the Watch-Tower <i>Radha Burnier</i>	243
Shards of a Broken Mirror <i>Shirley Nicholson</i>	247
Emerson and the Transcendentalists <i>Bhupendra R. Vora</i>	251
Studies in <i>The Voice of the Silence</i> , 11 <i>John Algeo</i>	255
Greater than the Sum of its Parts <i>A Theosophist</i>	263
The Theosophical Worker <i>Hugh Shearman</i>	271
Books of Interest	276
International Directory	278

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Cover Picture: The coconut grove – Adyar

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On the Watch-Tower

RADHA BURNIER

Adyar

Adyar has meant much to members all over the world for more than a century. It is good from time to time to think of what it means to have a Headquarters such as Adyar. This is a place where all the Presidents have lived during the time they held the office, and some, because they worked earlier in another capacity, lived here for longer periods.

Adyar, in Tamil (the language spoken in this area of India), implies a place to which one goes for spiritual reasons. It may be for experiencing peace, to spend a moment of quiet, to do work, especially if it is something which does not pertain to one's own importance, and various other things. It has often been called a sacred centre, which one approaches with the best one can offer.

Not everyone regards our Theosophical Centre in this way. Many come to it merely because it is a beautiful and quiet place and they enjoy being here for a short time. But, short or long, known or not by the person himself, it has an impact on all those who come for spiritual refreshment and not for purely personal reasons.

In celebrating Adyar Day, all this and more has to be recognized, and a renewal must be allowed to take place within.

There are many who are receptive and to whom the day is meaningful because it is an occasion for remembrance of the direction in which one wants to go.

In addition, this year Colonel Olcott was particularly remembered, and we pay him homage for the splendid work he did for the Society.

The Way Beyond

Life seems to proceed in a way which is almost inevitable in the sense that we do what everybody does. All of humanity is going one way, and that may be all right for people up to a point. Beyond that point a turn has to take place. We have spoken of this before, yet it is something which we have to think about.

The human being adapts himself to human society; he has to, otherwise he hurts himself. But a point comes when the hurt, that is, the physical side of it, is not of much importance. Giordano Bruno, for example, spoke of things which were considered as heresy by those in power, and he was tortured and burnt as a heretic. He spoke of what other people did not know, or did not go along with, because they had routine minds. He was speaking of things ahead of the rest of humanity, but which needed to be carefully thought over.

The Theosophist

We have to consider, especially in the present circumstances, whether the beliefs and theories that people go by are correct or not. Why does the world go on for centuries in the same fashion? Of course tools were different, and therefore the world may look different. But is it really? People's motivations in life remain the same, and wars, cruelty, and foolishness of various kinds go on, and become worse.

We have to give thought to whether certain fundamental ideas which we have are correct or not. Śankarāchārya's *Viveka-chudāmani* indicates that death is the future — of neglect (*pramādo mṛtyuh*). Death as we know through Theosophy is not a disability at all, but for most people death puts a stop to physical pleasures, and therefore it seems to be an obstacle. When it stops one from going further along one's preferred line, the thought arises that it must be avoided.

The word *pramāda*, although it suggests a mistake, also suggests a complete disorientation of the mind, such as that of someone who is drunk, drunk with wrong ideas, and therefore wrong feelings on most days. Such a person is compelled to do things he does not understand, and to go along a way that is not good for him. So *pramāda* means a condition in which a person does not know what he is doing. But *pramāda* also means 'mistake' — a mistake which may lead to trouble. Those who know Kālidāsa's poems will know about the *yaksha* (a type of being) whose error removed him from his position, and led

him into a world of human beings. Here the mind is misled, a state where something appears real, but is not real, and therefore takes us away from the path.

The present position is one in which fairly good people find their choice in life difficult to make. They may feel certain things are right, but when it comes to the point they are unable to follow on that path. The light appears like darkness, and darkness appears like light. While this is the position, we have to think what will help us to choose the right path when we are fairly good people and are not doing anything particularly wrong, like hurting others. Acts which appear to be all right to the worldly person may still mean wasting time and doing nothing from the higher viewpoint, even when doing a lot from the worldly point of view.

What sort of wisdom will wake us up? That state of wakefulness has been called *apramāda*. We must have clarity with regard to what is right and what is not right. Then we choose what is right, even when it causes some problems. There may be conditions when it is necessary to speak what is true for oneself. This in itself is a great step, because most of us adjust our words to suit the occasion. This may be all right up to a point, but on important matters it would lead us into falsity. We must have the courage to stand for what we consider to be helpful on the spiritual path, and not comfortably sail along the world's way, but be willing to hear what everybody has to say. It has to be listened to even when a person has wrong views.

On the Watch-Tower

If we cannot speak to each other frankly, how are we to clarify our points?

A fine musician hears sounds which a member of the audience may not. He makes a slight change. Most people in the audience do not know what the change is. But when all the sounds are tuned together they make an impression, which creates a fine change. There is something which corresponds to sound as we know it, at the level of Reality. Brahman, the ultimate self, can be known through sound which corresponds to that level of reality.

What we see may be ordinary, it may be just the appearance of a person, but the real in the person can be seen by those who train themselves. There is some small element even in the worst of persons, which corresponds to Brahman. The physical eye sees only the physical element; the inner eye of the poet sees things which do not usually strike other people. The inner eye can see the heart of things. So the question arises about learning to see and to hear as far as possible, to do which we have to look at things without commenting on them. With no opinion to express, there is complete silence inside.

Can we spend even a day in that kind of silence? You may have to speak words, you say when food is needed for the day, and so on, but your nature is open at the same time to the inner side of things. There is no barrier. *Pramāda*, or making mistakes, is theft — says the Upanishad. *Apramāda* is the path which leads to no errors.

The average person who appears to be

very clever may be totally blind, because the way which leads to worldliness is the way which blinds people. The way which leads to the divine is another way — the way to extended sight.

Where are we Going?

We are too slowly discovering that human beings are not superior, although we may be somewhat different from other species on earth. We cannot continue to survive when we are bent upon our own imaginary needs, including survival at the expense of others. All things on earth survive by the sacrifice of other creatures, including not only animals, birds, insects and so on, but also by the sacrifice, to a certain extent, of everything that exists on earth. We have therefore the duty to see that we do not take too much from Nature around us and from all other beings, and that we reduce our desire for superfluities that are seen as necessary. We do not have the right to possess, destroy, or do *whatever* we please on this earth.

The article by 'A Theosophist' in this issue points out:

It is not without notable significance that currently a worldwide interest has developed in regard to 'animal rights' — not only in connection with the preservation of endangered species, but in a new insistence that 'rights' are not to be restricted to humans on the ground that we are reasoning creatures, but rights may embrace all species, precisely because they are sentient beings and possess both consciousness and feelings.

The Theosophist

This gives the clue as to the most desirable aspect of all relationships with creatures, large or small.

We are told that there are three billion people in the world living on less than two dollars a day. Most of us are unconscious of this. To quote from an article in *Swiss Review* (Feb. 2008):

980 million people live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than one dollar a day. More than 850 million people are starving worldwide. Every second someone dies of malnutrition. Every year six million children starve to death before they reach the age of five. More than a billion people have no access to clean drinking water, and more than 2.5 billion do not have access to sanitary facilities. Every minute a mother dies during childbirth or pregnancy due to a lack of medical care. Every thirty seconds someone dies of malaria, despite this being a treatable disease.

If this is true, the physical condition of a vast number of people is deplorable, and the rest of the world goes on unthinkingly enjoying luxuries and pleasures. But physical deprivation is not the only way in which people suffer. There is also lack of water, employment, and other terrible disparities. The prospects are not good.

What does the human being need apart from physical aids to survive in a decent way? He needs the means to cultivate his mind, heart, and inner nature. This is far more important than having comforts. In fact, chasing pleasure to any extent is a worse problem than deprivation. Those who are very comfortable but not satisfied, who are continually searching for other

forms of enjoyment, are no better off than those who live in abject poverty.

The importance of living a modest but comfortable life and developing the mind, heart, and other inner faculties cannot be over-emphasized. To live sensibly is perhaps the most difficult thing to learn. The poor have no doubt to become reasonably well off, and the rich need to be able to give up part of what they have and live a simple life. This change is easy compared to the more important need to realize how the human being should develop and grow into what he is meant to be. Is it a question of more physical enjoyments, or of allowing conditions which help the mind, heart, and the inner senses to awaken?

Even though we may have power over other creatures on this earth, we have a long way to go in the direction indicated above. The mind occupied with the physical aspect is the main reason for our enslavement to conflicts and comforts. When that mind becomes free by not being attached, by looking at the beauty and wonder of Nature, including human nature, and by trying to understand the purpose of creation, the heart will not remain separate from the brain; it may have greater involvement in life than the mental nature does now. This blending, which has been spoken of in the spiritual literature of the world, has immense depths.

When this happens, new senses come into play. Life becomes impregnated by a power that makes the holy person aware of a Presence totally ignored by the ordinary man, making everything beautiful and sacred. ✧

Shards of a Broken Mirror

SHIRLEY J. NICHOLSON

IT seems to be a human characteristic to want to be a better person, especially among Theosophists, who have such a high ideal set before them. We tend to make resolutions, especially at the time of a new year or a birthday, to improve in some way in which we feel deficient. We may see ourselves somewhat as St Paul described himself as not doing what he wants to do and doing what he does not want to do.

Let us probe the root of this urge to be better. It may well be a product of our concept of ourselves. We may be deeply convinced that we are the higher Self, *Ātmā-Buddhi-Manas*, the Buddha nature or Christ within. *Ātmā* is the source of all our potentials; all virtues are inherent in this radiant Self. It is compassion, wisdom, peace, and will in the sense of will to the good. We may come to truly believe we are this Self from our studies of Theosophy. We may even get the fragrance of inner divinity occasionally in moments of meditation or experiences such as attunement to Nature. However, we are not convinced we are this higher Self day-to-day. We sometimes feel

inadequate, imperfect, and flawed, incapable of doing what we can envision for ourselves. We tend to identify with the personality or 'lower self', where these feelings of deficiency may be justified.

The personality (body, emotions, and lower mind) seems to us a single stable entity, consistent, unchanging, an abiding self. We feel 'I am me' all the time. Yet if we watch the stream of consciousness that runs through our minds continually, we find no consistent and stable self. We see ups and downs and mood swings. We see images and thoughts arise and dissolve. We see our attitude changing with the situation of the moment. We feel strong and in charge at one time, and confused and somewhat helpless at another.

We all suffer to some extent from a 'multiple-personality syndrome', like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. We take on many roles, even in the course of one day. We might be kind and forgiving with our family, but highly demanding of our associates at work. We might be wholly truthful handling money and affairs for the Theosophical Society, but shady

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The Theosophist

when we figure out our own income tax.

I heard of a striking example of a dog with multiple personality syndrome. He was generally obedient and eager to please his mistress. But one day on a walk they passed a stable of horses and a stray horse away from the group. The dog immediately began herding the stray into the barn by nipping at his heels and such. He paid no attention to his mistress's command, 'No!' and 'Come!' She had no idea that he was a herder. Yet this distinct sub-personality as a competent herder overrode the behaviour of the obedient pet she knew. It was a clue to his identity as part English sheep dog, a fact not known about this mixed breed rescued from the pound. We all have sub-personalities, as portrayed so graphically in the movie *Sybil*, which depicts the true story of a badly abused girl who developed several distinct personas or sub-personalities.

Ken McLeod, an author and teacher of Tibetan Buddhism, observes that 'far from having a single personality, we are like the shards of a shattered mirror, each piece reflecting a different picture of the world'. Each sub-personality has its own perspective of itself and of the world, and they may be in conflict with one another. As St Paul concluded his confession of not living up to what he wanted, he said 'there is no health in me'. The word *health* is related to the word *wholeness*. Thus at that time his conflicted soul did not feel whole and consistent.

We identify with some shards more than with others. It may be our work,

our appearance, our relationships, and especially our opinions and convictions. While in one sub-personality, say our aspiring self, we might make a resolution to improve or change something in another sub-personality, say our inner self-indulgent child (some psychologists feel we all have one). But of course this does not work. Part of us wants to change, but what is to be changed is also part of us. That is perhaps why resolutions are seldom successful. Yet the personas and patterns in these sub-personalities, though they seem solid and hard to change, are not absolute and fixed forever. Even the multiple personalities of *Sybil*, the subject of the movie mentioned above, softened over time with the help of a psychotherapist.

There is something behind these shards that *is* stable. It is not a mood or state of consciousness that changes. It is the true person, our genuine self. This self is like an actor who takes on many roles, yet can step out of costume and be his own self. In a similar way, we can come to identify with this true self and not allow our patterns and conditioning to pull us away. Realization that we are this self can even teach us to harmonize the sub-selves, so that they are no longer in conflict.

We might think of the true self as a reflection of *Ātmā-Buddhi-Manas*. At those levels of our being, peace is not just a feeling that comes and goes; it is a part of the changeless Self that we are. Peace is a potential everyone has, or is always available when obstructions

Shards of a Broken Mirror

are cleared away. Other aspects of that deeper self — loving-kindness and compassion, wisdom, intuitive understanding, realization of unity — are also inherent in what we basically are.

We do not live in awareness of our true self because aspects of the personality take over our consciousness. In McLeod's metaphor of shards, each shard 'reflects a different picture of the world'. As a family member, we think in terms of the family constellation; as a world citizen we think in terms of the overall global situation. In the everyday world we see differences and distinctions; in the world of the Self we see unity and connections. We have different pictures of the world in different sub-personalities.

But perhaps we are not hopeless cases like Humpty-Dumpty, who broke into shards and could not be fixed by all the king's horses and all the king's men. Dr John Algeo would advise us to forget the horses and men and work on ourselves. In an Adyar pamphlet he advocates developing one grand, consistent view rather than living with separate, perhaps conflicting partial views. He advises 'meditation to internalize theosophical truths by making them part of our inmost natures'. In other words, dwelling on Theosophy until it becomes part of us; holding the great principles of Theosophy in our minds and consequently developing one comprehensive view of the world rather than many splintered views. We then would act and think in harmony with this in-

ternalized view, whatever our situation at the moment.

In the Tibetan practice of Dzogchen, aspirants are shown 'the view', the way things truly are, not the usual projected images. I imagine this view reveals the changing nature or impermanence of all things as well as their unity and oneness in the overall flow. The student somehow receives a 'transmission', a direct, immediate perception in which things are seen truly. This view is infused into the student's mind by the teacher. It may be something like a lesser version of listening to an inspiring but difficult talk and somehow for the moment rising to a level of understanding that is normally beyond our reach.

Emily Sellon, former vice-president of the Theosophical Society in America and a wise and knowledgeable person, tells us of a way to pursue such a view. Writing in *The American Theosophist*, she said, 'Try first to draw into that inmost self of our being, our essential self which is the source of insight. Only in this way can we lift ourselves beyond the circumstances in which we are involved.' She, like Algeo, prescribes meditation. She suggests that we step back mentally, quiet the mind, and centre at a deeper level. Then if, as Sellon put it, 'that grand vision of the great truths [is] quick and vivid within us', we might rise to a holistic view that would tend to unify or harmonize the sub-personalities. If we internalize the grand vision so that it is our second nature, we will not be drawn into partial and conflicting views. We

The Theosophist

will not try to stamp out the flaws of the shards or try to be perfect, but rise to another level of consciousness.

The process by which we build up a background of eternal thought is not casual thinking. It is like Patañjali's understanding of meditation as contemplation, unifying one's consciousness with the object being considered. For example, in thinking of Annie Besant's beloved evocation, 'O hidden life', remember that the 'O' is evocative. We think of evoking the hidden life, the hidden love, that we believe to be in and around us. Merely repeating the words without an act of will to bring forth that life and love will not lift us to a level of realizing that what we say is true. Instead, we need to sense the object of the meditation, to sink our consciousness into it.

Such deep consideration of theosophical truths sets up conditions for insight and for realization of the grand view. If we continually keep great thoughts in the background of our minds, they will come forth when the mind is free.

To work on perfecting the shards of ourselves is to work with the personality. After all, our resolutions to do or be better are about 'me', the personality, not about understanding who we really are, our true self. Perhaps rather than concentrating exclusively at that lower level, we could spend effort on building a background of eternal thought. If we live in that understanding, forget about 'me,' and raise our level of consciousness, the personality will be affected. Then, as Sellon put it, 'Our actions will inevitably follow the dictates of our true self.' ✧

References

1. Ken McLeod, 'Imagine You're Enlightened', in *Buddhadharma*, Fall 2007, p. 35.
2. John Algeo, *Living Theosophy*, Adyar Pamphlets New Series No. 1, Adyar, Theosophical Publishing House, 1998, p. 25.
3. Emily Sellon, 'The Theosophical Life as Set Forth in *The Mahatma Letters*', *The American Theosophist*, June 1979, Number 6, p. 204.

The true Yogi does not study Occultism for the purpose of acquiring powers. In his onward spiritual progress toward deliverance from the shackles of Māyā, the Siddhi-s come to him of themselves. There can be no psychological perfection so long as the Ego is in the least affected by the trammels of Avidyā, and these Siddhi-s, however high they may be, are yet within the domain of illusion. Every student, even a tyro, of occultism knows that the acquisition of Brahma-vidyā is dependent entirely upon the development of a feeling of universal love in the mind of the aspirant.

Damodar K. Mavalankar

Emerson and the Transcendentalists

BHUPENDRA R. VORA

A VAST search for perfection obsessed Americans in the 1840s. Inspirationalists, Shakers, Perfectionists, Mormons — all across the United States of America, a great array of hopeful Utopians established communities, each avowedly communistic in its pooling of resources and earnings for the good of all. The communistic societies were only one part of a vast search for perfection that preoccupied Americans of that age.

The most publicized of American variegated 19th-century communistic groups was Brook Farm, the grand experiment of the Transcendental Movement. New England's Transcendentalists sought to rise above human experience, to seek a higher spiritual reality. They believed that man could 'transcend' the need for organized churches and creeds and establish his own relationship with the Creator and the universe. The underlying logic of their rationale lay in Unitarianism, which swept across New England early in the 19th century, cutting down the old Puritan dogmas. It preached the Oneness of God, the goodness of man, and the sacredness of reason, insisting

that human problems were capable of human solution only. However, while the Transcendentalists accepted the Unitarian doctrine that Christ was not God (but had honoured man by becoming man), they went even further. They saw the individual soul as a part of God — so man's ultimate self-reliance was not to be questioned.

At Brook Farm, the Transcendentalists put this self-reliance to the test. 'Our ulterior aim is nothing less than Heaven on earth', said newspaper editor Charles A. Dana. The object of the 200-acre colony near Boston was 'to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labour'. The aim was to set up an ideal society. Unfortunately the Transcendentalist group was not well organized to achieve this lofty aim. Some of the principal names behind the movement who were already prominent in their own right did not settle there — Branson Alcott, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and others.

Thoreau, the complete Transcendentalist, settled on the shores of Walden Pond in Concord, where he lived in happy

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The Theosophist

isolation for twenty-six months. He wrote of his at-one-ment with Nature and spiritual experience in *Walden*:

Thus it appears that the sweltering inhabitants of Charleston and New Orleans, of Madras and Bombay and Calcutta, drink at my well. In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the *Bhagavadgitā*, since whose composition years of gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conception. I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo! there I meet the servant of the Brahmin, priest of Brahmā and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Veda-s, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water jug. I meet his servant come to draw water for his master, and our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges. With favourite winds it is wafted past the site of the fabulous islands of Atlantis and the Hesperides, makes the periplus of Hanno, and floating by Ternate and Tidore and the mouth of the Persian Gulf, melts in the tropic gales of the Indian seas, and is landed in ports of which Alexander only heard the names.

This writing reflects the mood of the Transcendentalists Thoreau and Emerson, who were neighbours in Concord. Both

were deeply influenced by the ancient scriptures of India, reflected in their writings. Both these philosophers were so deeply touched by the *Bhagavadgitā* that they used to carry it in their pockets and dance with joy when they recited its verses. Emerson believed that the *Bhagavadgitā* was the greatest gift to mankind. Their idealism was reflected in their views on the problems facing American society then. They opposed slavery, and when John Brown, the abolitionist, was hanged for his campaigns to free the slaves, Emerson called him 'the rarest of heroes, a pure idealist'. Thoreau described him as 'an angel of light'.

Emerson was the most prominent figure of the Transcendental Movement. He was an essayist, poet, and philosopher. He wrote in order 'to awake in man, and to raise, the feeling of his worth', inspiring other American authors and philosophers like Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and William James, the British author Mathew Arnold, and the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Emerson expressed his teachings in his own life. To own many things or to be popular, he believed, does not matter: 'The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul.' Each man must think for himself and act on his own best instincts. In the closing lines of his essay on 'Self-Reliance' he wrote:

A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick or the return of your absent friend, or some other favourable event raises your spirits and you think

Emerson and the Transcendentalists

good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.

Emerson was a great encouragement to Americans to learn from the Old World and its teachings, but above all to venture on to the lessons of their own country. A central tenet of Transcendentalism was that there is more to know than man can discover by mind alone, that things sensed and felt or mystically apprehended go beyond and transcend what the mind can achieve. This stress on intuition was a carry-over from the older doctrine of the 'inner light', which held that individuals without the necessity of priestly intermediaries can discover divine truth. In fact the areas of things moral and speculative were the particular places where man's intuition could function. He challenged one to sharpen one's awareness, to search for an understanding of Nature's purpose, and at the same time to be a self-reliant individual.

Emerson was born in Boston in 1803, the son of a scholarly minister of the Unitarian Church. His father died when he was eight. His mother, though poor, managed to put young Emerson and his three brothers through Harvard College. The other person who had a great influence on the lives of the children was their aunt Mary. Since childhood Emerson had an inclination for being with Nature. Whenever the family looked for Emerson, he would usually be near a stream or out in the forests

or mountains contemplating Nature.

This was the age when in England Thomas Carlyle was spreading the light of his knowledge and Leo Tolstoy of Russia was influencing people's thinking. Emerson's ancestors were well known for their benevolence to people, and one was known to have said the prayer: 'Let there be no rich man in our family, for this may lead him astray and away from the path of religion, O God.'

After he graduated in 1821 Emerson taught at school and studied Theology. In 1826 he was licensed to preach as a Unitarian Minister, and soon became pastor of the Second Church of Boston. He was deeply spiritual, but also independent. Some of the Church procedures troubled him, and in 1832 he resigned his position. He travelled to Europe in 1833 and met several famous authors, including the poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, and above all Thomas Carlyle, who became a life-long friend. In 1834 Emerson moved to Concord, Massachusetts, and began his career as a lecturer and writer. He became a friend of such notable neighbours as Henry Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Bronson Alcott.

From 1834 to 1841, Emerson gave regular courses of lectures in and around Boston on his philosophy of life. He published his first book, *Nature*, in 1836. It expresses his love for the natural scenes around his home, and counsels men to grow to greatness worthy of Nature. In this phase of his life he studied and contemplated the ancient scriptures of

The Theosophist

India; he found what he was looking for. He was able to perceive the truth as explained by Indian sages that consciousness pervades every atom in the universe. Man, being a spark of the Divine, had the same potential and therefore could be a coworker with Nature. However he would have to restore his harmony with Nature. In 1836 he visited Bronson Alcott's school and saw pictures of world-famous poets, and read dialogues between famous teachers and disciples. He also read about Plato's ideals on education.

Emerson delivered a lecture entitled 'The American Scholar' at Harvard in 1837. In it he advised his hearers to learn directly from life, then to know the past through books, and finally to express themselves in action. A year later, he delivered his 'Divinity School Address' at Harvard. In this lecture, he applied his ideas of intellectual independence to religion, and spoke against formal creeds. In later years he lectured through the northern and western parts of the United States. In 1847 and 1848 he went on a lecture tour of England. During these trips he met his friend and mentor, Thomas Carlyle, as well as Wordsworth and other intellectuals.

The first series of Emerson's *Essays* (1841) includes some of his best known writings, such as 'Self-Reliance'. In 1844 a second series was published containing perhaps his finest: 'Experience'. He edited *The Dial*, a publication of the Transcendentalists, jointly with Thoreau for some time. He also wrote several other books:

English Traits (1856) based on his trip to England; *Representative Men* (1850); and *The Conduct of Life* (1860).

Emerson's poems, like his essays, are reflective and serious. Among them are some of the best poems in American literature, such as 'The Snow-Storm', 'Uriel', 'Days', and 'Brahma'. His stirring 'Concord Hymn' was sung at the completion of the Battle Monument at Concord in 1837. The first stanza, which follows, is inscribed at the base of the statue of The Minuteman at Concord:

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard around the World.

Emerson was continually in the public eye as a writer and lecturer until about 1870, when his health began to fail. His last years were spent quietly at Concord doing little writing. He died at the age of seventy-nine in 1882. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, has quoted Emerson extensively in *The Discovery of India* as regards self-reliance.

An American philosopher said that Emerson should have been born in India, not America. In his collection of poems entitled *Brahma* is a couplet:

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt.

The contradictions of life and logic have to be reconciled in the spirit of Emerson's *Brahma*. ◇

Studies in *The Voice of the Silence*, 11

JOHN ALGEO

THE metaphor of the ‘three vestures’, introduced in verses 140 and 141, is continued in the following verses.

VERSES [142-149]:

[142] The Shangna robe,²² ’tis true, can purchase light eternal. The Shangna robe alone gives the Nirvāna of destruction; it stops rebirth, but, O *lanoo*, it also kills compassion. No longer can the perfect Buddhas, who don the Dharmakāya glory, help man’s salvation. Alas! shall Selves be sacrificed to Self; mankind, unto the weal of units?

[143] Know, O beginner, this is the *Open* Path, the way to selfish bliss, shunned by the Bodhisattvas of the Secret Heart, the Buddhas of Compassion.

[144] To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practise the six glorious virtues²³ is the second.

[145] To don *Nirmānakāya*’s humble robe is to forego eternal bliss for Self, to help on man’s salvation. To reach Nirvāna’s bliss, but to renounce it, is the supreme, the final step — the highest on renunciation’s path.

[146] Know, O disciple, this is the *Secret*

Path, selected by the Buddhas of Perfection, who sacrificed the SELF to weaker Selves.

[147] Yet, if the Doctrine of the Heart is too high-winged for thee, if thou needest help thyself and fearest to offer help to others — then, thou of timid heart, be warned in time: remain content with the Eye Doctrine of the Law. Hope still. For if the Secret Path is unattainable this day, it is within thy reach tomorrow.²⁴ Learn that no efforts, not the smallest — whether in right or wrong direction — can vanish from the world of causes. E’en wasted smoke remains not traceless. ‘A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed but ever comes again.’ The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine’s silver star to thorn or thistle turn.

[148] Thou canst create this day thy chances for thy morrow. In the Great Journey,²⁵ causes sown each hour bear each its harvest of effects, for rigid justice rules the world. With mighty sweep of never-erring action, it brings to mortals lives of weal or woe, the Karmic progeny of all our former thoughts and deeds.

[149] Take then as much as merit hath in

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The Theosophist

store for thee, O thou of patient heart.
Be of good cheer and rest content with
fate. Such is thy Karma, the Karma of
the cycle of thy births, the destiny of
those who, in their pain and sorrow,
are born along with thee, rejoice and
weep from life to life, chained to thy
previous actions.

COMMENT. With verse 142, Blavatsky begins her interpretation of the ‘three vestures’. To put on the Dharmakāya vesture is to be united with the absolute, the ultimate reality, the Buddha nature. To be so united is to lose all contact with the limitations of the world, and therefore to be unable to participate in the enlightenment of others. Uniting with the absolute is, of course, the ultimate goal of all beings, but an ultimate goal is not the same thing as a proximate goal, and *The Voice of the Silence* argues for the desirability of a different proximate goal, one devoted to teaching and helping others to find the Way.

The path of devoting oneself to help others, even at the expense of one’s own immediate freedom from the restrictions and frustrations of life, is the bodhisattva ideal advocated by Northern Buddhism. The path of seeking personal enlightenment, following the teachings of the historical Buddha to that enlightenment and thus to the freedom of nirvāna, is the Arhat ideal associated with Southern Buddhism.

The Arhat (literally ‘deserving respect’ or ‘honourable’) is thought of as entering that state by an initiation, for which

an initiation robe woven from hemp is worn. ‘Shangna’ or ‘shana’ is literally ‘hemp’ or a cloth made from it; it symbolizes the acquiring of wisdom and the destroying of the separate personality, as HPB’s gloss makes clear:

Gloss 22. The Shangna robe, from Shangnavasu of Rājagrha, the third great Arhat or Patriarch, as the orientalists call the hierarchy of the 33 Arhats who spread Buddhism. ‘Shangna robe’ means, metaphorically, the acquirement of wisdom with which the Nirvāna of destruction (of personality) is entered. Literally, the initiation robe of the neophytes. Edkins states that this ‘grass cloth’ was brought to China from Tibet in the Tong Dynasty. ‘When an Arhan is born this plant is found growing in a clean spot’ says the Chinese as also the Tibetan legend.

Verse 142 thus highlights a paradox: Perfection has no room for imperfection or pain. And so those who have attained perfection cannot participate in the pain of others (be compassionate) or in the alleviation of that pain. Only the not-yet-perfect can help the imperfect. Which is better — to remain imperfect and work for the welfare of the many imperfect human selves or to reach perfection in the One Self and have nothing to contribute to others?

The Voice has no trouble in answering that question. In verse 143, the first option is called the ‘open’ or exoteric path. It is the public teaching of religions: get saved! become enlightened! It is said to be the

way to 'selfish bliss'. And that is another aspect of the paradox. How can selflessness be selfish? That option is 'shunned' by those who follow the 'secret heart' or esoteric wisdom. They remain in the world and are Buddhas of compassion.

Yet another aspect of the paradox is set forth in verse 144. To become perfect oneself—that is, to practise the six glorious virtues—has second place in the steps one takes on the Path. The most important thing is 'to live to benefit mankind'. The way to personal perfection is to forget about oneself by serving others. The six glorious virtues are the *pāramitā-s* (described later in verses 198 and 206-213), as HPB's gloss makes clear:

Gloss 23. To 'practise the Pāramitā Path' means to become a Yogi with a view of becoming an ascetic.

First, we forget about ourselves and devote ourselves to helping others. Then we can set about trying to make ourselves better by practising spiritual disciplines and acquiring virtues that extend from the first of the *pāramitā-s*, namely, sharing what one has with others (*dāna* or giving) to the last, namely, attaining insight into the nature of things (*prajñā* or intuitive wisdom).

The alternative to merging with the absolute and leaving this world is to remain in it—an alternative developed in verses 145 and 146. If we do not put on the Dharmakāya robe by becoming perfectly enlightened and merging with

the absolute, we can instead put on the Nirmānakāya robe, that is, remain in this world, continue to incarnate in order to teach others and thereby help them to freedom from pain and frustration. As noted above, the Nirmānakāya Buddha is the historical Buddha, who incarnates to teach humanity.

The highest form of renunciation is not renouncing the world. It is renouncing renunciation of the world and thus remaining a part of the world. It is the 'secret' or esoteric path. It is the teaching of the inner side of all great religious traditions: not to 'get saved' but to 'help save'. Those who take this path sacrifice their union with the great and perfect Self for the good of the weak, imperfect selves of all beings.

To follow such an ideal, however, is not easy. It requires great courage to renounce peace and ease for labour and woe. And so verse 147 says that if we do not feel up to this challenge, we should simply follow the public, exoteric religious teachings, the 'eye doctrine'. But do not despair. If we are not up to the challenge in this life today, we may be so tomorrow:

Gloss 24. 'Tomorrow' means the following rebirth or reincarnation.

This consolation may remind us of the ending of the poetic passage beginning 'There is a road': 'For those who win onward, there is reward past all telling: the power to bless and save humanity. For those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.' The road, the bodhisattva path, the Nirmānakāya

The Theosophist

robe is there for us. If we do not accept it this life, very well. There is always another time. The principle of karma guarantees that any effort we make will have its results, small or great, good or bad. The least attempt at spiritual progress will eventually bear fruit, as also will every wrong action: 'A harsh word uttered in past lives, is not destroyed but ever comes again', a saying that is identified in a note as one of the 'Precepts of the Prasanga School'.

Verse 148 continues with a sweeping statement of the pervasiveness and inevitability of the operation of karma in our lives and in the whole world process. It applies to the entire sweep of our evolution, as the gloss says:

Gloss 25. The 'Great Journey' is the whole complete cycle of existences, in one Round.

Karma, however, is a complex subject — one that we often oversimplify. Some of its complexity is hinted at in verse 149, which alludes to the fact that our actions involve others. Our karma or actions affect not just ourselves, but other beings as well. We are all interlinked; we participate in each other's lives. It is, indeed, that fact which makes this discussion of karma not a digression (as it might at first appear to be) but an integral part of the discussion of the two options apparently available to us: to seek salvation for ourselves alone, or to renounce private salvation in favour of working for the salvation of all.

The message of *The Voice* seems to

be, not that we 'should' be altruistic and concerned for others' welfare, but instead that concern for others is the only real option. The exoteric approach, the 'eye doctrine', or 'open path', is only a stop-gap measure. Because we are all karmically interlinked, and because every action we do affects all others, the bodhisattva way of service to all life is the only way.

MEDITATION. Meditate on verse 144: 'To live to benefit mankind is the first step.'

The following verses 150-160 develop in some detail the concept of a communal or collective Path that we follow as part of an evolving group or band of servers who have dedicated themselves to the welfare of others.

VERSES [150-160]:

[150] Act thou for them today, and they will act for thee tomorrow.

[151] 'Tis from the bud of renunciation of the self, that springeth the sweet fruit of final Liberation.

[152] To perish doomed is he, who out of fear of Māra refrains from helping man, lest he should act for self. The pilgrim who would cool his weary limbs in running waters, yet dares not plunge for terror of the stream, risks to succumb from heat. Inaction based on selfish fear can bear but evil fruit.

[153] The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go

Studies in *The Voice of the Silence*, 11

through his appointed work in life — has lived in vain.

[154] Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of Karmic retribution. Gain *siddhi-s* for thy future birth.

[155] If sun thou canst not be, then be the humble planet. Aye, if thou art debarred from flaming like the noon-day sun upon the snow-capped mount of purity eternal, then choose, O neophyte, a humbler course.

[156] Point out the way — however dimly, and lost among the host — as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.

[157] Behold Migmar [Mars], as in his crimson veils his eye sweeps over slumbering Earth. Behold the fiery aura of the hand of Lhagpa [Mercury] extended in protecting love over the heads of his ascetics. Both are now servants to Nyima [the Sun],²⁶ left in his absence silent watchers in the night. Yet both in *kalpa-s* past were bright *nyima-s*, and may in future days again become two Suns. Such are the falls and rises of the Karmic Law in Nature.

[158] Be, O *lanoo*, like them. Give light and comfort to the toiling pilgrim, and seek out him who knows still less than thou; who in his wretched desolation sits starving for the bread of Wisdom, and the bread which feeds the shadow, without a Teacher, hope, or consolation, and let him hear the Law.

[159] Tell him, O candidate, that he who makes of pride and self-regard bondmaidens to devotion; that he, who cleaving to existence, still lays his patience and submission to the Law, as a sweet flower at the feet of Śākya-Thub-pa [Buddha], becomes a *srotāpatti*²⁷ in this birth. The *siddhi-s* of perfection may loom far, far away; but the first step is taken, the stream is entered, and he may gain the eyesight of the mountain eagle, the hearing of the timid doe.

[160] Tell him, O aspirant, that true devotion may bring him back the knowledge, that knowledge which was his in former births. The deva-sight and deva-hearing are not obtained in one short birth.

COMMENT. The ‘they’ and ‘them’ of verse 150 are those referred to in verse 149 who form with ‘thee’ a karmic band, each of whose karma influences the others of the band. The members of such a band have a collective or ‘distributive’ karma, as HPB calls it in *The Key to Theosophy*, in which the actions of each member of the band affect all its other members.

This concept of our karmic connection with one another within a group is a curious mirror reflection of the evolutionary principle of individualization. In evolution, consciousness moves from a group soul, one soul that manifests in a number of physical bodies simultaneously (as, for example, all the bees in a hive are expressions of a single life rather than separate ones), to smaller and smaller soul-groups, consisting of only a few embodied expressions, until the human

The Theosophist

state is reached. In becoming human, we are 'individualized'. That is, the evolving entity or monad expresses itself in only one personal form at a time.

We human beings are thus the most separate, divided, isolated beings of the cosmos. The angst of isolation is the 'curse' of the human 'Fall' out of an integrated Eden, where we lived in harmonious but unconscious integration with other beings, into the fragmented world of self-awareness. But that is not the end of evolution. Indeed, far from being the zenith of spiritual evolution, the human state is in one sense its nadir.

From the self-aware state of isolated separateness, we evolve towards a conscious reintegration with other beings in which we each retain our separate identity but become conscious of our fundamental unity in the Ground of Being. The result is a reestablishment, not of the old group soul, but of a conscious analogue of it: a self-aware collective consciousness in which each individual retains a distinct identity, but also shares with all other fellow individuals a common awareness of their unity and mutual participation in the One Life.

The first step towards this conscious reintegration is the formation of karmic bands, in which evolving human souls are linked to one another by shared karma and eventually by a shared consciousness. Final liberation from the limitations of existence depends on our overcoming (or 'renouncing') the illusion of an isolated, separate self (verse 151),

and that overcoming begins with the karma we share with others.

Those who try to maintain the isolated state in which human life begins at the time of their individualization from the group soul are doomed to failure, for that is an evolutionary dead end. Only when we live a life of altruistic helping, by acting for others as they act for us, do we fulfil the purpose of our lives. Our appointed work in life is to make contact with our fellows, to become part of an evolving band of distinct but inter-linked souls (verses 152-153).

The first Object of the Theosophical Society is highly relevant here. The first Object is often regarded as a pious generalization, an impractical statement of an impossible ideal. It is nothing of the sort; it is very specific, very practical, and very real. The nucleus it speaks of as being formed by the Fellows of the Society is in fact one of these karmic bands or collective groups of souls. This is not to say that everyone who signs an application form and pays dues automatically becomes part of that nucleus. To say that would be superstitious. But everyone who joins the Society has thereby an opportunity to become part of this nucleus. Whether we do so or not is up to us. It has to be a conscious decision, freely taken.

Within our ever growing collective consciousness, we each have an appointed way or duty. Following that way, doing that duty without regard to the consequence to us personally, exhausts our personal karma and develops in us

the higher *siddhi-s*, which are the powers of wisdom, compassion, creativity, and harmony (verse 154). Our duty is not unchanging; rather it varies with time, and we are to follow whatever duty we have at a given time. When we are a sun, we should shine like a sun; when we are a planet, we should move as planets move (155-158). The point about relative and varying duty is illustrated by a tradition that says the present planets Mars and Mercury were in the past suns and will in the future be suns again. Verse 157 uses names for the heavenly bodies: Migmar, Lhagpa, and Nyima, of which HPB notes.

Gloss 26. Nyima, the Sun in Tibetan Astrology. Migmar or Mars is symbolized by an 'eye', and Lhagpa or Mercury by a 'hand'.

Like Migmar with his Eye and Lhagpa with his Hand, we are to watch over and lend a helping hand by giving light and comfort to our fellow pilgrims on the Way (verse 158). In thus sacrificing what seems to be our personal interest to 'Shakya-Thub-pa' or Buddha — not just the historical Gautama Buddha, but the Eternal Buddha nature — we enter upon the Path or into the 'stream', as verse 159 states. We become, to use a traditional Buddhist term, *srotāpatti*, which HPB glosses:

Gloss 27. *Srotāpatti* or 'he who enters in the stream' of Nirvāna, unless he reaches the goal owing to some exceptional reasons, can rarely attain Nirvāna in one birth. Usually a chela is said to begin the ascending effort in one life and end or reach it only in his seventh succeeding birth.

Buddhism traditionally recognizes four stages on the Path to Enlightenment and Liberation:

1. One who has entered the stream and has become free from the first three of the ten fetters, which are the illusion of being a self separate from all other selves (the basic fetter of all of us), vacillation or sceptical doubt (the special fetter of intellectuals, scholars, and scientists), and clinging to forms and rules (the special fetter of fundamentalists).

2. One who will return once only and who is nearly free from two further fetters: cravings or desires and all ill-will or aversion, that is, wanting either to have or not to have.

3. One who will return no more (but be reborn in higher worlds) and who is completely free of the first five fetters.

4. One who is worthy (an *arhat*), having cast off the last five fetters: desire for existence in the lower worlds of forms, desire for existence in the higher formless worlds, conceit or self-esteem, restlessness, and ignorance.

The ten fetters are wrong ways of thinking and desiring that have to be removed, one by one, as we follow the Path to the ultimate goal.

In the Theosophical tradition, these four stages are referred to as the first four initiations. It is probably best not to think of these as formal initiations like those of Freemasonry or even as wholly distinct stages of development, but as a symbol of the fact that enlightenment, liberation, or salvation does not come all at once, suddenly, but instead is a process

The Theosophist

that comes by degrees. Becoming enlightened is not like flipping a wall switch that suddenly turns on the light. Rather, it is like turning up a dimmer switch to gradually increase the light until it is as bright as possible. Still, the first step must be taken, and that beginning is a discrete event, like putting our hand on the switch or stepping through the gate onto the Path.

It took us a long while to lose the knowledge that we once had. It will take us a long while to regain it and to lose the ignorance we have replaced it with. We should not hanker after special powers and insight ('the eyesight of the mountain eagle, the hearing of the timid doe' of verse 159 or the 'deva-sight and deva-hearing' of verse 160). Instead, we should enter the stream, form the links that unite us with others, and eventually everything else will follow.

MEDITATION. 1. Consider the implications of becoming, not just a card-carrying member of the Theosophical Society, but a part of a nucleus of the

universal brotherhood. In such a nucleus, what is our relationship with other members of the nucleus? What do we owe them? What do we share with them?

2. Dwell on the following poetical statement by HPB:

There is a Road, steep and thorny,
beset with perils of every kind, but
yet a Road. And it leads to the very
heart of the universe.

I can tell you how to find those who
will show you the secret gateway that
opens inwardly only, and closes fast
behind the neophyte forever more.

There is no danger that dauntless
courage cannot conquer.

There is no trial that spotless purity
cannot pass through.

There is no difficulty that strong in-
tellect cannot surmount.

For those who win onward, there is
reward past all telling: the power to
bless and save humanity.

For those who fail, there are other lives
in which success may come. ✧

This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.

Dalai Lama

Greater than the Sum of its Parts

A THEOSOPHIST

THEOSOPHY, as a view of reality, is greater than the sum of its various parts. What does this mean? Suppose you have to go to a meeting and you come to your car, turn the ignition key, and nothing happens. That piece of technology consists of hundreds of pieces of hardware, pistons, wheels, wires, nuts, etc., but you will feel that the whole of it is just a heap. However, if you turn the ignition key, the engine starts up, and you are off to the meeting, then what you have is not a heap; it is a system. Why? Because all the parts are not only interconnected, but are now also interacting in true relationship — thereby justifying the purpose for which the automobile was constructed. For anyone who has gone through this kind of experience, it is easy to tell the difference between a ‘car’ and a ‘heap’ — or to understand that a system is more than the sum of its parts.

A system is a whole functioning as such, by virtue of the relationship of its parts. In addition to the word ‘system’, the key words to keep in mind are ‘whole’ and ‘relationship’, because we shall and do make use of those words constantly — as we do of ‘interconnection’ and ‘interaction’ because that is the kind of world

which has evolved during the twentieth century. In daily parlance we talk about the economic system, the state system, the legal, educational, social security, and other systems as if everything were a ‘system’, and, moreover, a system which in turn is part of a still larger and more comprehensive system.

Have you thought of yourself as a system — more specifically, both as a subordinate system and a superordinate system? Our physical body is a system, that is, it functions as a whole by virtue of all the interconnections and interactions of its myriad parts. Yet we are also a super-ordinate system, which means that within our body are a number of subsystems, for example, the nervous, digestive, circulatory, respiratory, and other systems. Each of these has its own relative autonomy, functioning very well in any normal situation. They all give us freedom to think about many matters and indulge in various activities, other than breathing, digesting, and so forth. As the governing system, we are, each one of us, in control of all these subordinate systems, utilizing them for our purposes.

Yet from another larger perspective,

Based on a talk given by a member of the Indian Section in 1988.

The Theosophist

you and I are, in turn, just subordinate systems. We are members of a superordinate community called a 'state'; the state is part of a national state system (like India); our human species is subordinate to a planetary ecosystem; the planet itself is part of our Solar System; the Solar System is subordinate to our galaxy; and our galaxy — the Milky Way — is but an infinitesimal subordinate system within what may be called a metagalaxy, or Universal System. I have said all this to make us think of the universe as a mighty magnificent superordinate system — a universe that is elegantly organized, creative, evolutionary, and open-ended.

Let us take three matchsticks and place them on a table, parallel to each other. This enables us to add them up, as we would in arithmetic. Then take those same three matches and arrange them so that their ends touch one another. This gives us a geometrical figure, a triangle (actually an equilateral triangle, because the matches are equal in length). When we look at these two arrangements, the first is an example of simple addition, and the result is a 'heap' (and will remain so whether we add or subtract a match to or from the heap). The second arrangement, on the other hand, is much more complex. It is a triangle whose interior angles are equal to two right angles, comprising 180° (each angle in an equilateral triangle being 60°). These angles and degrees are made possible solely because of the specific 'relationship' of the three matches. Instead of being a 'heap' they now constitute a 'system'.

As a system, they have properties which have emerged beyond the properties of the same three matchsticks when they were just piled up in a heap.

As Systems Theory demonstrates, we are dealing here with a powerfully creative aspect of the universe as organized. Each system in that universe, whether we start with an atom, a molecule or whatever, exhibits certain properties that are appropriate to its level of organization. As we move from a simple to a complex system, new properties emerge. Let us explore a simple and, I think, illuminating example. Take two elements, hydrogen and oxygen; each has very well-defined properties in the atomic or gaseous state. Hydrogen is very inflammable and oxygen is a supporter of combustion. When fused, they form H_2O — a molecule of water. At this more advanced or complex level of organization (or system), the water molecule possesses properties not found in either of its atomic parents. This is a basic concept in General Systems Theory — the principle of emergent properties. As we move up the organization scale from subatomic particle, to atom, to molecule, to cell, to multicellular forms found in plants and animals, to human species and their creations, namely, families, communities, nations, or international structures, we find that at each new level of organization, a more complex system both in its structure and in its behaviour exists.

We are integral parts of a most elegant and open-ended process of creative evolution. We are in a universe that

Greater than the Sum of its Parts

appears infinitely diverse, and yet the 'many' are all but aspects of the 'one' — like a giant oak or banyan, with its hundreds of branches and sub-branches and lakhs of leaves, yet all emanating from one seed — and the whole is sustained by the energy and life-force from its single root-system.

And now a fundamental question challenges our thinking processes: How can we come to a better understanding of this universe of which each of us is an inseparable component — and would like to feel an integrated component? Going back to the examples of H₂O and the oak tree, we can analyse water in terms of its chemical components and various properties. Would this be comparable to the 'additive approach' towards the three matches, when we added them up separately and arrived at the simple arithmetical total? Or we can look at water systematically, regarding the result of the fusion of its components and their interaction in turn within the larger physical environment. Here we are approaching our subject from the standard standpoint of 'relationships' among constituents in a given system. And this is comparable to our second or 'constitutive' approach to the three matches when we created a geometrical pattern (the triangle). As regards the example of the oak tree, the 'additive' approach would, say, count the specific number of branches, leaves, and so forth, measure the length and breadth and weight of the tree — in short, analyse the oak from the perspective of its parts, and then attempt to synthesize or add up those parts

so as to arrive at a completed 'whole'. Alternatively, the constitutive approach begins with the totality or wholeness of the tree viewed as a system, and then proceeds to examine and understand the nature of the relationships of its parts and the relation of the tree to its environment. Here, then, we have two types of approaches: additive and constitutive forms of thinking. We have yet to see which is the correct or right approach.

In recent years, studies of the human brain have shown that its two hemispheres, connected by the corpus callosum, engage in different forms of thinking. The left hemisphere provides us with sequential forms of cognition: a to b to c to d; it is logical and analytical. In short, it is the approach par excellence for what is known as 'propositional' thinking. In terms of what we have been considering, the left hemisphere is programmed to deal with 'additive' forms of thought processes.

In contradistinction, the right hemisphere deals with what is called 'appositional' forms of thought processes, that is, where things or concepts are placed in juxtaposition or a certain proximity — even as we engaged in such an exercise when placing the three matchsticks so as to form a triangle. In other words, the right hemisphere functions largely in terms of 'constitutive' forms of thinking.

We need both hemispheres, and both types of cognition. The left hemisphere provides us with a means to engage in logical, sequential, and analytical processes; the right hemisphere gives us the

The Theosophist

ability to see ‘relationships’ and to engage in patterning a view of appearances as realities. But traditionally Western thought and formal education have emphasized the left hemisphere and its mode of thinking, ignoring largely the creativity found in the right hemisphere. The traditional approach emphasizes analysis and the ‘parts’; the largely neglected appositional approach emphasizes ‘wholes’ and ‘relationships’, which helps explain in turn, for example, why artists and poets have been generally downgraded or ignored in the Western system of values, which traditionally places its emphasis on objectifying and quantifying the physical ‘parts’ of society — and regards this as the practical approach to the good life in a separative world. This traditional approach has engulfed not only the West, but overshadowed also the East. India is involved very deeply in imitating the West, because of its craze for so-called modernization and progress.

But this traditional approach has to change, because we find ourselves today in the most complex, interconnected and interacting society in history. Everything seems to be involved with everything else. And hence the critical need to look beyond the ‘trees’ in order to get a picture of the ‘forest’ — to understand the dynamics of mutual relations and interactions. What keeps Nature in an overall balance is an increasingly critical question, having no answer, given the ramifications of, say, acid rain, or the ‘greenhouse’ effect as carbon dioxide increases in our planetary atmosphere. What must we do to get our economic

system right, in balance, in the face of horrible deficits, for example, the unemployment situation? We must now learn — in fact we are being compelled to learn — that indeed ‘the whole is greater than the sum of its parts’.

We often talk about ‘wholes’. The ‘whole’ comes from the Greek *holos*, referring to an understanding of reality in terms of integrated wholes, whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller component units. You may recall in this regard the principle of emergent properties, illustrated by the formation of the H₂O molecule. This principle provides a new view of reality, which has revolutionized our thinking in the twentieth century. Fritjof Capra says:

It is based on the awareness of essential interrelatedness and interdependence of all phenomena, physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural. It transcends current disciplinary and conceptual boundaries, and will be pursued in new institutions.

This, of course, lies at the heart of systems-thinking, which emphasizes basic principles of organization, and examples of which, as we have already seen, are found from the organization of atoms and cells to the structure and behaviour of solar systems — nay, galaxies.

This scientific view brings us to the crux of our thesis of ‘Holism’, a concept which should rightly be applied to an understanding of our Perennial Philosophy, namely, Theosophy, known in the East as Brahmavidyā and in the West as Theosophia — the Divine Wisdom.

Greater Than the Sum of its Parts

What are the basic propositions at the heart of Theosophy? HPB sets them forth in the Proem to *The Secret Doctrine*:

a) There is ‘An omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable *Principle* on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression . . . It is beyond the range and reach of thought.’ This ‘One Absolute Reality . . . is the rootless root of all that was, is, or ever shall be’. (In other words, there is one ‘single’ holistic source for the entire universe — for both that which is manifested and that which is unmanifested. This is so according to the *Gītā*: ‘The manifest is a part of me.’ Sri Ramakrishna says, ‘God is with form, without form, all from the transcendent’, that is, whole.)

b) The Eternity of the Universe is in toto as a boundless plane, periodically ‘the playground of numberless universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing. . . .’ This is the absolute universality of the law of periodicity, which physical science has observed. ‘An alternation such as that of Day and Night, Life and Death, sleeping and waking, is a fact so common, that in it we see one of the absolutely fundamental laws of the Universe.’

c) There is a fundamental identity of all souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the unknown Root. And for every soul there is the obligatory pilgrimage through the cycle of incarnation (necessity) in accordance with the cyclic and karmic Law.

In all these three fundamentals of

Theosophy we find enshrined the concept of the ONE, the Whole — a whole whose myriad components are interconnected — that is continuously progressing and evolving. What is then its relevance today? These propositions affirm unequivocally that all life is One, and therefore all humanity comprises a single family, and hence the first Object of the TS asserting Universal Brotherhood. This was revolutionary when promulgated, when there was slavery in much of the world, when two-thirds of the people on this planet were subjugated to Western imperialism and colonial rule. And yet this Oneness now forms the core of the UNO charter’s preamble: ‘We the Peoples of the United Nations . . . reaffirm faith in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.’ We have very far to go to achieve these lofty ideals, but no other path at all is there to go than the one laid down by the TS over a century ago.

This perception of one humanity and one world has its spiritual basis in One Absolute Reality, and in turn it demands of all the members to assist in transformation towards a global consciousness, in spite of nuclear weapons and national bitterness. For as soon as we recognize that we are an inseparable component of a vast planetary Ecosystem — that we are not apart from, but an integral part of this manifested world as a whole — it follows that we stand or fall with it, because this itself is a manifestation of non-dualism, or *advaita*. This non-dualism, as expressed in our first Object of Brotherhood, calls for a new

The Theosophist

relationship of interdependence with all other humans on this planet. Further, *advaita* tells us that the One expresses itself in the many, and hence the plurality of richly diverse cultures, religions, languages, etc. We do not want to homogenize, and yet we should make sure that our global resources must benefit regional, national, and even local levels of society. Since our planet is beautiful but finite — as the astronauts' pictures have shown — we cannot expect to be able to continue exploiting and consuming our global resources at the present rate. We must move towards a new lifestyle, physically simpler, but stressing new qualities.

Our motto is 'There is no religion higher than Truth'. It follows from this that there is no single religion that is higher than the others in its embodiment of that Divine Truth. Therefore our second Object calls for a study of comparative religion and philosophy, and also stresses the need to study the relationship between the religious and scientific approaches to the One Truth. What the Society's founders envisaged more than a century ago is progressively coming to pass in our lifetime, namely, it is being recognized that religion and science are complementary modes of understanding the one Divine Wisdom. For confirmation, you may read *The Tao of Physics* and *The Turning Point* by Fritjof Capra and similar statements of modern physicists like Werner Heisenberg, David Bohm, Gary Zukov, and George Gamow. In their works these authors

look in detail at the parallels between the latest findings in Western physics and other sciences, and Eastern mysticism and Vedānta.

The third Object of the Society is concerned with exploring the multi-dimensional nature of man. There is no area of greater worth and importance, given the problems confronting mankind today. As we all know, in past ages men and women were all buoyed up by religious and other value systems which provided them with a view of reality which held that life had a purpose both here and hereafter, and that life persisted after the death of the physical body. This view of reality has been eroded, and erosion of traditional religions and moral values has resulted in what has been called an existential vacuum. Modern secularism and the consumer society have failed to fill this vacuum, resulting in unprecedented increase in alcoholism, drug abuse, divorces, and broken families, crimes of violence, including hijacking, vandalism, and suicides. In the West, so many suicides are of adolescents — an ultimate commentary on the seeming purposelessness of living. There is need of a purposeful view of life for human society as a whole and for its members as individual men and women.

That is what the Perennial Philosophy, in its modern manifestation as Theosophy, can offer. It affirms that in the phenomenal world there has occurred, over vast stretches of geological time, the evolution of forms from single-celled organisms to the magnificent

Greater than the Sum of its Parts

mosaic of thousands of species, of which the most complex and mentally advanced is our own. But Theosophy goes much further than Western science, because it testifies to a second line of evolution — the evolution of cosmic consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo has written in *Savitri*:

A million lotuses swinging on one stem world after world and coloured and ecstatic world climbs towards some far seen or unseen epiphany.

From the perspective of the Perennial Philosophy, evolution is then realized as divine creativity — the evolution of form and of consciousness, both to take place, or rather taking place, in planetary history. This is the universal teleology or goal, the unfoldment and realization of the divine potential in all elements of the manifested world.

This entire manifested world is Divine, but the divinity has to be unfolded, and man can consciously apply himself to this. Hence for us humans the path is one of self-actualization. But the proverbial three score years and ten are utterly insufficient to accomplish this intricate process of actualization, any more than one's education can be completed in just one grade or class of schooling. Thus the Ancient Wisdom teaches that the divine consciousness, embodied in each of us, undergoes numerous incarnations in order to acquire the required experiences and lessons in our spiritual education until we can graduate as perfected and fully accomplished beings. This process is never fortuitous, lucky or unlucky, but

regulated and safeguarded by perfect cosmic justice. 'As ye sow, so shall ye reap' with every experience, pleasurable and painful alike, assisting in the inexorable, and accelerating actualization of our spiritual potential.

It is a magnificent role that each of us is called upon to perform in this cosmic drama, a drama that is open-ended and never ending. We can perceive this as an element in a universal system. Given the nature of the evolution of forms and consciousness alike, we can appreciate that we are parts of a 'system' that is not closed or static, but open-ended and dynamic, and ever creative, in which all elements are interconnected and interacting. Hence, the Principle of Reincarnation plays an indispensable role in making possible the actualization of this universal process of evolution of divine consciousness in each and all. While dynamic systems move from one level of organization and behaviour to new levels in turn, within that process they must be able to maintain a viable, overall balance among their various parts and components. So, in turn, within our own individual process of self-actualization, as sub-systems, we also live and move and have our being by having our actions maintained in a viable, overall balance or equilibrium. Thus we can see also the indispensability of Karma — the principle of action and reaction — in order that the divine system can be maintained and can function with cosmic justice and harmony.

This is an overarching world view and relevant to a new age of global ecology

The Theosophist

and humanity that we are entering. Within this view, what may be the appropriate value system by which to fashion our lives and determine our actions? Once the world is perceived as holistic, it follows that we in turn must adopt a holistic set of values or ethics. We must call for two complementary codes of ethics that are required for societal and individual transformation: an Ecological Ethic and a Self-Realization Ethic. We might think of them as existing on two axes: the first comprising a horizontal axis, and the second a vertical one.

The Ecological Ethic emphasizes:

- (1) the total community of Nature and
- (2) the oneness of the human race.

Such an ethic is essential to preserve the bio-sphere and enhance the evolutionary development of all species and societies in the material world. It is not without notable significance that currently a worldwide interest has developed in regard to 'animal rights' — not only in connection with the preservation of endangered species, but in a new insistence that 'rights' are not to be restricted to humans on the ground that we are reasoning creatures, but rights may embrace all species, precisely because they are all sentient beings and possess both consciousness and feelings. This Ecological Ethic comprises the immanent form of evolution on earth. Spatially and symbolically it exists on the horizontal axis.

As the second Ethic occupies the vertical dimension, the two Ethics form a symbolic cross. The Self-Realization Ethic affirms that the proper end of all indi-

vidual experience is the further growth in individual awareness and the evolutionary development of the human species, and hence the truly appropriate function of social institutions is to create environments that will foster this development. As with the Ecological Ethic, this Ethic too is supported by modern scientific understanding, specifically psychotherapy and the newly emerging humanistic psychology. This Ethic is found at the core of almost all religious philosophies.

These two ethics, one emphasizing the total community of man in Nature and the oneness of the human race, and the other placing the highest value on developing one's own self, are not conflicting but complementary like two sides of the same coin. Together, they leave room for both cooperation and wholesome competition, for love of others and for one's own individuality. Each is a corrective against excesses or misapplications of the other.

We do not live in a *heap* — a big buzzing confusion — of a chaotic universe with no meaning. We live in a *system*, a beautifully organized cosmos regulated by physical laws which guide all scientific endeavours, sustained by *One* eternal source of power and love. The Theosophical world view implies in its first fundamental proposition: 'The Universe and all that exists within it are one inter-related and interdependent whole.' And this is why we can affirm that Theosophy, the modern embodiment of the Perennial Philosophy, is an expression of that universal whole, and therefore is much more than the sum of its parts. ✧

The Theosophical Worker

HUGH SHEARMAN

IN the Theosophical Society there is a core of members who regard the Society not merely as a source of inspiration, interest, and information, a congenial meeting ground for diverse types of people or a pleasant way of spending time. They regard it as a work to be done for humanity; and some regard it as a work to which they are specially commissioned upon a high Authority, and feel that, in serving humanity in this way, they are also serving an inner life or power that is to be intuitively or mystically apprehended within the Society.

The Worker

It is those who regard the Society in one way or another as a work to be done, a service to be fulfilled without reference to self, who are its main source of strength. It is such people whose patience and insight carry the work forward in times when the superficial enthusiasm of the less deeply engaged members is tending to flag. It is such workers who have unobtrusively withdrawn the work into the silence of their hearts in times of persecution only to bring it forth again into

the open when persecution ends, the flame being brighter than before. And, as well as these strongest and staunchest workers, there are others who draw nearer year by year to the standard of strength and stability that these have established.

The Tree and the Fruit

The strength of a good Theosophical worker comes from the fact that he does not depend for encouragement or stimulus upon external results. The success of his activity is measured for him by its quality and its relevance to his inner experience and not primarily by its immediate overt fruitage of visible results.

To be indifferent to external results would alone lead merely to carelessness and ineffectiveness. Results certainly matter and are important; but the best results in our work are not obtained by concentrating anxiously upon bringing them about solely by external means. They are the fruit and not the tree. If we keep thinking of the fruit and at the same time neglecting the tree, the fruit itself will soon deteriorate in quality. The tree in this case is our inner life and deeper purpose, and

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The Theosophist

the fruits for our Society may be increased activity and useful influence. The inner life and deeper purpose must be experienced and cultivated before outer activity and influence can be brought about in the best way and on sure foundations.

The member, whose work for the Society is grounded upon an experience of inner purpose, is not worried by a recession in membership or by various material difficulties. There may be much trouble and suffering through these things, but there does not have to be anxiety or disappointment if the worker is established in the true purpose of the work.

Praise and Blame

Certain fruits of action are likely for the present to be denied altogether to the Theosophical worker. He will not receive praise or recognition for what he does, or the recognition will be of a kind that does not matter and is of no value. Indeed the glow of personal admiration can at times be a chilling indication of failure. For example, if an earnest worker gives a talk in which he tries to convey something that he has deeply felt and valued, and if at the close of his talk everybody praises him and tells him how wonderful he is, he has obviously failed to some extent; for he has attracted attention to his own personality and not to the message which he had to give. The praise is neither good nor bad, but simply irrelevant. The message of Theosophy and the work of the Theosophical Society are not personal matters, not yours or mine or anybody's.

They belong to a whole that is vastly greater than any personality.

If personal approbation is irrelevant to our work, so is personal condemnation, whether of ourselves or of others. Our behaviour springs from our condition and stage of psychological growth; and, while we may often have to draw other people's attention to their obligations, it is no more useful to be angry with them for their shortcomings than to be angry with a child for not being grown-up. A frequent inconvenience suffered by Theosophical workers is the failure of others to keep promises that they make. This usually arises, not from any malice, but from people's immaturity and their failure to be really in control of their own lives and impulses. Without condoning a default, it is more useful to seek out ways of helping the defaulting party to avoid its repetition than to condemn it indignantly. And if we ourselves do things that are an annoyance to others or fail to do things that we ought, it is more useful to find out how we gave rise to disharmony than to try to defend ourselves and argue that we were right.

Isolation

Sometimes a Theosophical worker is placed in a position of great isolation and has, as it were, to hold an outpost in the work. He may also be profoundly isolated in his own home and family and social background. If this happens, it should be accepted that this is the role that the work requires of him. It is the quality of our acceptance of a situation that is

The Theosophical Worker

important and not the transformation of that situation into something that may be personally more congenial. It is useless to think, 'If only I had some understanding person to help me, or if only I had more time and money to devote to the work!' If that is our situation, it is obvious that what the work asks of us is that we should go on without a helper or without time and money. While the work of the Society is a prime duty to the Theosophical worker, it is equally important that for its sake he should himself grow into a good Theosophist; and he will do that best when drawing upon the resources of his own character rather than upon outer circumstances and other people.

Sometimes a devoted worker finds himself in a place where, in spite of his best efforts, the membership of the Society is declining and the work seems likely to die out altogether. Often, if he will keep right on to the end, a new group of people will appear and take up the work. But sometimes the work is actually going to die out for a while in a particular locality, probably because of the prevailing condition of the community there. In such a case it is the task of the worker at that place to conduct as prolonged and efficient a rearguard action as he can, recollecting that it is by the quality of our work now that we lay a claim upon the future. The Theosophical worker has to be one of whom it can be said, 'Winning or losing, he played the game.'

It has sometimes happened that a Theosophical worker has found himself to be the only person to attend a meeting

that has been arranged. His obvious task then is not to lament the absence of others but to go on and hold the meeting alone, pursuing such studies and meditations as he feels to be suitable to the occasion. Whatever overt results may ensue, he will know, if he is grounded upon the inner life and intention of our Society, that his thought is not wasted at such a time.

Looking away from the occasional difficulties and frustrations of individuals, it can be seen that our work as a whole has made great headway and exerted a great influence upon the world since the Society was founded. Something has already been achieved whose results no human calamities, vicissitudes, or baseness can ultimately efface. To that growing success every hard or lonely struggle of an isolated worker is an effective contribution; and, in recognizing this fully, he can discover that he is not alone at all. Loneliness arises from measuring our lives and work by anxious and competitive personal standards. If, by forgetting ourselves in the work, we lose sight of these personal standards, we can discover that we are members of a great company and can never be lonely.

Theosophical work also involves much drudgery and much outwardly unrewarding attention to innumerable small details. If the drudgery is approached with an attitude of openness, accepted and unremittingly dealt with, there comes through it a certain inexpressible experience of detachment and power and a gradually appreciable deepening of the inner nature.

The Theosophist

Changing Human Nature

It might be said that the purpose of the Theosophical Society is to change or transform human nature. This is, after all, the only effective way of changing the human world and bringing into outward and active manifestation that Universal Brotherhood of Humanity which we recognize as a reality but which for so many is still only a vague transcendental hope or not even that. And the one part of the totality of human nature which we are most directly responsible for changing is our own nature.

As well as being many other things, the Theosophical Society is a training ground for human character, and its service is a discipline through which the profounder lessons may be learnt. Theosophical workers can discover this according to the measure of the sacrifice they make for it. That it should be a school for heroes and a means of educating true saints was the intention of its Founders. It is open to any member to take up the challenge which that intention offers. And a major part of the challenge may lie in the fact that all his fellow members have a perfect and admitted right to be neither saintly nor heroic.

In changing his own character, the Theosophical worker may be wise to remember that one of the greatest sources of possible loss of balance is not his vices but his virtues. Any talent which he may have — organizing ability, psychic capacity, knowledge of some special subject, some particular form of good-

ness or reliability — may, by asserting its importance, obliterate a balanced appreciation of the wholeness of things. This can easily happen when a person has some form of psychic sensitiveness. The range of things that he perceives by means of that sensitiveness — usually a very much narrower range than he realizes — seems very important to him, and he can lose his sense of proportion. Many other capacities — a clear analytical mind, special experience of some subject, a special devotion to some aspect of truth — can equally cause him to make a fool of himself and betray the wisdom to which he professes to aspire, if he lets the personal importance of such a capacity run away with him. Safety lies only in self-effacement and the unremitting service of something greater than self.

Indecision

One of the greatest difficulties of the Theosophical worker seems to be indecision. He often sees that he ought to work, feels that he has a duty to work, and yet does not do it gladly. He may therefore fall back upon repeating platitudes and living to some extent in terms of platitudes; but this will not make him happy.

Indecision often takes the form of doing some good and worthy kind of work which is nevertheless not the work that is most urgently required to be done. It is good work and will bring some fruit of commendation and good results, but it is not really the best work in the circumstances. It has been said that the

The Theosophical Worker

good is the enemy of the best. In the Theosophical Society it has often been the conventionally and respectably good rather than the actively bad which from time to time has defeated and stultified the best. Indecision causes people to evade the real heart of the matter, but they continue from habit and a sense of duty to put up a very solid display of good work from which the highlights of more essential achievement are nevertheless absent.

These crises of indecision arise from failure to recognize and experiment honestly with that law of sacrifice which is the essence of Theosophical work. By that law the old pattern of personal values and preferences must be abandoned before a new one is known and enjoyed. We have had the great good fortune through our studies in the Society to come to know that there is something

beautiful, new, and unknown awaiting us, that there are fresher fountains and wider spaces than are known to the narrow conventions and orthodoxies; but we have to move on and lay living claim to that unknown, abandoning the known that has kept it from us and us from it.

It is essentially fear of the unknown and dependence on the known that create the bleak and barren state of indecision. Fear, therefore, is to be sought out and brought to the surface in our lives and dissipated, and dependence is to be recognized and challenged as to its worth. It is not enough that our Theosophy should come to us on good authority. We shall never be happy until we bring it to the test of living experience and find that sacrifice is a reliable way of life. Then we shall be happy and effective workers and not merely dutiful ones. ✧

Have you found your life distasteful?
My life did, and does, smack sweet.
Was your youth of pleasure wasteful?
Mine I saved and hold complete.
Do your joys with age diminish?
When mine fail me, I'll complain.
Must in death your daylight finish?
My sun sets to rise again.

Robert Browning

Books of Interest

SCIENCE AND THE AKASHIC FIELD: *An Integral Theory of Everything*, by Ervin Laszlo, Inner Traditions, Rochester, Vermont, USA, 2007, pp. xii +194.

This book is a lucid presentation of an enlightening study and comprehensive review of science. It includes an Introduction on 'A Meaningful Scientific Worldview for Our Time', and is presented in two parts: 'The Foundations of an Integral Theory of Everything: How Information Connects Everything to Everything Else', and 'The In-formed Universe: Perennial Questions and Fresh Answers from the Integral Theory of Everything'. Besides the references provided for each chapter, there is a bibliography of additional research reports and theories, and an index.

Some important aspects considered by Dr Laszlo in this book are:

- A goal that gives overall direction;
- life and civilization before they evolved on Earth;
- cultivating our long-neglected faculty for accessing the information conserved in the Ākāśic field, which carries and conveys information throughout the cosmos;
- in the Ākāśic field all attributes of the manifest world merge into a state beyond attributes — the state of Brahman;
- a poetic vision of a cosmos where nothing disappears without a trace, and where all things that exist are, and remain, intrinsically and intimately connected;

- the most fundamental element of reality of the quantum vacuum;

- could the universe itself possess some form of consciousness, a cosmic or divine root from which consciousness has grown and with which it remains connected?

- the physical parameters of the universe are so finely adjusted that living organisms can exist and evolve on this planet.

The author draws our attention to many other details substantiating aspects of the scientific worldview corroborated in Theosophy. He states that a theory of everything needs to be 'an integral theory of all the kinds of things we observe, experience, and encounter, whether they are physical things, living things, social and ecological things, or "things" of mind and consciousness' (p. 7). He also indicates that 'Life, mind, culture, and consciousness are part of the world's reality, and a genuine theory of everything would take them into account as well' (p. 11).

'Coherence' has the ordinary meaning of 'logical and consistent', which is easily understood. But when set in a scientific context, it means that 'the living organism is extraordinarily coherent: all its parts are multi-dimensionally, dynamically, and almost instantly connected with all other parts' (p. 43).

The author indicates that in the transpersonal world of consciousness, the principal landmark is the connectedness of

Books of Interest

the human mind: ‘The mind of one person appears able to act on the brain and body of another. This faculty . . . forms the basis of a new branch of medicine known as “telesomatic” or “nonlocal” medicine’ (p. 50). This appears to echo what was stated much earlier in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* (ML No. 45, pp. 263-4):

Nature has linked all parts of her Empire together by subtle threads of magnetic sympathy, and, there is a mutual correlation even between a star and a man; thought runs swifter than the electric fluid, and your thought *will find me* if projected by a pure impulse, as mine will find, has found, and often impressed your mind.

The author elaborates on this ‘connectivity’ in terms of information of a very comprehensive, subtle, and vital nature. The answer to the puzzles of coherence that scientists have found, he says, is ‘the presence in Nature of the active and effective kind of information — “in-formation” — that links all things in the universe and creates quasi-instant connection among them’ (p. 59).

Madame H. P. Blavatsky has described Ākāśa as the sounding-board of Nature which includes different kinds of vibrations and constitutes the manifest-

ation of the universe. Dr Laszlo states:

In the new physics the unified, physically real vacuum is the equivalent of Ākāśa. It is the original field out of which emerged particles and atoms, stars and planets. . . .

Scientists now realize that space is not empty, and what is called the quantum *vacuum* is in fact a cosmic *plenum*. It is a fundamental medium that recalls the ancient concept of Ākāśa (p. 77).

The author states further that the Meta-universe (a vaster, more fundamental universe that is behind or beyond the universe we inhabit) is unlikely to have come into existence out of nothing, as a result of pure chance. The bottom line is not ‘design *or* evolution’; it is design *for* evolution. (pp. 38, 87). This is similar to the well-known statement in *At the Feet of the Master*: ‘For God has a plan, and that plan is evolution.’

Such a breakaway from materialism — still dominant today — is noteworthy.

Dr Laszlo holds a Doctorate from the Sorbonne, and is a former professor of philosophy, systems theory, and futures studies in the US, Europe, and the Far East. He is the founder-president of the Club of Budapest.

A. KANNAN

This idea of Mahat (the great) Ākāśa or Brahmā’s aura of transformation with the Hindus; of Ālaya, ‘the divine Soul of thought and compassion’ of the trans-Himalayan mystics; of Plato’s ‘perpetually reasoning Divinity’, is the oldest of all the doctrines now known to, and believed in, by man.

H. P. Blavatsky, *CW* 13