

Practical Theosophy by C. Jinarajadasa

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by C. Jinarajadasa

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTORY

[Page 1] THE value of Theosophy as a philosophy of conduct lies in the fact that Theosophy approaches us every hour of the day and in every occupation that is ours. While it contains universal truths relating to the profoundest problems of existence, at the same time it tells us luminous truths about the little things of our daily lives. Once a man has grasped Theosophical principles, even if only intellectually, they will never leave him. They are as inseparably woven into the fabric of all life as the truths of evolution are woven into the fabric of Nature. A man may refuse to live up to them, but he cannot separate himself from them; they dog his footsteps in the home, in his business, in his amusements; they make a running commentary on all that he sees and hears.

There are three fundamental Theosophical truths which transform a man's attitude to life when he begins to apply them. They are :

1. Man is an immortal soul who grows through the ages into an ideal of perfection.
2. The growth of the soul is by learning to cooperate with God's Plan which is Evolution.[Page 2]
3. Man learns to co-operate with God's Plan by learning first how to help his fellow men.

The first truth tells us that man is a soul and not the body; that the body is merely an instrument used by the soul, and discarded, as at death, when no longer fit for the soul's purposes. It also tells us of Reincarnation or the process of repeated births on earth, by which method a soul grows by experiences life after life, slowly growing thereby into wisdom and strength and beauty.

The second truth tells us that the purpose of life is not contemplation but action, and that each action of a man's life should be so guided by understanding that it fits in harmoniously with the Divine Plan of Evolution. The more a soul co-operates with the Divine Plan, the happier, wiser and more glorious he becomes.

The third: truth tells us that each man is bound by invisible bonds to all his fellow men; that they rise and fall with him and he with them; that only as he helps the whole of which he is a part, does he really help himself. Love of one's fellow men and altruism in the highest form are therefore the essentials of growth.

These fundamental truths are applicable to every occasion of life, and the Theosophist is he who applies them. Let us see how they can be applied in various departments of human activity.

CHAPTER II

THEOSOPHY IN THE HOME

[Page 3] WHAT is the family, in the light of these Theosophical truths ? It is a meeting-place of souls to help each other towards perfection, No individual in a family comes there by mere chance. The elders and the youngsters, the masters and the servants, the guests, even the domestic animals, are in a family because each is to help and to be helped. There is no such thing as chance in the Divine Plan; each individual in the family comes and goes, is a member of it for a long or a short time, because he can co-operate to further the welfare of all the other members of the family. He has a definite role in the family, and his growth as a soul is by playing that role to the fullness of his capacity. The home is a place for growth, and the ideal home is where the conditions are such as enable each individual member of it to grow swiftest towards his perfection.

There are several aspects of life in the home, and each is affected by the principles of Theosophy, What has Theosophy to say concerning the relation **[Page 4]** of parent and child, husband and wife, master and servant, host and guest ?

First let us take the relation of parent and child. The child has a dual nature, first as a soul and second as a body. It is only the body which the parents provide; the soul of the child lives his life independently, and takes charge of the body provided for him because he hopes to evolve through it. It is only as regards the body of the child that the parents are the elders; but the child, as a soul, is the equal of the parents, and sometimes is wiser, more capable, and more evolved than they.

Therefore the child does not belong to the parents; they are only guardians of his body, so long as the soul cannot fully direct the body during its infancy and youth. The phrase "my child" gives no right over the destiny of the child; it gives only the privilege of helping in the evolution of a brother soul. As the parents evolve by learning to help their fellow men, one such is sent to them as their child.

During the years of infancy, the parent's duty is to help the soul of the child to take control of his body so as to do his work. That soul comes with many experiences of past lives; he is preparing himself for a vast work in the distant future. He takes birth in a particular family because its environment is both what he deserves and that **[Page 5]** from which he can get the experiences he needs for his growth. The duty of the parents is to help the child to those experiences.

This is to be done first by surrounding the child with all that makes for a healthy life; it is the duty of parents to know the rules of hygiene and sanitation, so that the physical conditions for the child may be as perfect as possible. Next the parents must provide an emotional and mental atmosphere that helps the child. The soul of the child is not perfect; he comes from his past lives where he has been both good and evil; tendencies of both are in him as he takes his new birth. But the parents can help the child's growth by recalling to his memory in his early years only the good and helpful experiences and not the evil and vicious. It is true that the soul must eradicate the evil in himself only by his own action; but others can make it easier for him, especially when he begins a new life as a child, by throwing their weight on the side of his good rather than of his evil.

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Therefore the parents must understand the invisible power of thought and feeling, how a thought of anger, whether expressed or not expressed, waters the hidden seeds of anger which the child has brought from his past lives, and how equally thoughts of love and affection starve out the germs of evil while they feed the germs of good. A soul [Page 6] with both good and evil in him can start his new experiment with life as a good child rather than as a bad one, if the parents will foster in themselves their good thoughts and feelings rather than the evil.

While the duty of parents is to surround children with all that tends to goodness and beauty, the failure of a child to be good under those circumstances is not necessarily due to the parents. The soul of the child may find the seeds of evil in himself too strong for control; the parents can but attempt to guide him, but if he will not be guided he must go his own way. The soul will learn through his mistakes, and through the suffering resulting to him and to others from them. If the parents do their duty, they have done all the Divine Plan expects of them; they cannot make or unmake the nature of a soul, for the soul himself must work out his salvation. A mistake is not the calamity that it appears to be when we know that the soul has not one life only within which to set right his error, but several lives. The Divine Plan gives the soul as many opportunities as he needs, till he finally grows into strength and virtue. Therefore no parent need blame himself, if he has done his duty, because his child does not respond to ideals of virtue. The opportunities that the child refuses to take will come to him again, though only after he has been taught by pain to grasp them. What the [Page 7] parents must always do under these circumstances is not to think of the soul by his failures, and so increase his weaknesses, but to think of the soul by his virtues, and so strengthen them.

In the training of children, one important question is how to make a child do the right thing and not the wrong. Unfortunately, civilization hitherto has believed that some kind of corporal punishment is inevitable as a part of the method. While parents have the duty of training a child, they have no right whatsoever to force him ; the excuse that punishment is good for a child is not really borne out in the light of the fullest facts. It is true that in early years the child body is very largely an animal intelligence overshadowed by the soul nature, and that many of a child's activities have little or no direct association with the soul; it is not the soul that eats and drinks, is pettish or obstinate, or is made happy with toys, or laughs when tickled. This animal side of the child does indeed often require curbing; but any kind of outward pressure by corporal punishment, while it may achieve the intended result, brings about also a certain coarsening of the child's vehicles which makes them more obstructive to the spiritualising influences of the Ego.

The higher nature of the child, represented by his latent emotions and thoughts, has in childhood [Page 8] great sensitiveness; if proper care is taken, a fine and happy emotional nature and an open and intuitive mentality can result for the child as he grows up. Harsh treatment of any kind coarsens his finer vehicles, however much it may temporarily check the crudities of the physical; and repeated shocks of this kind finally coarsen and deaden that higher sensitiveness which should be prominent in all men and women as a normal characteristic of human beings. The man who is thankful that he was made to be good by punishment does not realize how much better he might have become, had a more rational system of training been understood by those who had his young vehicles in their charge.

When parents and educationists realize that all the experiences of life have not to be condensed into one brief lifetime; that the soul has an eternity of growth before him ; that he has the right to make his own experiments in life, so long as he does not hinder the growth of others; that each individual alone is responsible for the good or evil that he may do; that others are responsible for him only as they are his brothers and fellow men ; then we shall have a saner outlook upon this matter of child welfare and

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training, and there will be little difficulty in arranging methods of child discipline which will curb the child's animal nature in ways that [Page 9] are not derogatory to his higher nature as a soul.

When we come to the relation in the family as between husband and wife, Theosophy tells us that they are both equal in the responsibilities and privileges which they have in life. What has brought them together in this family relationship is a series of duties and privileges which is called the Law of Karma, or the Law of Action and Reaction. They do not meet for the first time in their age long existence, they have met many times before and have "made Karma" between themselves; they have also "made Karma" with certain other souls who may come to them as their children and dependants. It is this karma, which they owe to each other and to those that shall surround them in the home, that brings two souls together as husband and wife.

Often this karma brings with it the blossoming of affections and sympathies; in such a case we have the ideal marriage. But it may well happen that, after two people have been brought together, the karma between them produces phases of unhappiness. In both conditions, it is the Divine Purpose that they shall get to know each other in their Divine natures, and discover their common work, which is indeed a part of the great Divine work. For while souls can discover each other through [Page 10] love, yet if they will not through love, life forces them to discover through hate; for hate that repels in the beginning attracts in the end. Men and women discover these mysteries of life outside the marital relationship; but nevertheless that relationship has been planned as one mode of discovery. No relation gives such great opportunities for the discovery of another's self and also of one's own self as this; and the man or woman who uses these opportunities, when karma gives them, thereby grows in spirituality and comes nearer the discovery of the great Self of God and all humanity.

When this high spiritual purpose is recognized as underlying family life, family responsibilities and privileges appear in a new light; the trivial duties of the home have shining through them the light of Eternity. The birth of children or their loss, the anxieties and cares of tending them and training them, the joys and the sorrows which they give, are all so many experiences leading to the great Discovery. The family is not a meeting-place of simple travellers who meet for a few brief years, and then go their separate ways in eternity; it is far more a theatre or concert hall where a drama or a composition is being rehearsed, so that all the individuals may learn to perform their parts with beauty and dignity for the delight of man and of God. [Page 11]

Not dissimilar too is the relation in the home between master and servant. Usually where this relation exists, the servant is less evolved than the master; he therefore appears in the family in order that he may be helped to grow by an elder soul. We may engage a servant, but his coming to us is not a matter of chance; we may pay him wages, but our "karmic link" does not cease with the money which we give him. The servant is the master's brother soul; he is usually the younger brother, but the monetary contract between them should never be allowed to make less real the great fact they are brothers.

Servants come to us to be shown a higher ideal in life than they would normally be aware of, were they not brought into association with their masters. Neatness, method, conscientiousness, generosity, courtesy, fine behaviour and culture are examples of conduct which the master has to place before the consciousness of his younger brother, the servant; but while we present to him our example, we must not ask of him, since he is our younger brother, our standard of achievement. It is our duty as masters to be

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patient and understanding while we call out the best from our servants through a spirit of willing co-operation. Many a virtue can be learned as a servant which, in a later life of larger opportunities, will lead to great actions; and those of us who are [Page 12] masters, but who have not yet learned such virtues, will need to return to life as servants to learn them.

Who toiled a slave may come anew a prince,

- For gentle worthiness and merit won ;

Who ruled a king may wander earth in rags,

For things done and undone.

The domestic animals who form a part of the family are not such unimportant members of it as people usually imagine. The Divine Life that is in man is in the animal too; but it is at an earlier stage and therefore less evolved. But it is to evolve to a higher through contact with man. Man's duty to his domestic animals is to soften their savage nature and implant in them manlike attributes of thought and affection and devotion. Therefore, while the animal gives us its strength in service, we must use it purposely to train it towards humanity, for the animal will some day grow to man. If we bring out a dog's intelligence by our training, it should not be used to strengthen his animal attributes, as when we train our dogs to hunt. A domestic cat may be "a good mouser," but it is not for that reason that God has guided him into the family. If we train horses, it certainly should not be to develop speed for racing or hunting ; the service they give us should be rewarded by bringing out of them qualities that more contribute to their evolution towards humanity than speed. [Page 13] The general principle with regard to our relation to our domestic animals is that they are definitely sent to us to have their animal attributes of savagery as far as possible weaned out of them and human attributes implanted in their stead, for what is animal today will some day be man, as man today will some day be a God ; and he serves evolution best who helps the Divine Life to move swiftly on its upward way.

CHAPTER III THEOSOPHY IN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

[Page 14] THERE are just now in the educational world many attempts at reforms; all who have the practical duty of teaching and helping in the building of the character of children are aware how unsatisfactory are the existing theories and methods. The drift of these various reforms is clearly evident when we approach the problem of education from the standpoint of Theosophy. The existing theories start with the supposition that the child is an intelligence which began at birth, and that, when he comes to school, his mind is a *tabula rasa*; necessarily, therefore, the aim of education is to give the child a knowledge which he does not possess and to mould a character which is yet unformed. These theories are still accepted as true, in spite of the fact that every one who has had to teach boys and girls, and every parent who has had to bring them up, knows by practical experience that children have definite characters, as well as definite aptitudes, from their earliest infancy.[Page 15]

From the Theosophical standpoint, the first fact that, has always to be kept in mind with regard to a child is that he is an immortal soul, and that his appearance as a boy or girl is in order that the qualities latent in that soul may unfold themselves through experience. The second fact is that the visible world is only one part of a larger world in which the child lives, and that all the time the child is being affected for good or evil not only by what he sees and hears, but also by the invisible atmosphere of the thoughts and feelings of others. As an immortal soul, the child has already had many experiences of life, and his present appearance as a child is only one of many similar appearances in past ages. He has, therefore, known much about life, and has already gained a certain amount of experience of what to do and what not to do. This knowledge, however, is largely dormant, so far as the child's brain is concerned.

The true aim, therefore, of education is twofold: first, to call out this latent knowledge in the child; he must be made quickly to rediscover such principles of conduct as, in his past lives, he has tested and found were valid for him; and that form of education is the best which enables the soul, working through the child's brain, to come swiftest to a remembrance of his past successes and failures. The second aim in education is to bring the child [Page 16] as quickly as possible to a synthetic view of life; for no man or woman begins to be educated until he or she sees life from some central standpoint. In the general activities of life, we are apt to miss the mark, because we permit divisions between our mental and emotional and moral worlds; and when we thus exist in compartments, the resultant of our energies is always less forceful than it might be if we lived as a whole. Therefore education must, from the beginning, instill into the child the sense of a whole in life and since he has already come to some degree of synthesis through his experiences in past lives, the educationist should aim at bringing the recollection of this synthesis swiftly, and at developing it to embrace a yet larger horizon.

This work of enabling a soul, through his child body, to come to his old synthesis, has to be done in three stages, those of the Kindergarten, the School, and the College; we shall now see what Theosophy has to say concerning education in each of these stages.

The child is not merely the little physical body which we see; he is also an astral body of emotions and a mental body of ideas. All the three vehicles, mental, astral and physical, make up the child; and all three are sensitive and require training and co-ordination. Each vehicle has a certain vitality of its own, quite

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apart from the commanding general [Page 17] vitality of the soul of the child; and each has a rudimentary consciousness with likes and dislikes which are not necessarily those of the soul of the child. These subconscious streams of consciousness are pronounced during child life, and they have to be kept within their proper bounds while the soul uses the vehicles which give rise to them. Sometimes some of these subconscious elements may be quite contrary to the nature of the child; the physical body of the child may be extremely boisterous or lethargic, because of the physical heredity of the parents, but this need not mean, necessarily, that the soul lacks either serenity or strength. Exactly similarly, each child's astral and mind body have energies of their own to start with, quite apart from the energy of the soul of the child who uses the vehicles. Therefore, the principal aim in the Kindergarten stage of education is to enable the child to get control of his vehicles; the brain needs to be developed by muscular movements, the emotional nature by feelings, and the mental by thoughts.

The work in the Kindergarten, as we all know, trains the child's body in method and order and rhythm, and trains his brain centres to recognise the concepts of colour, shape, weight, temperature, and so on. The deftness of hand taught in Kindergarten work reacts on the emotional and, [Page 18] mental nature of the child, and such training is very necessary, so as to enable the soul to come more swiftly to his synthesis. But we have to recognise that the child's character is influenced not only by the objects he handles and by the shapes he sees, but also by innumerable invisible influences; the lines and angles and curves of the room in which he works, the colour of walls, and the shapes of the physical objects surrounding him in his Kindergarten room, all invisibly help or hinder him; every line in the objects around him, every shade of colour, every tone he hears has its influence on his mental and emotional natures; we can help children or hinder them by the objects which surround them in their Kindergarten life. Modern Kindergarten methods have recognised the value of the handling of various objects by the child; but they have yet to recognise that the objects themselves are continually, though invisibly, handling the child, and that they are moulding him in the right way or warping him in the wrong.

The influence of the teacher upon the child, when viewed theosophically, is far more than educationists now realise; for the child is influenced not only by the visible teacher but also by that part of the teacher's nature which is invisible. A sharp word or a bright smile from a teacher has, we know, visible effects; exactly similar, but far more powerful, is [Page 19] the effect of the thought of the teacher. The true teacher must be equipped in educational methods not only intellectually but also emotionally; and in the Kindergarten specially is this essential, since the child's delicate astral and mental vehicles are extremely sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of the teacher. Without love for children and a keen interest in their ways no one has a right to be a teacher; and this general principle is most important in the Kindergarten, where children are given over to the teacher almost body and soul.

Many improvements have yet to be made in the Kindergarten, but the general principle underlying them all is that, while the child's three vehicles are plastic, it is the duty of the teacher to bring to bear upon them not only the visible but also the invisible influences, so as to bring down into the child's brain as quickly as possible the fuller nature of the soul.

After the child gains a certain amount of control of his vehicles in the Kindergarten, in the next stage at school he has to gain the sense of Law. His emotions are therefore now, to be more fully worked upon. Now the child is born with an emotional nature which he has developed through many lives; the teacher has not therefore an altogether plastic or inchoate emotional nature to work upon. He can only modify it, eradicating any twists or warps which exist in it, and strengthening what is beautiful. [Page 20] What has to

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be given to the child — or usually, as a matter of fact, reawakened in him — is a deep capacity for feeling, with, at the same time, a serenity while he feels, .

This can largely be achieved by working with the child's physical body; Herein lies the value of gymnastics, especially all gymnastics, which have in them some sense of rhythm. Wherever a rhythm can be developed in physical action, as in the dance or in eurhythmies, there is a clear emotional reaction and the child's invisible emotional body is steadied and gains a sense of law and order; and this reacts on the mental nature so as to attune it to the thought of law. This effect is specially heightened where the rhythmic movements are performed by many children in common; it is as if while they all work together they become units of an invisible rhythmic movement, which imposes upon them a great law of beauty and order in action.

The sense of law and beauty is also greatly developed by training the child in poetry and music; this training does not mean that the child must be made to write poetry or to compose music — unless indeed he has a special aptitude for either within him — but that he shall be given both music and poetry as his emotional food. Every child from earliest years should know some poetry and some music suited to his capacity; but we must take the greatest care [Page 21] that the word-phrases or musical phrases are really suitable. For just as physical dirt may infect the sensitive body of the child, so too can the emotional and mental natures be infected by harmful poetry and crude music. Nursery rhymes, with their usual jumble of thoughts and images which have little relation to life, are in this respect distinctly harmful; perhaps presently our poets will give us great poems for little children to take the place of the nursery rhymes which are taught them now. If we could, in our modern civilisation, abolish the ugly noises of the streets, and the ugly pictures on hoardings, as well as the use of phrases in language distorted from their true meaning, we should not need to complain of unruly children; unruliness is a malady of the emotional nature, but the germs of it are not so much in the children as in the outer world which surrounds them in our modern civilizations.

The mental nature of the child has to be trained by making it strictly true to fact; and this is exceedingly difficult in these days, because so many of the words we use do not signify what they are meant to signify. Words having definite, accepted meanings are often used for purposes of exaggeration or as slang, and these things confuse the sensitive mental nature of the child. Therefore the greatest care has to be taken that children only [Page 22] hear words which are true, that is, words which have some clear and precise relation to the thing signified. The mental nature of the child is extremely active and difficult to hold along definite lines; therefore clear descriptions of things must be given to him and also expected from him. This mental accuracy in his education will enable his dormant mentality to express itself more fully as the years pass; accuracy of thought and description is necessary for the highest of reasons, which is to bring down to the child's brain his consciousness as a soul who has already thought accurately about such experiences as have been his in his past lives.

Needless to say the child's mind has to be trained by stories. The mind is one of the finest architectural implements that we have; the mind's nature is to build. We must, therefore, give it suitable material at the varying stages of its growth, and in early years show the mind what makes for beauty in building. Here comes in the use of fairy stories, and especially of myths; myths have in them an intrinsic beauty of structure, and the child's mind is trained to high imaginative faculty by teaching him the great romances of the visible and invisible worlds.

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A necessary element in education is to give the child, even in his earliest years, some definite synthesis upon which to found his imagination; and for [Page 23] this religion is fundamentally necessary. A religion need not mean definite dogmas of a theological kind; what the child needs to start with is some great universal thought embodying in it a universal feeling. Every religion has many such suitable thoughts, even for a child's mind, and it is perfectly possible to surround children with a beautiful religious atmosphere. Each child should be taught morning and evening to recollect himself as a soul by some simple prayer of dedication ; one such, greatly in use among the children of Theosophists, is this simple prayer of the "Golden Chain " :

I am a link in the Golden Chain of Love that stretches around the world,

- and must keep my link bright and strong.

So I will try to be kind and gentle to every living thing I meet,

- and to protect and help all who are weaker than myself.

And I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts, to speak pure and beautiful words,

- and to do pure and beautiful actions.

May every link in the Golden Chain become bright and strong.

In this beautiful prayer the child's imagination can easily grasp its symbolism, while the prayer has within it the great thought of a larger unit of life than the child himself. A work yet waiting to be done for education is to write textbooks and story-books for children which present to them the [Page 24] universal life of humanity, while fascinating their imagination at the same time; we could make of children great philosophers, if only we realised that philosophy is not a matter of definite systems or schools, but of thoughts and feelings and aims which the best of humanity have all in common.

One further important element in the child's education should be the teaching given to him through tending plants and animals; these lower orders of creation should be near the child's life constantly, so that he may remember himself as one linked in a great chain of life, and realise that his nobility grows as he serves not only those above him but also those below. And apart from this, each flower or tree or animal radiates its own influence, and we can utilise these invisible aids to hasten the child's growth in thought and feeling.

When the time comes for a boy or girl to go to College, we may take for granted that the vehicles — physical, astral and mental — have been disciplined to some extent and are fairly under control. Therefore now begins a period when the soul can definitely impress on the brain his inner attitude to life, in order to train his vehicles for the work in life which he plans to do. Unfortunately, in present-day Universities, the training given is deficient, because the teaching is so exceedingly academical and has little relation to the practical [Page 25] problems of life as seen by the soul. The most useful part in many ways, of University life is not the instruction received from the professors, but that received from the students, in games and in social intercourse. The usual result of College education as it exists now is very well described in these lines :

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- A young Apollo, golden-haired,
• Stands dreaming on the verge of strife,
Magnificently unprepared
For the long littleness of life.

When Theosophical ideas prevail in Universities, it will be recognised that the teaching given must definitely aim at making clear to the student his own problems as a soul. He has come to life to do a work, and the preliminary years of child and youth have been spent in building his vehicle; now he is free to survey his past and look into the future, in order to make clear to himself what he is and what is his work. The help to be given to him is by presenting such aspects of culture as awaken within him his ancient synthesis. All through his education in Kindergarten and School this has been one of its aims; but while the synthesis there was mainly felt emotionally, during College it should be recognised intellectually.

The synthesis is to be brought before him by arranging the experiences of the geniuses of the past [Page 26] and of the present in such a manner that their general impression is to strengthen in him his innate enthusiasm for his own special work as a soul. If any man or woman finishes College without having found within himself or herself a deep enthusiasm for a work, the University has failed in its aim so far as he or she is concerned. It is the function of a University to show us what are the objects worth pursuing in life, not, as now, merely to equip us for a profession. This was indeed the aim of University life in Athens, but in modern days there is so little of clear understanding of what life is, that in the University the professors themselves are confused as to the great problems of existence, and hence their enthusiasms run primarily on intellectual and academic lines. It is well known that Oxford and Cambridge have a strong atmosphere of their own, but that atmosphere is more of a crystallised past than of a living present or an absorbing future.

A true University should so train a man that through all his work in life, after he leaves the University, there shines a serene radiance as of an immortal doing a work in time; and this is the real basis of any culture worth the name. It has been said that the function of a University is to turn out gentlemen and scholars; the work of the University, from the Theosophical standpoint, should be to [Page 27] make of men immortals and servers. It is in the University that the highest ideals of life should be reflected with beauty and serenity; and the greatest ideal of life to be taught to men in such a place in modern days should be the joy of fellowship in working together with all men and nations in one definite work for the welfare of humanity. Of the many perfections which a University can give to a man or woman, that which is most needed today is to make him or her a Knight of Service, just as of old with King Arthur's band, one of that

Goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record.

Those of us who have gained what modern Universities have to give, know how much we owe to them; but we cannot help confessing that while they equipped us in some fashion mentally, they did not equip us to understand the problem of life which confronted us when we left College. We have had to unlearn, slowly and painfully, many of the lessons of the past, and learn many strange and difficult lessons of

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whose existence our professors told us nothing. If all this could be radically changed, and the University be made definitely a place where to us, as souls, our soul's work is pointed out, and also how, as we do that work, there is all round us the background of Eternity, what could not University life be as an essential **[Page 28]** part in the life of every man and woman ! As things are now, many a man and woman who has had no College education is a nobler Soul and a greater Server than those who have had their years in a University. All this will surely change when the fundamental principles of Theosophy permeate education, and our professors profess above all things the great truths which reveal to men their Divine nature, and how that nature is developed through human service.

CHAPTER IV THEOSOPHY IN BUSINESS

[Page 29] THERE is an idea largely prevalent in the world among religious people that business activities are incompatible with a truly religious life. This has been due to the peculiar conception of life which certain exponents of religion have given to their followers. We know how today people think of "religious" interest and "secular" interests, and there is a tacit recognition that they must be opposed, or, if not actually in opposition, at least mutually exclusive. This conception arises from an exaggeration in religions of the thought of the Transcendence of God; the Creator, having once created His world, is thought of as living in some sphere removed in space from that world, and as merely supervising it. In this religious conception, man, as the creature of God, has only the duty of pleasing his Maker so as to make secure his own salvation. I well remember a sermon which I heard once in a Christian Church on the duty of man to God; this duty was described as composed [Page 30] of the three virtues of humility, gratitude and obedience. The preacher insisted upon the subservience of the soul of man to God as a pre-requisite to a religious life. It was evident that according to him the ordinary activities of life in the home, in business, and in amusements, counted for very little with God, and that man was judged according to certain theological virtues which he had or had not acquired. This extreme Christian conception of the old problems of man's everyday life is very vividly summed up, in the verse of a hymn which was sung by the congregation on this particular day of the sermon; the verse is this :

I am going home in the good old way,
• I have served the world with its worthless pay,
For its hopes are vain and its gains are loss,
And I glory now in the blood-stained Cross.

Here we have very clearly the thought that the multifarious activities of the world have no special use in the spiritual growth of man, and that what we gain of capacity and growth outside the strictly religious sphere is but "worthless pay". Wherever in a religion we have the idea of renunciation and asceticism, there usually develops this idea of the uselessness of life in the world.

The natural consequence of the division of life into secular and religious is the creation of two moralities which have often little relation to each [Page 31] other; the religious man will consider that it is perfectly legitimate to be selfish, savage and unspiritual in his business dealings with a fellow man, whom he will try to love as a "neighbour" in his religious relation towards him; a deeply religious man, both tender-hearted and kind in one part of his nature, yet will possess another part of savagery and resentment, and will see no reason why this latter phase of himself should be modified at the cost of business gain. A fraudulent but pious milkman, who will water his milk on weekdays with perfect nonchalance, will do it on Sunday too, with his pious Sunday face, and then go to church and revel in his religion !

Now Theosophy abolishes these two moralities in the world of business, by showing that the business world is as much a part of God's world as temples and churches. It is One Life which is manifesting through all the activities of men, and all the activities which have been developed in civilisation are necessary in the Divine Plan. God's plan for the salvation of humanity works not only through individual

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men, but also through men as groups. Men's natures must be grown emotionally, mentally and spiritually, and one cause of this growth is their collective activity in various organisations. In the collective life of humanity, various types of divine agents are required to carry out His purpose; the [Page 32] ruler and the lawgiver, the fighter, the teacher, the priest, the healer, the artist, are all required to play their roles as actors in the Divine Drama of life; but not less of a divine actor is the business man.

Now the man to whom business is one of his principal obligations comes as a soul into life with as much a spiritual purpose as the man who is the priest; that purpose is to equip himself as a soul for activities everywhere and in all time. He does not come to gain wealth or ease, but capacity; his Soul is put into a business life, rather than into one of religion or art, because he can learn such soul qualities as he next requires for his growth more swiftly in the business world than any other sphere. The sterling virtues which are learned in business are fundamentally spiritual; no man can be a successful business man unless he is one-pointed unless he is quick to respond to opportunities, unless he grows in imagination. These are not "secular" virtues because they are developed in what we hold to be secular activities; they are capacities which are built into the life of the soul. Certainly we find that a large number of business men, highly endowed with these qualities, are selfish, cruel and hard, but this does not mean that the virtues are useless, because the possessors of them lack other virtues. When we remember that a man lives many lives, and that once he acquires a capacity he [Page 33] never loses it, we shall then understand how, after a business man has developed these virtues in one life (even though it has meant the development at the same time of selfishness), in a future life, when his vision is cleared and he begins to be altruistic, he will still have this marked ability when he turns to his work in altruism.

In the evolution of humanity, the faculties of all men, good and bad, are used; "blindly the wicked work the righteous will of heaven". The world's lands are, habitable today only because a few pioneers originally went out into the deserts and forests and made them habitable; they may have gone out purely for selfish purposes, but nevertheless they were used as the agents of a Divine Plan. Men may go out as pioneers into new lands to gain wealth for themselves; but we know that such a life requires heroism, sacrifice, doggedness, strength, and these virtues become permanent acquisitions of the soul. In the same way, today, in the "trust magnates" and "beef barons" of America and elsewhere, we have manifestly great capacity together with much selfishness and lust for power; but they are building up more efficient ideas of business, and so are helping in the Divine Plan. As for their selfishness, that will be purified out of them through suffering in future lives; and when after that purification they gain a true perspective [Page 34] of life, they will have with them the strong virtues which they developed through their greed and selfishness, and they will then be far more efficient on the side of good than many another who may have been good and pious but had acquired little capacity.

The practical message of Theosophy to the business man is that he should identify himself with the higher possibilities and motives in business, and not with the lower. What the former are, we can see if we look at the various stages of development in business capacity which men show. In the earliest stage of commercial life, we have mere greed, and the man is all the time thinking of his private interests and gloating over them as his particular possessions. In the second stage, the element of greed is mastered by the mental element of business routine, and the individual becomes practically the slave of business, busying himself continually with all kinds of activities in business, not always because of the profits involved, but largely because these activities give him the sense of vitality and reality. In the third stage of growth, the business man is conscious of himself as the great master of capacity, and is far more conscious of this power as he exercises it than of the gain it brings; he is often most unselfish about

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individuals and most ascetic in his private life, though of course he will manifest the acme of selfishness in his utter [Page 35] one-pointedness in the exercise of this power. But then will inevitably come the last stage, when, in the exercise of his master-capacity, he sees what are the honourable lines of activity for him as a guardian of divine energies.

The Theosophical business man should always aim at idealism in his profession; and this is quite compatible, even today, in spite of all the obstacles in his way. The first characteristic of this idealism should be the holding of a high conception of his business as a noble contribution to human welfare, and with this a keen desire to bring it to a high state of perfection. He will, therefore, be thoroughly efficient not only in his own line, but he will try to join with others in associations, so as to uphold the ideal. Much has yet to be done in bringing business men together into organizations, not merely for private interests, as in Trusts, but to discuss the fundamentally efficient principles involved in business. Into the hands of business men the Divine Plan entrusts the development of one aspect of the world's work, and it is their duty to see that their work is done with as little waste of time and energy as possible. Something has been done so far in standardising tools and machinery; much more needs to be done along this line, so that there may be throughout the world facilities for the mutual development of inventions and processes. It is from [Page 36] the business men of the world today that we expect the practical carrying out of the great ideals of Internationalism; while religious teachers may expound Universal Brotherhood, the practical foundations for it must be laid by the business men of the world.

The Theosophical business man must always remember that the world's development is part of a great Plan, and "big men" in all departments of life are employed to carry out the Divine work. For instance, just now there are great changes taking place in the business world in bringing about great combinations; we know how ruthless such Trusts are and how they push to the wall the small merchant. Yet we see at the same time the slow transformation of material development from the work of a few for their own gain to the work of a great national department for the welfare of all. It is because of the plans of business development laid down by such combinations that one day, where spirituality and not greed controls such Trusts, we shall be able utterly to abolish poverty. Every invention that has made life easier for men is a realization of the thought of God, and an inventor is not less a God's priest than is a priest of religion.

All men are channels of one great Divine Force, and as it runs through them they retain it for themselves, some more and some less; and most do not [Page 37] understand the duty they have of transmuting that Force into the least little activity of life. If the business man were to recognize this principle, he would then realize how much of a builder he is in the divine edifice of human life. Did not Christ say : "I must be about my Father's business ? " The great Father lives mysteriously in our world — as ruler and lawgiver, healer and priest; but He lives, too, strange as it may seem, as the "business man". This is the high aspect of business which Theosophy shows, and the man or woman, whose Dharma or Duty is business, can bring a high spirituality to all work in shop and in office, in factory and in counting-house, doing all as a part of "my Father's business ",

CHAPTER V THEOSOPHY IN SCIENCE

[Page 38] THEOSOPHY stands foremost among the religious philosophies of the world today in the wholehearted acceptance of the facts of modern science. More than this, Theosophy so continually appeals to observation and reason that an inquirer into Theosophy, who has had any preliminary scientific training, finds himself thoroughly at home in the Theosophical method. This is not necessarily because the conclusions of science and Theosophy are the same, but because both are the result of a certain method of inquiry. We owe the modern scientific method largely to the work of Francis Bacon; it was he who laid such emphasis on the need of careful observation, of methodical grouping of facts, and of rising from particular ideas about them to general concepts of natural law. This method of induction has enabled the modern scientist to discover great fundamental natural laws, and the practical application of the discoveries of science has been to revolutionise civilization. **[Page 39]**

The facts which have so far been considered by the modern scientist tell us of a vast mechanical process in Nature, and, within her an inexplicable tendency to transformation which is called Evolution; and this tendency, ever at work, brings into being the myriads of forms in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms. The facts observed show us a great ladder of life, which stretches without a break from the speck of dust to the greatest human genius.

Of course it is recognized that this process, which has created the human intelligence, must not be judged in its sole relation to man, for man is only one species out of myriads. Now, if we consider what science says about man, then, so far as the generally accepted facts of modern science tell us, man, as an individual of his type, is merely a material form and the forces playing through that form. When that material form disintegrates, nothing remains of him except what slight change he has caused, in the trend of the evolutionary process, by any attempts he may have made to modify his environment away from savagery and towards civilization.

Theosophy has no doubts to cast upon scientific *facts*, nor as to their complete authority to solve the problems of life. There are, however, certain weaknesses inherent in modern science which make the present scientific *conclusions* only of partial value. **[Page 40]** The first of these is the over-hasty generalization which characterises the inductive method in practice; theoretically, the conclusions drawn from a group of facts should be recognized as warranted only so long as no contradictory facts present themselves; in practice, however, the tendency is for the scientist, when his hypothesis seems to explain his facts, to take for granted that there are not other facts which might question his deductions. There is hence an authoritative conclusion in scientific theories which is really unscientific. A striking instance of his weakness in scientific method is illustrated by the geological theories as to the age of the world, which was stated conclusively not so many decades ago to be only a few hundred thousand years. But one sole fact, in itself of no greater consequence in evolution than any other fact, the nature of Radium, has largely modified all these geological theories; and scientists now feel warranted in assuming that the earth's age should be counted by millions of years instead of by hundreds of thousands. A second example is the way that theories of heredity were accepted for decades as absolutely conclusive, in the light of the assumption that acquired characteristics were transmitted; this assumption was accepted as a truth mainly because the facts so far gathered did not contradict such a hypothesis. But a few facts discovered in the crossing of peas, considered so **[Page 41]** trivial as not to deserve notice for several

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years, have imposed on the old theories an entirely new adjustment to facts, and Darwin's theories are profoundly modified today by the facts of Mendelism. "When modern science began, it was Bacon's intention that the first hypotheses, however absolute they seemed to be in their agreement with facts, should be nothing more than what he called "First Vintages"; but it is the tendency of the scientist to come to finalities when he observes his facts, and to presume that because finalities are useful for the practical purposes of experiment and life, therefore they must be accepted as the fundamental verities.

A second weakness in science is due more to the individual scientist and less to the method, and this is exemplified in the general tendency, still shown by scientists, to ignore those facts which tend to prove a psychic or spiritual nature in man. Scientists, owing to an unscientific bias, have erected barriers to truth in this matter as cramping to human progress as any that theologies have ever made. Even today, the small band of scientists who have scientifically examined such facts about man's spiritual nature as are within the range of modern science, meet with an unscientific hostility when they announce the results of their investigations, largely because those results condemn the dogmatism of past scientific conclusion.
[Page 42]

A third and a more fundamental weakness of science, so far as practical life is concerned, is that science cannot give, by her very nature, a real philosophy of life. Every day that passes adds to the old stock of facts, and so many specialised branches of science now appear, that today we cannot "see the wood for the trees". There are so many facts being discovered, that every scientific "law" must be held merely tentatively, if we are to be strictly scientific; one new fact — as Radium — may mean a profound modification of the "law". Science can legitimately only describe a process, and not a direction; not having all the facts, she cannot scientifically presume any kind of a resultant diagonal. Science can, therefore, never give a philosophy, but she can give the indispensable facts for one.

Theosophy, dealing as it does continually with the facts of the Universe, is but a continuation of science; the difference, however, is that Theosophy has a larger group of facts to go upon, and also shows in what way an individual can discover for himself that final diagonal of life which is the true philosophy of conduct. The facts of Theosophy have been gathered in precisely the same way as the geologist or physicist gathers his facts, that is, by a carefully trained faculty of observation, leading to induction and deduction, and tested repeatedly **[Page 43]** by every new fact. In Theosophy there is the tradition of an Ancient Wisdom, carefully built up by this method by mighty scientific Intelligences, who are called the Masters of the Wisdom; it is their scientific knowledge which is stated in modern Theosophy. The principal point in which this ancient science differs from the modern is in the conclusion, in the light of facts discovered by the ancient scientists, that the evolutionary process consists in a dual development of life and of form. Every object consists of the form it appears to be, and a life which holds the matter in that form, but is capable of independent existence at the dissolution of the form. This life may seem scarcely to have the characteristics of life, as in a piece of mineral, or it may show the first germs of what we call life, as in the fungus. Just as science shows a magnificent ladder of the evolution of form, so Theosophy shows a similar ladder of the evolution of life and consciousness, from that of the atom to that of the Creator of the Universe. The Masters of the Wisdom have also brought within the range of scientific observation the invisible worlds, upon the fringes of which some modern scientists are now beginning to come in some of their experiments.

Moreover Theosophy can give that which modern science cannot give legitimately, and that is a proof of the final consummation of evolution, which is **[Page 44]** the transformation of the human individual

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consciousness, by a process of rebirth and growth, into a consciousness showing the attributes of Divinity. The immortality of the soul and its steady growth into greater life need not always be mere speculations, because Theosophy points out how an individual can know these things for himself.

The method of discovery of these "final causes" follows logically from the highest ideals of modern science, which inculcate a pure, impersonal observation and thinking. Theosophy carries this high scientific thought concerning nature into a vaster realm, presenting to the intelligence the greater ranges of facts of the invisible worlds. The high training of the imagination which Theosophy gives, guided as it is by a perfect altruism, evokes then within the individual's consciousness a new faculty greater than mind, and this new faculty can know the final causes. When the perfect scientist, or the true Theosophist, has "cast out the self" in his observation of life, his mind develops a luminous quality which makes it the mirror which reflects a greater faculty than the mind itself. This new faculty, which is nearest described, though only partly, by the word Intuition, is acquired by no external means, but is born within a man's own inner nature; it gives him then the sole criterion of Truth, for beyond any doubt of the most critical [Page 45] mind, he is able to know Truth at first hand for himself. In thus continuing the scientific training of the mind till the mind itself is transcended, Theosophy fills up the inevitable gaps in the scientific method, since it gives that final criterion directly to each individual, for the lack of which science is unable to give a valid philosophy of life and conduct.

The great value of science in human evolution is due not only to the practical changes that the discovery of natural law effects in civilization, but also to the spiritual training that each individual gains by being taught to be scientific in his observation of the world around him. There is no one who can do without the scientific method, till at least he gains sufficient serenity and purity of mind to discover the higher process of intuition within him; the more are the facts of nature, to be observed by him impersonally and purely, which are brought into the consciousness of man, the more is he helped to realize the higher nature within him. This is why the scientific method is a necessary part of the highest human training and of spiritual growth.

Theosophy applied to science means that scientific facts are considered not mainly for their utilitarian value to add to man's comforts, but primarily because their understanding shows man the true harmony of the larger whole of which he is but a [Page 46] part. There is no greater strength or dignity possible to man than from his realization of a Divine Mind at work in all the manifestations of nature; for when that Divine Mind is seen, then it is seen as the Good, the True and the Beautiful; and when that Divine Mind is revered, then man himself grows in wisdom, strength and beauty. Only slight changes are needed, in the present groupings of scientific facts, to show to man's intelligence the wonderful design that is woven in nature to make a perfection and harmony cognisable alike by the eye and the brain. The study of nature's forms, under the guidance of Theosophical scientists, can be worked out, even for little children, so as to train the mind to reverence all manifestations of life, whether in stone or plant or animal. Specially would emphasis be laid on the geometry of nature, according to which electrons are built into atoms, and atoms into elements, and elements into the forms of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms; not chemical forces alone would be studied, but chemical shapes too. The Platonic solids, with their development from the tetrahedron into the icosahedron, would be studied as the "axes of growth" of all forms. Science would then give the alphabet of rhythm and beauty, learning which, men would know how to find beauty everywhere in every object of all the worlds, visible and invisible. [Page 47] A pure intellect is the glory of science, and the pure in mind take conscious delight in the Good, the True and the Beautiful, which mirrors itself in their minds.

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Every child should be taught to observe the life of nature around him; he should be guided to take a keen interest in such facts of nature as are within the range of his experiences, and his elders should carefully lead him on stage by stage in his discoveries and in his thinking till, even with his child's limitations, he develops something of the faculty of impersonal observation. He will then develop, if not a keen interest in nature, at least a deep respect for her ways. This faculty, which he develops through a scientific training, will affect his whole mentality, enabling him to come more quickly than without such training to truth in all the departments of life in which he will engage. His moral nature will manifest greater justice because he will be less passionate in his judgment; he will be less affected by hearsay and opinion and popular prejudice because of the growing instinct in him to be on guard against the mere presentations of facts, when such presentations are not real but illusory. There would be less of malice and hatred, gossip and prejudice in the world, if men in their childhood were to be trained in the rudiments of scientific thinking; these moral failings become impossible [Page 48] when the cause of them, which is false thought, is removed.

The message of Theosophy to science is to bring out her *real* strength as an aid to the discovery of truth. For that which science deals with, the facts of nature, are expressions of a great Divine Life; and he who can come in the true scientific spirit before a fact comes indeed before God Himself. For a fact, when clearly conceived, is a fragment of the great Reality in which is all that men need for their growth and happiness. The truer the Theosophist, the more scientific he is, just as the truer the scientist is to his ideal method, the more of a Theosophist he is, in fact though not in name.

CHAPTER VI THEOSOPHY IN ART

[Page 49] THE place of Art in life grows in significance each day as men develop greater faculties of thought and feeling. The higher the civilisation the more powerful is the influence of art in it; and the capacity for artistic conception and expression in a man becomes in many ways the standard of his evolutionary achievement. Why this is so we shall see, when we examine what art is from the standpoint of Theosophy.

Now all our living leads to action; even in deep meditation a man is acting, and acting in reality far more vigorously than when he disturbs merely the equilibrium of physical nature. Each action is the final issue of a series of forces either mental or emotional. When an action originates in thought, that action is wise and just where thought has dealt with realities and not falsities; where the thought has been grounded in truth, and is four-square to the facts of nature, the action is right and productive of good to the individual and to the whole. It is the function of science to produce right action by purifying the mind and by training it to be true to reality.

The function of art, on the other hand, is to induce right action through right feeling; and since art has shown itself to be in many ways a synthesis of man's highest self-expression, it is obvious that in our human feelings there are ranges of emotion by means of which we can come to truth swifter than by any exercise of even the most discriminating mind. Man in his emotional nature is near to the brute in some of his desires; yet there are within him certain emotions which unbar hidden reservoirs of power which makes him absolute master of circumstance. It is with these finer emotions that art is concerned. The keen sensibility to the beauty of a sunset synthesises in a moment our past experiences of life and states them to our emotions in vast, sweeping generalisations; a phrase of music in a particular mood may give us the glimpse of a heaven hoped for or lost; the beauty of a human face may lead us whither all the philosophies lead as they seek eternal verities. And these finalities, which are stated to us by the highest developments of the intellect, are given to us equally, and sometimes more profoundly and more truly, by our feelings. [Page 51]

An understanding of Theosophy explains the process of that right feeling which is necessary for art. Feeling, looked at from within the man, is a mood; but looked at from without, is the setting in movement of a finer vehicle, called the astral body. Upon the purity of material, delicacy of structure, and pliability of the astral body, depend the nature of a man's feelings, and therefore his capacity for art. Theosophy applied to art deals primarily with the purification and the training of the feelings.

Since the astral body is dependent for its sensations so largely upon impacts which reach it through the physical body, the purification of the physical body becomes the first essential. According to the kind of food eaten is the kind of body; if the diet contains flesh of any animal, the body acquires a gross texture which reacts on the texture of the astral body, the vehicle of feeling; when the food is pure and refined, the finer texture of the physical body induces purity and delicacy in the astral. It is true that hitherto some of the greatest artists have had, from the Theosophical standpoint, gross bodies, and yet they have been creators of art; but this only means that they would have achieved still more, had not something of their creative force been lost in its transmission through a coarsened physical vehicle. In spite of the over-

riding by will of nature's laws, the general law remains that the [Page 52] purer is the physical body the greater is the sensibility to feeling, and hence the greater the capacity for art.

Next, the feelings must be trained to be pure, that is, they must be irresponsive to what conduces to impurity and keenly sensitive to what harbours, purity. Here at once the question arises : What is, purity ? Leaving aside the question of what purity is as a moral virtue, purity in the domain of art means a correct appreciation of Beauty. What the Ideal Beauty is, which is the unchanging standard, we need not for the moment consider; for there is already in the world some knowledge of that Ideal Beauty, and for the practical purposes of life there is no difficulty in distinguishing the beautiful from the commonplace or the ugly. What is important to realise is that, for artistic development, there must be a continuous communion with Beauty and a definite avoidance of what is the not-beautiful.. We little realise how the lines in the objects that surround us in the home and in the streets affect our astral bodies and so our emotional nature; discords of colour and sound, impurities of line and form: give a warp to our natures which adds to our moral weaknesses and debilitates our mental strength. Men find it difficult to be virtuous largely because so much ugliness surrounds them; just as bacteria in the dust and the air, and parasites of various kinds, [Page 53] induce many a disease and diminish the physical vitality of men, so invisibly, but not the less harmfully, hosts of emotional bacteria, the ugly lines and forms and colours and sounds, infect our feelings and induce in them a chronic moral ill-health which saps the vitality of the soul. Civilisation has not yet awakened to the gravity of this hidden contagion; it is taking place all the time, though we are little; aware of it because we are "used" to it. But it is never the soul's nature to be " used " to ugliness and evil; the inner constraint shows itself in outer fractiousness; and, just as a baby's peevishness is to be traced to some hurt produced in his little body by improper feeding or by some annoyance like a pin sticking into him, so it is with men's tendencies to evil; the visible and invisible uglinesses in life are responsible for the crimes of men sometimes far more than their own criminal propensities.

Since every object around us affects invisibly our capacity for feeling, either by hardening and coarsening or by making it more sensitive and profound, a practical understanding of the place of art in life means a thorough reconstruction of the environment of each man. Specially is that reconstruction necessary in the case of children, whose astral bodies during their childhood and youth are sensitive to outer influences far more than are the astral bodies of grown-up people. Every object that surrounds [Page 54] children from the moment of birth should have some touch of beauty; the lines and curves and colours of walls and ceilings and furniture should definitely be aimed to influence the child's feelings; ungainly street hoardings and palings, ugly plots of ground and discordant sounds should all be banished from our towns for the sake of the children, if not for our own sakes. We insist on sanitation to preserve the health of the physical body; why should we not equally insist on a moral sanitation to safeguard the health and sensitiveness of our finer vehicles ?

Purity of feeling is thus one element of right feeling; a second element is sympathy. No feeling is right feeling unless in it there is reflected the larger world of men's griefs and joys; each feeling, if it is to develop the higher sensitiveness which produces art, must enshrine in ,it in miniature the similar feelings of all humanity. There is no such thing as "art for art's sake", if by that phrase is meant that there exists a world of art and beauty irrespective of its relation to the world of men. The highest art, consciously or unconsciously, had its roots in men's hearts, though its boughs may lift up their flowers to heaven; the most abstractly musical phrase of a symphony of Beethoven has yet its reflex in our human feelings. The more the artist's feelings widen out in their sympathy with [Page 55] men's sufferings and hopes and

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dreams, the vaster is his art horizon, and the more universally understood his artistic creation. Hence it follows that the artist must train his sympathies by observation, by meditation, by travel, by practical service; while he purposely uses his purified feelings as the tools of his art, yet must those feelings be supported by a broad and purified intellect. There could be no greater boon to an artist than Theosophy, which teaches him what are the universal feelings of men, and what is that "God's Plan for men", the contemplation of which is a perennial source of wisdom and purification.

While the purely artistic development is possible by temperament to only a few, there is no man or woman or child born who has not some distinct capacity for artistic feeling and expression. Every effort should be made to rouse in the child the dormant tendency to appreciate beauty; not only should he be surrounded by beautiful objects, he should also be taught how to produce beautiful things. The energies of his physical body should be taught the meaning of rhythm through the dance; his eye and brain should be trained by drawing. He should be taught what are pure tones of sound in speech and in singing, and his imagination should be trained through poetry and through abstract music. Just as it is the duty of parents [Page 56] to see that children have healthy bodies, not less is it their duty to see that their children have refined tastes too. By placing before the sensitive feelings and unspoiled natures of children none but what is in the best of taste, and only what is best artistically, an immense impetus is given to the unfolding of the Divine Spirit in man. For art is less a faculty of the soul than an element of its inmost structure. Just as, in the evolutionary process, the senselessness of the stone gives way to the sensitiveness of the plant, and the vague feeling of the plant gives way to the surging passions of the animal, and the animal's inchoate thoughts give way in the next grade to man's coherent thinking, so too man's power of understanding through the mind is to be made subordinate to knowledge by the Intuition. In most men this intuition is dormant, or only dimly sensed; the next stage in human evolution is to understand life in the full light of the intuition. Therefore it is that artistic development becomes supremely necessary for all men; it enables them to do their life's work by a swifter and completer process - that of the intuition - than thought can provide them. It is true that the loftiest thought, by its utter impersonality and when suffused by a desire for service, touches the realm of the intuition; the great philosophers especially reveal the same insight into life's problems which the pure intuition [Page 57] reveals when reflected in art. But it is far easier to make men pure and sympathetic in feeling than impersonal in thought; therefore, while science and philosophy are essential for human culture, that culture is more swiftly developed by appealing to the artistic instincts of men.

When, by surrounding men with beauty, and by training them to respond to it, their intuitions are aroused, they discover a higher and a more lasting truth than science can reveal to them. The great advantage of the vision of truth by the intuition is that it is always synthetic; each truth of life discovered by the intuition is linked to the totality of truth, and man can proceed in his further discoveries along a road that has no break nor divergence. The drift of things is seen clearer, and from a more central point, by the intuition than by the highest purely mental process.

There is scarce any such humanitarian influence in life as art, if its inner force is understood and consciously used. Each feeling which art gives rise to is like the segment of a circle of universal feeling in which the feelings of all the rest of humanity too are like segments. Each artistic creation — not the mere imaginative fancy or *tour de force*, but the real creation which is as a window into a Divine World of Ideas — links the creator to all men; it at-ones him with humanity.[Page 58]

A soul capable during life of only one work of art, either in the thought world or in the emotional realm, has yet linked all humanity with him to that measure of the artistic capacity in him; while a great poet or

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painter or sculptor or musician becomes like an eternal priest of humanity, linking man ever to God. This at-one-ing quality of art is a force which is as yet but dimly understood by man; when civilisation everywhere is instinctively artistic, then un-charitableness and enmity must utterly vanish, since to love art is to love that Totality of which each of us is but an infinitesimal fraction.

Lastly, there is through artistic development a discovery that utterly revolutionises the life of the discoverer. True art, as already explained, is born where there is purity of feeling and sympathy; and when art becomes creative there results a lofty impersonality. The result achieved of "casting out the self" by scientific thought is also achieved by the artist while he creates; all great artists concur that at the supreme moments of inspiration all thought and sense of their little selves are swept away. When the little self of the artist is thus swept away, there steps into his life for the moment a larger Self, an indescribable Personality. It is the discovery of this Personality, who is master of his craft and infallible in his wisdom, which is the great [Page 59] event in the artist's life. It is the artist's "salvation", that realisation of man's eternal safety and of his imperishable nature which religions try to give through ecstatic contemplation. Perhaps it is only at a few moments of his creative life that the artist makes the great discovery; but each moment of discovery is as a milestone in his unending artistic career, and to have even for once known that Personality is thenceforth to see all life with "larger, other eyes" than are possessed by men.

The artists who have this vision are "not of an age but for all time," and an Ideal World hovers round them, shedding its many-hued gleams on the drab events of this mortal world. That world is always around us, though only the great artists can tell us what it is in its grandeur and totality. Yet each man can gain a glimpse of it, in so far as he trains his feelings to be pure and radiating with understanding and sympathy. A child with his integrity of heart and innocency of hands, may gain a glimpse of that world, becoming for the time truly an artist; gleams of it are seen in the colour of the clouds, in the blue of the sea and in the roar of the waves. The mountain ranges mirror it, and in every lake and pool, and in the fields at eventide, and in forest, and in thicket, that world looks into our hearts and minds. The face of friend and beloved is a mirror of it; the harmonies of music tell us of

[Page 60] it with an almost maddening insistence. The great Reality, in which our immortal natures are rooted, is not far away, to be realised perhaps - who knows ? — only after death; it is here, and now, the source of every solace as it is too the cause of all pining and death. And Art has the key to open the door to it, to all who seek that door.

CHAPTER VII THEOSOPHY IN THE STATE

[Page 61] EVERY great body of ethical teaching has stood or fallen according to its effect on men as they form organised states. Since a man is a unit of a social organisation, the value which any ethical teaching may have for the individual is inseparable from its application to the community of which he is a part. Just as an understanding of certain simple truths of Theosophy modifies a man's conception of himself, so too the conception of what constitutes the true state, when viewed in the light of Theosophy, profoundly modifies a man's attitude to his life among his fellow men.

For what is the modern state today ? In the main it is very little different from the pack which we find among the higher vertebrates, like jackals and wolves. As the aim of the pack is to protect itself against a common enemy, and to get more easily food for itself, so the chief aim of the modern state is to protect itself against aggression and to [Page 62] increase its means of sustenance. The morality of the pack rules the state today; any individual who diminishes the power of the state's resistance or of its aggression, or who lessens the quantity of food, is regarded as the enemy of the state. Hence our attitude to the law-breaker and to the poor; the criminal is looked upon as one who has lost his right of citizenship, and he is punished more to deter others from crime than with the intention of redeeming him; we do not inquire into what made him commit the crime and who is responsible for the environment which made his criminality possible. The poor man is considered a failure in life, a part of the refuse of civilisation, and we do not inquire how far the state itself is responsible for the causes of his poverty. Armies and navies are part and parcel of modern civilisation, and woe indeed to that state which should refuse to imitate all the other states and not equip itself to be efficient in destruction. In our ordinary conceptions of the state, in most peoples minds, the individual is largely regarded as an animal to be *curbed* for the good of the state, and the neighbouring states are regarded as rivals against whose enmity the state must ever be on the watch. How radically different is the Theosophist's conception of the state will be seen when we apply Theosophical truths to the problems of the state.[Page 63]

There are two fundamental facts about the true state, and they are: first, that the State is a Brotherhood of Souls, and secondly that the State is an expression of the Divine Life of God. Let us see how the state appears in the light of these two truths.

The State is a Brotherhood of Souls. The individuals who compose the state are *Souls*, immortal egos in earthly bodies; they are the members of the state in order to evolve to an ideal of perfection. As souls, and as *all* partaking of one Divine Nature, all within the state are brothers; whether rich or poor, cultured or ignorant, law-abiding or law-breaking, all are brothers, and nothing one soul does can modify that fact of nature. The educated or the proud may refuse to see an identity of nature with the ignorant and the lowly; the weak and the criminally minded may show more the attributes of the brute than of the God. Yet is there in high and low alike the one nature of the Divine Life, and nothing a man does can weaken the bond of brotherhood between him and all the others.

But this Brotherhood of all souls is like the relation of brotherhood within a family; brothers are not all of the same age, though they are of the same parents. So too, among the souls who compose a state, there are elder souls and younger souls; it is just this difference of spiritual age and [Page 64] capacity

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which makes possible the functions of the real state. The age of the soul is seen in the response to ideals of altruism and co-operation; he is the elder soul who springs forward to help in the welfare of others, and that soul is the younger who thinks of self-interest first and follows its needs in preference to self-sacrifice on behalf of others. The divisions which we now have in a state's life of rank and of wealth are no true distinctions which divide the elder souls from the younger souls; one man born into a high class or caste may yet be a very young soul, while another whose birth is ignoble, according to the world's conventions, may be far advanced as a soul.

There being in each state elder souls and younger souls, the Law of Brotherhood requires that the elder shall be more self-sacrificing, on behalf of the younger, than the younger should be towards the elder. Since life through long ages has given more to the elder souls than to the younger, more is required from the elder, both of self-sacrifice and of responsibility.

By the natural order of events, the direction of a state's affairs will fall inevitably on the elder souls. It does not matter whether the power in a state is administered by a monarchy, oligarchy or democracy, because when the state begins to perform its true functions, the direction of its affairs is by [Page 65] an aristocracy, by the best souls, that is, the elder and the more capable souls. These best souls may call themselves democrats or republicans, and may hold their power in trust from the masses, but the fact remains the same that the guidance of the state is entrusted by the younger souls into the hands of the elder souls. Till the day comes in the far-off future when each soul will himself, as the Divine Lawgiver, be a law unto himself, the direction of the state must come into the hands of a few, whom we call the rulers or administrators.

The great principle to guide them in their administration is that in all the state's affairs the principle of Brotherhood shall dominate in all things. This will mean the clear recognition that any preventible suffering or ignorance or backwardness of even one citizen is to the detriment of the welfare of all the citizens; that since the destiny of each is inseparable from the destiny of all, as rises one so rise all, and as falls one so fall all; that there must be no shadow of exploitation of one man by another, of one class or caste by another. Since, too, all men are souls and, even the least developed, Gods in the making, it becomes the duty of the administrator in all laws and institutions continually to appeal to the hidden Divinity in man. In existent states, the attempt is first and foremost to curb the remnant of the brute in man, utterly forgetting the [Page 66] power in him of co-operation on the side of good, if only the God in him were to be appealed to.

When there comes in the state the recognition of this hidden God in a man, a complete revolution will take place in our attitude to and in our treatment of the criminal. First and foremost, whatever he does, he is our brother. He is a younger brother truly to those of us who are the elders and give implicit and willing obedience to the laws of the state; but though he fall a thousand times, he is our brother even after the thousandth time. The problem of crime then turns first upon the understanding of the causes which contribute to crime, and secondly of the means of the proper building of the character of the law-breaker which will make failure impossible again for him.

The contributory causes to crime are physical and mental. Of the physical, want of health is the great cause; it may be due to malnutrition or to bad housing conditions or to disease, but where an individual lacks health of body, due to any one of these causes, part of the responsibility of the crime rests upon the

state's administrators and upon all who have appointed them by their suffrages. The mental contributory causes are both of the individual and of the community. The individual has in him a weakness of character brought from his past lives, a weakness strengthened by an [Page 67] unfavourable environment, instead of, as it should be, atrophied by a favourable one; to the strength of his own failing, the individual is responsible for his crime. But the strength of his own innate failing may not necessarily be the full strength evidenced in the crime; sometimes much of the strength required for committing the crime was given to the criminal by *others*. Thus, for instance, when a weak-willed, undeveloped man in a fit of drunkenness commits a murder, we should see, were we to analyse fully all the hidden causes, that there was added to his fury and anger an additional power of hatred from outside. Some outwardly law-abiding citizen may have willed with hate to kill an opponent but have refrained, because of the consequences to him of the crime; but though he refrained from the act, he did not refrain from the powerful thought of murder. His thought, launched into the atmosphere, flies to the weak-willed, drunken man, whose will alone would not be sufficient to impel him to murder, and fastens upon him at the time of anger, and discharges its full force through him, and so commits vicariously a murder through him. In each criminal act of every criminal all of us have a share; it is the thoughts of malice and hatred of the seemingly law-abiding citizens that as much contribute to crime as the innate weakness of the criminals themselves. Crime [Page 68] committed by a few is caused by all, and the final doer of the act is not alone responsible for the act, but also each and every one who impelled him to that act.

Next follows the consideration of the cure of the criminal. Since the criminal is fundamentally diseased, and since all have contributed, some more and some less, to his disease, the cure must not have the slightest thought of punishment about it. On the contrary, it must be guided by the thought of atonement. It was the state's function as guardian of every citizen to see that in his environment everything which could foster the seed of evil in the weak-willed man or woman had been removed; if he or she commits a crime, it is a proof that the state had betrayed the trust imposed upon it by the Divine Law. We, as citizens of the state, must cure the disease of the law-breaker, not by our hatred, as now when we imprison and punish him, but by our Brotherhood. We do not punish the consumptive, but try to cure him with the best treatment we can give, sparing him none of the state's resources to save his life. Similar must be our attitude to the law-breaker, who is our brother.

If only we could realise our Brotherhood with each citizen in the state, we should discover dozens of new modes of curing crime. Already our growing sense of humanity has discovered alternatives to [Page 69] banishment in goal in the system of Probation adopted in many countries for first-offenders, and in the Juvenile Courts and Junior Commonwealths and Reformatories which are proving their efficiency in the case of juvenile offenders. We are beginning to treat the criminal as if he were indeed still a man; only a little further development is needed on our part, and we shall know him as ever our brother. Then a full tide of wisdom will be ours to solve many of the problems which baffle us today as we try to improve the lives of our fellow men.

If all our laws could be so framed as to reveal that the sacrosanct ideas of the state are *not* of rights to property but of preserving Brotherhood; that men are not regarded as brutes, whose animality is taken for granted, but rather as the sons of God, whose divine nature is continually expected to reveal itself in response to ideals of integrity and virtue and Brotherhood; that he who refuses to co-operate with the state is not regarded by the state as less a citizen and a brother but the more to be tended and cherished because of his weakness; if this conception of the state could be taught to every child and revered by every man and woman; then indeed would crime diminish generation after generation and the joys of co-

operation replace the bitternesses of competition, and for the first time would appear on earth a true state. Some day there will be [Page 70] everywhere on earth these true states, for it is the Divine Plan that men shall come to realise that a state is a Brotherhood of Souls.

The State is an expression of the Divine Life of God. Stage by stage in an ascending ladder of life, the Nature of God as the Immanence reveals itself in stone and plant, in invertebrate and vertebrate; each stage reveals more of His life by greater complexity of the organism, bringing about on the side of the Form many units built up into a whole, and on the side of the Life, a new expression of life higher than the separate lives of its component parts. So too is there taking place with men, and through men, a fashioning of new vehicles for the life of God. At one stage it is God the Man; at a later stage it is God the Family, and dimly we see in the family more of the possibilities of life for each member of it, and by realising these possibilities we feel a new call to sacrifice and idealism - for the Family. The man, as the unit of a family, finds that his Divine Life is surrounded by a larger, more mystically beautiful radiance, which envelops him as the nutrient matter surrounds the nucleus in the cell.

Then comes the later stage still, when another and a more glorious wave of Divine Life descends on men, and out of families builds a State, fashioning out of units a new and a larger whole. Thence [Page 71] appear new possibilities of life for each within the state. A new sphere of Divine Life surrounds the souls who make the state, feeding them with new hopes and dreams with which to live, even as the mother nourishes within her womb the child and feeds its young life with her own blood.

Could but citizens know of this brooding Life which is the essence of the state, then would they joyfully build for it the perfect vehicle out of themselves and their homes and their cities. Ugliness would vanish, to be replaced by beautiful dwellings and stately cities; disease and misery would be as an evil dream, and poverty and bitterness and strife could nevermore mar the serene and joyous life of the state. In each citizen's face would then be seen something of the glory of the state; the artisan who toils *as for the state* would have a beauty of bearing all his own; the artist and dreamer would reveal a beauty all his own, other than the beauty he discovers and proclaims. For, as man seeks God, so God seeks man; as man through slow passage of time rises from the savage to be the civilised man, from the solitary, self-seeking man to be the unit of a family, and then of a state, so God descends to man first as the man's conscience and his hopes and dreams of immortality, then as the family, and then as the state. For the true state is a revelation of God, and it is [Page 72] because that revelation is yet to come that man strives to change his environment from good to better, from better to best. Through barbarities and savageries, through selfish greeds, through fratricidal wars, the world's states are changing age by age, and men rise from the brute to the God; they change because God the State calls for His habitation. It is this knowledge of God the State which Theosophy reveals to all who desire to understand, what is the future that awaits men.

When men understand what makes the true state, then will come a fuller revelation still of God as the World State. Through all the states in the world then will manifest a larger purpose than men have ever dreamed of before; each state will grow into new, beauteous achievements because over all the states broods the mighty power of God's Plan fulfilled at last. None will ask which is the better state, for where God's hands have touched, there is perfection. Shall a man, seeing that miracle of God, a sunset, ask whether the rose is lovelier than the blue or the gold, or ask that the sunset be of one colour alone? So shall the world be some day, when the Wisdom of God "mightily and sweetly ordereth all things". To this Day of all humanity the world's states are tending, and they will reach their goal at last because it is

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God's Plan that they shall. [Page 73]

Wisdom in planning, confidence in endeavour, and a joyous outlook night and day to all things in life are his who thus sees God's world and man's world illumined by Theosophy.