

# The Gods Await

Katherine Tingley

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Katherine Tingley was born on July 6, 1847, in Newbury, Massachusetts. In 1894, while working at her relief mission in New York City, she met William Q. Judge who introduced her to theosophy. Upon Judge's death in 1896 she succeeded him as head of the Theosophical Society. In 1900 she moved its international headquarters to Point Loma, California, where she founded the Raja-Yoga School, Academy, and College, and in 1919 Theosophical University. Her other major activities included prison reform, work for international peace, musical and dramatic productions, and the publication of theosophical books and magazines. Throughout her administration she lectured extensively in the United States and abroad until shortly before her death in 1929.

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## **Foreword**

Too long have we been thrall to the "blinding and crippling tyranny of creeds and dogmas." It's time to step out of the shadow of fear and self-doubt and claim "the freedom to breathe the broad sweet air of life and find infinity within ourselves; . . . we are immortal, inheritors of all the good in the universe" (pp. 12-13). *The Gods Await* by Katherine Tingley is an urgent call to all of us to do just this. Wrung from the compassionate heart of one who worked tirelessly to restore dignity and hope to the disinherited of soul and of body, her plea is for recognition that every human being — no matter what his circumstances or how he may have stumbled and fallen — is of divine lineage, capable of untold possibilities of attainment if his finer impulses are encouraged and his baser instincts gentled and controlled.

The material here is drawn from extemporaneous talks to capacity audiences in Europe and America and to her students.

An inspired speaker, Katherine Tingley challenged her listeners to heights of nobility they had never imagined they could achieve. Riffle the pages at random and you'll find glints of pure inspiration, practical wisdom, straight-from-the-shoulder commentary, understanding, largeness of vision and, running throughout, a profound identity with those who suffer.

An altruist by nature and by deed, in the early 1890s on New York City's East Side she set up soup kitchens and emergency relief missions, and later she established philanthropic organizations for orphaned children, unwed mothers, and destitute families. Years of ministering to the poor and disadvantaged found her increasingly disheartened by the enormity of the task to relieve the frightful burden of those trapped in circumstances over which they had no control. "I felt my heart almost at breaking-point to see so much keen misery and to know that all I could do was so wretchedly little, so ineffectual to lift them out of their present trouble and keep them secure against as bad or worse tomorrow or the next day" (pp. 63-4).

One day during the 1892-3 cloakmakers' strike in New York City William Q. Judge [Co-Founder of The Theosophical Society and General Secretary of its American Section.] called at her home. A silent witness to her relief efforts, he had intuited her longing for some satisfying explanation of the cruel injustices she daily encountered, for a philosophy not only broad and compassionate enough to allow for independent thinking but also practical enough to strike at *causes* rather than merely at effects. He told her of theosophy with its comprehensive worldview; that a spark of the Divine resides in the least as well as the greatest, in every life form of all of nature's kingdoms. This caught her interest, for to her nature was a sacred temple, every part a living god incarnate on earth for a divine purpose. She embraced the idea of reincarnation as a just and compassionate means of giving

everyone a chance, not only to rebuild his character but also to right wrongs done to himself and against others; and of karma — as ye sow, so shall ye reap — as a universal law that acts on every plane, whether the god realms or the world of molecules and cells. As for the beleaguered of soul, everyone, no matter how degraded he may have become, has within him a divine spark and the god-given power to learn from his mistakes and change himself. We need no intercessor to save our soul: we are our own destroyer, our own savior.

With such a philosophy to live by, her outlook and life underwent a profound change. She joined The Theosophical Society and became closely associated with Judge. When he died in March 1896, Katherine Tingley succeeded him as the leading theosophical official. Within a few months she embarked upon a world tour, holding "brotherhood suppers" en route wherever possible; her moving account of her meeting with H. P. Blavatsky's teacher in India "placed a talisman in our hands" (p. 129). She took note of those whom she might later on invite to help her build not only an international center of theosophic light, but also the school for children she had long dreamed of. On her return to New York — via Point Loma, California, where she had purchased land for future use — she founded the International Brotherhood League to consolidate and expand her philanthropic activities, reorganized the Society under the name "Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society," all the while continuing rescue work where disaster had struck.

In 1900, with the removal of the Society's international headquarters from New York City to Point Loma, her childhood vision of a city in the Golden West slowly and steadily was realized. Here she would rear a citizenry in the atmosphere of the Mysteries of ancient Greece, where music, drama, and the arts would be an essential part of the scholastic curriculum and where

high ethics would be instilled. To this center poets, writers, educators, businessmen, ministers, physicians, and skilled and unskilled workers were invited — they came as "students" to learn and to offer their devotion and talents to building a center of education for children and adults that would develop all the faculties, spiritual, mental, moral, and physical. Imbodying the noblest ideals of manhood and womanhood, the school, it was hoped, would herald the day when wars and their progeny of evils would be unthinkable, and peace and brotherhood universally practiced.

Chief among her philanthropies was prison work— the cause and cure of crime and the rehabilitation of inmates were an absorbing concern. From 1911 to 1929 *The New Way*, an eight-page folio-size magazine, was produced and circulated free "for prisoners and others whether behind the bars or not." Its editors gave theosophical ideas in a variety of forms, stressing individual responsibility and that regeneration was always possible, regardless how horrendous the crime, if one had the will and desire to change one's thinking and attitudes.

Probably no cause was closer to Katherine Tingley than peace, for without it there can be no stability; without stability, the home life and children suffer. Everything is interlinked. Her personal encounters at a very young age with the "vileness of war" and its heartless and maiming fallout, had left permanent scars on her sensitive nature. The horror and pain she witnessed among soldiers on both sides in the Civil War had transformed her into a fervent advocate of peace and brotherhood among all nations and races, reinforcing her conviction that children at an early age should learn of the beauty and promise of peace *before* they are tainted with the "glory" of battle. Notable among her peace efforts was a series of Peace Congresses and Parliaments from 1913 through the '20s.

Tingley's benevolent causes were legion, her way of making theosophy "immensely serviceable," wherever it was needed most: against vivisection and its devastating abuses; against the death penalty — not only to allow the prisoners on Death Row an opportunity to live and reshape their lives, but also because of its degrading and sometimes disastrous influence on humanity, even at times on the unborn; and against the prevailing war syndrome that every conflict of wills has in the end to be solved by violence. No detail was too small for her to check, no idea too grandiose for her to attempt to implement if the timing was right.

In 1926 when *The Gods Await* was first published, it was warmly received and translated into several languages, but within three years the author died and her books gradually went out of print. Today, six decades later, many are looking to Katherine Tingley for a practical presentation of basic theosophic ideas in clear, inspirational language, and for fresh leads in the areas of home life and education. To help meet the need, Theosophical University Press has issued a revised edition of *The Gods Await* as a companion volume to the author's first book, *Theosophy: The Path of the Mystic* (3rd edition 1977). The revision was done with perceptive skill by Sarah Belle Dougherty and TUP's editorial and printing staffs. Both books carry forward the salient message that we human beings are *not* sinners, doomed to failure, but beings of light, kin to the immortals, capable of royal conquests of the soul if we but dare to believe in our god-selves.

— GRACE F. KNOCHE

*Pasadena, California*

*March 21, 1992*

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## Chapter1

### Dogma versus the God in Man

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Men and parties, sects and schools are but the mere ephemera of the world's day. TRUTH, high-seated upon its rock of adamant, is alone eternal and supreme. — H. P. BLAVATSKY, *Isis Unveiled*, Preface

### Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

Men have their unselfish moods, but even their great purposes are fickle and changing: their aspirations are here today and gone tomorrow. How then could such a one as Helena Petrovna Blavatsky have been understood by her time? Except to those who have discovered that the worldly life is not the delightful thing it claims to be, who have come to the limit of it and found ambition and selfishness to be delusions, she will remain forever a mystery. Those who understood her must have in some previous life waked to the unreality and impermanence of the things men mostly set their hearts on; and then they must have waked to the reality beyond, which demands of us the will to grow and the will to serve.

While HPB remains a mystery in some senses, there is about her a certain grandeur that impels us towards search for the inner meaning of things and an effort to awaken the deepest part of our nature where all truth abides for us to discover. It was for these needs she came, and offered her life on the altar of truth. She saw



how humanity had been drifting through the ages unaware of its birthright and unconscious of its dignity: how the indefiniteness of modern ideas had confused the minds of the people and engendered everywhere uncertainty and helpless doubt; how the essential truths of religion had been honeycombed with falsehood by the tortuous forces that retard the progress of mankind. She left for posterity a body of teachings with power in them to change the whole world, and as it were raise from the dead the immortal part of man. She was the herald and champion of the soul, the living God in man, as against dead dogma and conventional opinion, every phase of stultifying unreality, and every evil that would destroy mankind.

### **The Curse of Dogma**

The philosophy of life accepted by the majority has constantly led men away from their noblest possibilities. We eat and sleep and suffer and die in our brain-minds and the lower and unreal portion of ourselves, and keep the chambers of the soul with doors locked against our own entrance.

Look at the faces in the street, the general aspect of humanity in public places: they are already beginning to fear death; the thought of death is with them always. Fear is in our blood and it will be in the blood of our descendants. Our young men grow old before they have been young, and our women are bowed down and joyless. We are limited in our intellect and heart-life and physically, and where many should be giants, they are apologies for men — and all because down through the centuries we have been presented with half-truths only. The great and universal truths about life have been hidden away under forms and ceremonies and reasoning and argument and expectancy and faith, till we no longer know where we are.

Most men and women do not really think at all — they imagine

they do, but they do not — and this is one of the great troubles of the day. They borrow their opinions from outside sources and ignore the divinity sleeping within themselves. Appearances pass for truth, the letter is preferred to the spirit, and while we take the thoughts of this one and that and seek to follow them, the grander and more helpful thoughts are within ourselves, unawakened and awaiting recognition.

We hunger and thirst for the surface of things and will never rest long enough in the chambers of the immortal man, often taking no step forward in things spiritual because our minds are so immersed in books, often burdened with a kind of scholarship that tears out the heart of humanity and explains the universe and all that therein is from the standpoint of matter and the brain-mind alone. Even if we read and studied millions of books and had the greatest of teachers to instruct us, we would find no truth until we believed in our own inner selves and that, being human, we are more than human — greater than the world imagines or than dogmas and creeds allow — because there is within us that which is capable of absolute knowledge and may not stop, without self-degradation, at faith.

Many who desire truth are yet unwilling to give up for its sake any of their mental encumbrances that bear no relation to truth: preconceived notions lingering in the halls of their memory, opinions born of their own whims or the psychological influence of their neighbors' minds or the books they read or their environment, the conventional views they absorbed through their education when they were taught to accept cant phrases as substitutes for vital realities.

Consider the injunction that we should love our neighbors as ourselves. We read it glibly in church on Sundays and repeat it with a certain vanity in the repetition, but what have we of it in

our daily life? Conventional phrases expressive of politeness and a conventional attitude of goodwill; lip-worn platitudes, in respect to which whoever violates normal usage is accounted rude and unfriendly. It never or rarely occurs to us that talking about loving our neighbor as ourselves, unless real feeling capable of dominating our lives and actions lies behind the words, is all a vain repetition — lip service, cant, and even hypocrisy.

We are our brothers' keepers: how shall we do our duty by any one of them while the contents of our minds are neither thought nor truth, but catchwords, trite phrases, and conventional terms? What place in the scheme of things can we adequately fill while we let the thought-tides serve as the substance of our mental activity? We must think away from our puny selves and narrow environments and the little gods we have set up in our hearts and homes as though time and the higher law would wait for any man. We must think away from the superficiality that runs through all modern life.

Many who desire to be and seem to be sincere are among its victims. Here you have a lawyer, a typical man of the world. He goes to his office daily and stands before society a very eminent representative of the law. At home, amidst his family that he loves, he attends church with regularity and gives handsomely to the offertory. He gives his banquets, he is a high official of the State, he caters to the whims of this one and that one, is of this or that political party — and since the way of the world is towards self-advancement, the world calls him a splendid man. It seeks his society and visits at his home and is anxious to have him as its friend; and he is flattered by the attentions and adulation of the world and feels that he has won his place in life and has no will or desire to grow.

And then his body dies and he receives great honors and a public

funeral, and the newspapers are full of his greatness — and it is all nonsense. There is nothing in it: nothing real, nothing to endure. Under all that stress of ambition and show and publicity, nothing was growing. It was just a certain aspect of the man that was active — the material side of him — and he never knew how to fall back on the real and deep resources of his nature which are in the soul, and at the last he went out blind and having learned nothing.

No man can walk in the light until he has freed himself from this superficiality. The human mind must achieve its independence, stepping out and standing for greater things than mere society shibboleths. What is the use of being content with less than truth? As long as we are confused and our thinking is all awry with the ideas of the old religious systems, so long will it be impossible for us to understand the real nature of man because the essentials for such an understanding lie all within man's divine higher self, in the inmost sanctuary of life.

We know that these two beings exist in every man: the lower nature that loves to follow its own inclinations; and the immortal imprisoned in the flesh, who is only to be made manifest by nobility of character. In the one part the treasures of indulgence and conceit are held to and hoarded, from it is that snarling, grumbling selfishness that steals into life like a snake. From the other come all our golden moments filled with sacred meaning: the joy of service, of giving the best one has and can, which is all that there is of value in life, the precious treasure that money cannot buy nor time lay waste; imagination, the artist within which, coming forth like an angel of light from the chambers of the soul, fashions the life to perfect beauty. To live successfully, we must learn infallibly to discriminate between these two. We must learn to overcome by knowledge or we shall be taught by suffering to overcome. And how can a man learn if his mental

vision is so untrained that he cannot distinguish between convention and fact, between living truth and dead dogma?

## **Work Out Your Own Salvation**

One of the greatest of all the stumbling blocks in the path of humanity today is the ease with which error intermingles with truth, or we should not have the worldful of conflicting thought-systems we have. It is absurd for the human mind, being finite, to proclaim the finality of any creed. He who builds on blind faith builds his house upon the sands. Did the spirit of truth still inform and sanctify the world's religions, there would be none of these deep divisions among men, for we are in reality all part of the universal scheme, brothers in respect to whatever is real in our being.

The kingdom of heaven is within us; it is not far away. Deity pervades the whole universe. It is impersonal and unknowable, no matter how near we may draw to the light of it. It is the absolute, the goal which we climb towards and never reach; that we climb towards forever, forever learning and growing in the will and power to serve, forever acquiring new and grander ideals of that towards which we climb. He who understands this knows what is the dignity of man, and that the religion which alone will fitly correspond to our innate religious nature will be a universal system of human brotherhood based on the knowledge that we are essentially divine — a system that will warm our hearts with the knowledge that there is nothing outside ourselves that can save us or damn, that it is we ourselves who alone must and can work out our own salvation.

It was Emerson who said that to go through life depending on some external power to save one's soul was like running up bills on the chance of Somebody Else's paying them, with no thought or intention of paying them oneself. And the certainty is that he

who looks for such foolish salvation is blind to fact and sense. The notion has made us quite indifferent to our higher interests: it has dimmed for us the glory within and left us with nothing better than the brain-mind and barren faith to be our guides. It has given no answer to the deep appeal of the heart but forms and rites and half-truths that often become wholly false, so that fear of punishment, proceeding from the doctrine of original sin, has been all through the centuries shutting us in and holding us down: we have been torn, worn out, and driven into a corner by the psychological influence of fear. Our lives and powers are dwarfed and perverted by it — fear of death, fear of public opinion, fear of an imaginary revengeful God.

There would have been no need of a doctrine of salvation if a doctrine of damnation had never been preached to deaden our understanding of spiritual things and put a veil between us and our high possibilities, and to turn us aside from the path of investigation the soul demands we should follow and leave us stranded on barren beaches with doubt and despair for our companions, haunted by disappointment and beset with questions we cannot answer.

I would have the word *sinner* abolished. I would take sin out of the dictionaries and out of the speech and memory of men. Whilst humanity is hypnotized by religious fear we cannot stand out in the richness of real life. We cannot be our true selves whilst these pessimistic and ignoble ideas poison the mental atmosphere. Sons of God that we are, here to work out superb destinies for ourselves and the world we live in, to permit them to enter our minds for an instant is to blaspheme against the eternal law. Instead of the blinding and crippling tyranny of creeds and dogmas, we should have freedom to breathe the broad sweet air of life and find infinity within ourselves; we should have leave to stand on the conviction that we are immortal, inheritors of all the

good in the universe. There is no punishment — there is nothing to fear except what we create in ourselves.

How man's spiritual nature has been neglected — how starved, how overlooked and forgotten! The god in man has been entombed for ages and the exterior life has been the force all-predominating. Every evil in life is the result of ignorance and the false teaching of seeking the light outside ourselves and ignoring that inner source from which all spiritual light shines. And now we sit like dumb things waiting for time to change or for revelations to fall out of the blue, and all the while it is ourselves that hold the keys to all our situations. In an hour or a moment, if one desires to, one can find the door within that opens into regions of which we have never dreamed, where happiness is, because there all our problems are solved. Here surely a self-confidence is offered and attainable which passes all understanding. The essence of theosophical teaching is that we should kill out fear and in its place plant love.

Each of us can, and must eventually, become a law unto himself: each having that divine power latent in him and being linked vitally with the great cause, source, and center of life — linked consciously if he eliminates fear and all other pessimistic thought and feeling. For there is within us always a grand inspiration, a breath and force from the innermost which no limitations nor yardstick ideas nor intellectual criticisms can touch. It may be called the love of the Supreme, for it is a royal compassion which is the heart and essence of all existence. To gain the knowledge that would save him a man need not open any book nor once lift his voice in prayer, nor wait to be born again or forgiven by any personal God, nor reach out in any way for help from outside himself.

It is himself who must forgive himself, resting in the law that

controls all life; falling back in confidence upon the stronger, the eternal side of himself; holding himself through imagination in divine realms of thought; feeling himself a part of the everlasting beauty. For there are no dark places in the chambers of the soul: it is wholly an abode of living light and knowledge. We need not look outside ourselves for the grandeur and the aid our hearts are craving. The secret and key to all situations is in the heart. All truth is within. It has been on those inner planes for ages and still lies sleeping in the spirit of man.

No one can tell it in words, no one can convey it in speech or writing — none can reveal to us the secret of life. Keys and hints may be given, enthusiasms may be awakened, hearts may be aroused and minds stimulated to thought, but the reality is a thing each one must find for himself. Greater than all the books that ever were written, greater than all the wisdom the teachers of old brought to mankind, are the books of revelation a man may read in within himself.

Move out into the fields of thought where reality is and you will have left your volumes of theology behind and you will have ceased to do injustice to your own soul. Your personal God will have died a natural death in your mind. He will be sitting no longer aloof in space nursing his moods of love or revenge, or cutting you off after a single lifetime from all opportunity to gain experience or do service, and shutting out the splendor of infinite and eternal existence from you — all that fantastic creation of human brain-minds will have vanished away. But the divine consciousness within will be growing as the flowers grow. You will have come to see how the harmony and protecting universal delight which we may call God's love breathes through all worlds and events and peoples, and you will have come to realize how you, being a dweller in eternity, have been made subject to time. We do belong to eternity. It is the scene of the unfoldment of our



life: the school, arena, and native habitation of the soul.

## **Natives of Eternity**

Man, we know, is religious by nature. Every human being, even the lowest, has tendencies towards religion because all are sprung from a divine source. Whatever the mind or even the life of a man may be, the god is still sleeping within. This basic knowledge that man is essentially divine can solve all the problems that have vexed us or our forefathers before us; by it humanity may be lifted out of all its despair and limitations. The thought that springs from it immediately is that our evolution is in our own hands to create and direct, that our salvation can only come from ourselves and through our own efforts. One has but to evoke one's own higher nature, perceiving and recognizing the resources of the god within one's own being, and the response will come as surely as the rising of tomorrow's sun. Was it not said that the kingdom of heaven should be found within ourselves?

We are wonder-seekers: the mind is curious and tends to reach after what is unknown and far away, so we set our thoughts and hopes upon remote regions, a point in space beyond the stars. But men are not led to their highest duty by what excites in them this love of the marvelous. Was it not in the heart, in the chambers of the heart — there and there only — that the kingdom of heaven might be discovered?

Forms and creeds and dogmas can but obscure the light within. As long as the mind is led by them — no matter how high the principles they may seem to inculcate — it cannot but miss seeing at least one half of the meaning of life, it cannot but be put off with half-truths and be deaf to the inner voice. There can be no glory nor inspiration in the life: the soul like a lonely wanderer will go on seeking to touch the mind to growth and the life to

nobler standards of character. It will go on seeking to flood the conscious self, the whole personality, with the fullness and grandeur of its power — and seeking in vain. That is why humanity is drifting out now into these seas of unrest, and why the shadows overwhelm us and our sight cannot penetrate them: we do not understand ourselves.

And now all antiquated theories are being overturned, customs and beliefs are being abandoned. There is some force at work in the world today that compels us to acknowledge the poverty of our religious life and thought. Before the World War [1914-1918] a large portion of humanity was half asleep. Those of the dogmatic faiths were complacently satisfied with their religion, but now men find themselves everywhere stirred with a new unrest: the faith that seemed so abiding before holds no such absolute sway now. Dogmas and creeds are dying slowly, and there is such a depletion in church attendance that the clergy everywhere are alarmed. Why? Because humanity is starving for the bread of life and can take no more of the wretched husks that have been doled out to it for centuries.

The fact is that we are essentially divine, born to evolve. That is what we are here for, and not to sit negative under a burden of errors. The possibilities of human nature are not limited and it is not difficult to discover truth if we only look for it unbiasedly. But we must be without preconceived notions, we must have no belief in a personal God or that we live but one life on earth, for such ideas as these cripple the mind and are bound to generate fear and unrest. To find that infinity within us, we must start upon the quest aright, having freed our minds of all such remembrances as would forever prevent our realizing the goal.

True religion can function only through the inner nature: only through it can we realize the relationship between man and man,

man and the universe, man and deity. Therefore he who is wise will clear his mind of dogma and let the soul sweep in on him as the tides cover the shore: that for things as they are, and with eyes concentrated on the inward life, he may have sight of the inner beauty; that he may have sight of the soul growing and evolving as naturally as the flowers do; that the interior life of humanity, from which all our hopes, aspirations, and ideals come, may express itself through him as simply and perfectly as the beauty of a rose is expressed through its form and color and perfume.

For we are here as warriors of the universal law to do battle superbly for the spiritual manifestation of man, that these cloudy things which prey upon the mind may be dispelled by the sun that makes all things clear: by the light of the soul, the illumination of the higher self, the eternal spiritual shining of man's own inward divinity. What we see of humanity, even at its best, is but the shadow of the real thing which is unmanifest and forever striving towards manifestation, and this is the higher, the immortal part of man.

Life is a scientific problem and must be approached scientifically. We cannot carry with us false and useless notions and thereby conduct our lives to a success, for somewhere on the road we shall catch our feet in them and be tripped up and have to start again from the beginning. We shall come, all of us, to the place where the law and life itself will demand renunciation from us and it can no longer be postponed. Then we shall need a large burying ground for the foolish and too-much-loved fallacies that have blocked our way. It was this that Jesus meant when he said that a man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven until he has become as a little child. It is a cleaning of one's mental house — a preparation of the mind for a larger vision and equipment.

Where prejudices are discarded thus, with the misconceptions that have burdened us for years, new life is bound to sweep into the mind like music from the heaven-world. The universal harmony is bound to sweep into our lives: we shall enter into brighter realms of thought and effort and see a goal in front more glorious than any we have dreamed of; and the knowledge of it fortifies us and is a sure foundation on which to build our lives and thought.

A new sense of responsibility comes because the largeness of life is apprehended and the will is set towards self-evolution, and we know that life is eternal and may be fashioned as one will. It may be fashioned as we will — and this not our own life only. On this path a man takes his fellows along with him; he cannot travel it alone. He is restless and unhappy unless aware that he is serving the whole human race. He knows that life and the universe exist not for the individual, not for himself, but for humanity; that in reality there is no separateness, that inwardly he is not apart from mankind at all; that it is only in the outward aspects of life that separate being and these many differences of thought and growth and feeling are to be found. He has attained an inner realization of unity: he has come into that profound knowledge of it which is inherent in the higher states of consciousness. He has seen nature from a new standpoint. The largeness of her life, the combination and interplay of her forces, he sees are all tending towards a vast unity and that, though on the outside there may be disagreement and much he does not understand, the undercurrent is all towards a mighty music and a harmony. For the universe, like the human soul, proceeds from the central source of existence.

Continually new and grander conceptions of life and duty come to him. He leaves it to the sectarian to imagine he has done all he could do. For his part, he feels that all he has ever done has been

less than well done because it was done with less than full understanding. He feels that he has fallen short always, and done much less than enough, because he has not understood. He leaves it to the sectarian to imagine a reward awaiting him in heaven and complacency and self-satisfaction to be his in another world beyond death. He could not be satisfied with himself or with bliss: he could not be satisfied, though he saw nothing but happiness and never disease or death, while one human being was left suffering or lightless.

For in that inner consciousness in which we all share there is an unsilenceable voice calling to us to render help. And though it may not make itself heard in our minds and our hearts because the shadows overcloud us, and though we may think we are satisfied because our eyes are on the objective world, yet in truth it is utterly impossible for any fragment of humanity to be secure and in peace and untroubled while any other fragment is in peril or oppressed, because inwardly and in reality we are one.

All this he knows — that life is sacred, man's responsibility infinite, and every moment of time infinitely precious. All doubt and pessimism have gone from him; he walks the noble path assured of his position. His affection for humanity — for all this living universe — grows with the growth of his sense of duty: he finds that there is more and more to do and think, in the way of service, daily. He becomes ever more aware of that higher and universal self within him to which he owes all service at all times, supremest duty forever.

His body has become for him merely that in which he lives. He sees himself on this plane as a part of the great scheme of life, here to carry on its divine purposes which are ever pressing into his mind and fostering his growth towards the type of the perfect man that is to be. So he has brought his physical life into

perfection, has practiced physical as well as mental purification. His modes of thought and reflection have permeated his whole system and begun the creation of the new type, which cannot be brought into being in any other way. The soul has mastery over the body and shapes for itself a destiny wonderful and beautiful beyond our conception.

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## Chapter 2

### War versus Patriotism

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The ills of the human race will never end until either those who are sincerely and truly lovers of wisdom come into political power, or the rulers of our cities, by some dispensation of providence, learn true philosophy. —  
PLATO, *Seventh Letter*, S. 326

### My First Contact with War

It was when I was a child that I first came in contact with the horror of war, in 1861. In Massachusetts my father had recently organized a company and brought it to Virginia, where his regiment, the New York Mozart, was stationed on the road to Fairfax. Soon afterwards my mother and the rest of us followed and lived for awhile in an old mansion in Fairfax County so as to be near him.

Along the road we traveled on the way there, thousands of forest trees had been felled, trenches had been thrown up in every direction, and in the distance forts could be seen everywhere. Everywhere, too, there were thousands of soldiers: some drilling, some lounging around their tents, but all with the stern, set, and strained expression on their faces that made me think, even then, of the many tragedies of the battles they had fought and still were

to fight. I used to go riding with my eldest brother into camp and along the line where many of the regiments were stationed, and it was always these grim, horror-stricken faces that impressed me. Everything in the war atmosphere had something of misery in it that awed me, and there seemed to be no remedy.

After the second battle of Bull Run I saw the ambulances returning with the dead and dying, followed by files of Confederate soldiers, ragged and half starving, sick and war-worn, pushed along to the old Capitol Prison by the Union men who had them in charge. Another time, one night just after the Seven Days' Battle before Richmond, the soldiers were trying to reach the encampment outside Alexandria. At that time we were staying in that city, and Ellsworth's Zouaves were bivouacked in the street in front of our home — I can see them still, and the glare of the pine torches, for there were no street lights in those days. Childlike, I had gotten out of my bed and stood at the window in the dark room, looking out on it all — and there the wounded came straggling in; they had been marching all day from the front, caring for their wounds as best they might. The medical staff, as I remember it, was being brought up from the rear to meet them there in Alexandria and had not yet arrived.

Suddenly I could stand it no longer, but summoned my mammy and had her come down into the kitchen with me. There we took charge of things somehow, requisitioned anything and everything that I could, and went out to the soldiers. Hours later I was missed, and my father found me after some search at midnight in the street among the soldiers, binding up their wounds.

I think it was just after Bull Run, when McClellan took command of the scattered forces of the Union and began to reorganize them on the Potomac, that I came into a full realization of the vileness and terror of war, although the battle itself, while it was in



progress, had been for me a phantom of horror. I had heard the deadly cannonading in the distance and known that human beings were being mowed down by thousands — I could not keep from picturing it all to myself.

It was the day of the grand review of the Army of the Potomac, and my brother and I witnessed that imposing spectacle. McClellan was there, and so were President Lincoln and thousands of onlookers from Washington and elsewhere. Eighty thousand infantry, eight thousand cavalry, and about twenty batteries of artillery made up the pageant, in those days one that was considered remarkable indeed. But all their splendid array brought nothing but tears to my heart and eyes, for crowding on my mind incessantly came pictures of what had been, what was to be, why they were there. I looked out on it all in despair. My heart went out in equal tenderness to the South and the North; I had as deep sympathy for the one side as for the other.

They were all martyrs to the insanity of the age: the insanity of unbrotherliness which had brought about that war, as it brings about every war. Picture after picture came before my mind's eye of the end and aim of it all, and question upon question filled my thoughts. How could the divine spirit of brotherly love prevail to sustain the Negro race in its real advancement, if it had not prevailed to avert the slaughter? I had little heart to think of the alleged glory of war: the trappings and the pageantry, the "splendor of the captains and the shouting." What filled my vision was man's inhumanity to man and the dire need of a new gospel or revelation from the great center of light to call a halt to warfare then and bring about that by which it might be abolished forever.

Many years have passed since then, but humanity has not yet learned wisdom. Efforts are being made even now to have the

country prepare for war and many feel that this is a necessity, but I know that it is not. War and preparation for war and thought towards war: these are a confession of weakness. To maintain peace is a proof and manifestation of strength. I would not dare criticize the patriotism of any honest man or reflect in any way on those who do what they think is their duty; but a man's foes are they of his own household, and so it is with a nation. Our enemies are not outside, but within: in our own national mind and customs, our national aggressions and fallings short. We distrust our neighbors because we distrust ourselves. I do not mean in this or that nation alone, but all over the world. We might all of us talk less about being proud of our countries and work more for their spiritual advancement and regeneration.

It is universal ideals that the world is aching for today. We need to understand as never before that our responsibilities are not for ourselves alone, not for our own countries alone, but for the whole human family. Territory and trade may be much, national honor may be much, but the general salvation of human society here in this world — that is *all*.

### **Patriotism, True and False**

The most vital need of every people on earth is permanent peace, and to get permanent peace we must create and sustain an international spirit or world patriotism which will come as the result of recognition that what affects one nation, affects all; that as far as one ascends towards the peaks of knowledge and well-being, so far all others will follow, and as deep as one may fall away from its ideals and into national selfishness, to that depth or lower in the nature of things the others will be dragged down too; that each nation must partake of the good and bad karma of all.

In a country that based its life wholly on principle and the spirit of human brotherhood, patriotism would be altogether a noble

thing, and its aim would not be to set hearts beating at the sound of a drum but to induct all minds into broader conceptions of the meaning of life. Were each nation to cultivate patriotism and national loyalty of that type, the world would soon be united in a universal beneficent system.

National interests ought to be dear to us, so dear that we should be eager to give our lives — in the living, not in the dying — to preserve the reality, the inner life and spiritual beauty of our countries; to protect future generations and leave them a heritage of noble life, an incorruptible dignity of culture such as money cannot purchase nor brute force attain or defend.

The highest law of our being demands that we should build our nations on the rock of that enduring wisdom which belongs to the divine soul of man, and rear up our children accordingly that they and their posterity after them may not know the sorrows we have known, but build on the rich results of our strivings the foundation of the great republic of the soul — that inner republic of which all souls are citizens — that it may be established "on earth as it is in heaven." But to stand merely and narrowly for one's own country is a suicidal substitute for patriotism. It is, eventually, a poisoning of the supposed object of its devotion because it implies working against the general life and spiritual health of the world, on which the life and spiritual health of each nation depend. We cannot separate ourselves from humanity.

The curse of our nations is separateness. We are not agreed upon any scheme of life or thought or action. We are separated one from another by the imaginary interests of daily life, and competition carried too far is ringing the death knell of our civilization. Money has become such a power as to make men lose sight of their souls and conscience and forget that they are a part of universal life. Our half-interest in ourselves — devotion to the

outward selves and ignoring of the inward and real — closes against us the door to those deeper realms of thought where truth abides, and hides away from us the manifestation of the true and beautiful divinity latent within each.

The greed of the world is the death of the world. The man whose mind is occupied with trying to get control of others that he may stand before the public as powerful and prosperous — that man is, from his soul's standpoint, in his death throes.

We forget that a future awaits us — verily the gods await us — and that there are more lives to be lived than this one. We ignore the spiritual will in man and that godlike part of our own nature which now more than ever should be brought into action, for this is the beginning of a cycle, a pivotal time in human history. Every age has its keynote: there was a period of political and religious despotism; this is one of inquiry, growth, and doubt. In proportion as we attain understanding of truth now, the evils that afflict the world will be eradicated as the cycle proceeds on its course. We are building the civilization of the future, and it is the first duty of the race today to see that the building is nobly done.

And yet it is now, today, that beneath the surface and in the undercurrents of life, in certain strata of society — strata we need not here name — there is a force luring us towards our undoing which, like a monster in a fairy tale, is growing day by day in power, energy, and foresight for its own advantage. What is the meaning of all this insidious propaganda, this urging upon us of armed peace and preparation for war, this constant insistence on the fallacy that man, to hold his place, must stand ready to resist his fellowmen by violence? To me it is one of the most terrible things in the world to hear it said that good can result from slaughter, or that it is possible to adjust rightly the conditions of the world by infringing on human rights.

Have we not seen how quickly the psychological influence of evil and selfishness can sweep over a whole continent, how easily the mind of a nation can be diverted from right channels into wrong? It would be better for the peoples of the earth to sink into sleep and never see the sun again, than to permit another war such as that we have recently suffered. I am thinking of the soldiers who die in battle — pitted man against man, and going out under the pressure of their bitter and bloodthirsty moods and the hatred, frenzy, and madness of the conflict — and wondering to what condition the souls of them will gravitate. Wondering and questioning, because hatred begets hatred, and brutality begets brutality; and though we had colossal intellects and all the wealth of the world, we could not bend the divine laws of nature to our desire.

I am thinking, again, of the effect of war on the generations that follow: how something is lost out of the lives of all those born in wartime, so that monstrosities come into being and strange examples of human kind — a new race breathing the atmosphere of hatred and embittered from birth and before birth — not a few of them here and there, but a whole generation of the unbalanced.

Yet when the slightest suggestion is made that the country is menaced — and the newspapers love to print such suggestions and are full of them — the majority of minds fly out at once to ideas of defense by brutality and violence, that we may have new wars to devour the noblest of our men and kill off those whose lives should most be preserved to build up our civilization. Then we brag of our patriotism and sacrifices! I say, before the drums begin beating and we hear the tramp of our loved ones marching deathward—before the phantom of death is stalking and ravaging through the land — oh, that we would unfurl the banners of a loftier kind of patriotism!

Could you have armed peace in your family, in your dealings with your children and those whom you profess to love? Could you have a peace there, regulated, enforced, and maintained with swords and bayonets and firearms? There is no substance in the idea at all: it is wholly false. A peace based on armaments is bound to be but a temporary makeshift, and its passing is bound to be always into worse bloodshed and horror.

### **Vistas of a Nobler Peace**

Fear and apprehension of war are becoming a chronic disease among all so-called civilized peoples: an old disease that hangs on and will never be healed until the world discovers the secret of true patriotism. There is no nobility in fear. It is a thing born wholly in the realms of personality, smallness, and selfishness, and has nothing to do at all with the higher self which is the hero in man. No individual and no nation can make the slightest progress upwards until fear has been eliminated from his or its being.

In times of peace, we are told, we should prepare for war. In times of peace, were we decently fearless and had the least spiritual insight, we should prepare only for a higher peace; and peace in every succeeding age should mean something nobler and grander. For standing armies and navies we should have the wisdom of the higher man which would include knowledge of how to meet our brothers, not brutally in battle but as divine beings should meet beings equally divine.

For the great power of the divine universe is in every human heart, even the most wretched and unfortunate, and it does not take a lifetime, it does not take a year, for a man to discover the god within himself. If he has the courage to face the issues he may find it in a moment of time. Let him, seeking truth, force the doors

of his own soul and all human nature will be revealed to him. Let him find access there and the desires and passions that have haunted him through life will disappear. The light of the soul shining in on the mind and coloring the life of a man: that is the glory of God, that is the glorification of man, that is the establishment of everlasting peace. For each one of us is a universe in little and each one has all the secrets of time within himself.

We might learn a lesson from the flowers in their quiet purity: that the souls of us should blossom out into the eternal, and that days and moments, men and events and things, might reveal to us continually new aspects full of promise and encouragement until conviction comes that life, which once seemed so dreary and tragic, is in its inmost essence joy. For life is this, in reality: to feel the nearness of the infinite, to find the great knowledge in one's own heart, to rest in the house of unselfishness looking for the grand ultimate in all things, looking for the beautiful and ancient law. Life is this, in reality: the march of the soul going home to the supreme spirit, to the light of light, to the life of life, to the knowledge of knowledge.

Losing sight of the eternal in the transient, we fail to find the meaning of life. Had men discovered their true humanity, they would know that brute force can never, by any chance, under any circumstances, win any single real victory or anything profitable at all. Winning by it, we lose; its victories are our worst defeats. It is the ignorance and timidity of the age that hamper us, and both can be traced back to heredity and the long generations of the past. Each man and each nation is an epitome of all humanity, and the disastrous belief in separateness proves that our gaze is wholly turned away from the real and fixed on the objective plane.

There is but one true and legitimate battlefield: the mind of man, where the duality of our nature keeps us constantly at the only rightful war there is — the war of the god in us against the lower self. The kingdom of heaven is within, and no one is so far from the light and the truth that he cannot turn tomorrow and find it. Then shall he work for the glory of God and shall know the secret of so working, for God is in man and through man's heart may be made manifest. And the glory of God is the glory of humanity: of manhood, of womanhood and motherhood, of a home life strong, pure, and beautiful, of a civic life lifted above all petty jealousies and differences, of an international world patriotism based on the fundamental brotherhood of man.

We have come to be overweighted with our exterior and worldly interests and have lost that natural human equilibrium by which we might live undisturbedly in the spiritual side of our nature, making our minds subservient to our real selves and using them as a means of service and growth. For we should regard the idea of adjusting national differences by brute force as an insult to the dignity of spiritual manhood. We should see that the men we train for war — and whether we or they know it or not, humiliate in the training — might be trained wonderfully for peace instead: to be statesmen and teachers, the efficient guardians of their nations' peace.

We should no longer seek, as we have been doing for ages, to arm ourselves against our neighbors. Our whole care should be to protect our neighbors against our own lower selves. Cultivate a fear of invasion and you are moving far away from justice, far away from duty. Shame on the people that so distrusts its higher self and godlike abilities as to feel unable to resist invasion by any other means than brute force!

All nations since the beginning have had their great successes and



periods of high achievement, followed by ages of spiritual and physical ignominy and the downward trend of their cycles. We surely are in a cyclic decline and nighttime now, and not in the day and splendor of our season, for we do not understand in the least the real meaning of life, individual or national. Our patriotism has coarsened abominably, and we reflect the coarse aspects of it on other nations, as they do the coarse aspects of theirs on us.

Do those who are interested in promoting armaments and who believe that it is by brute force of arms that a country may be well protected, do they realize the power of psychological suggestion? Cruel influences can be made by constant reiteration to enter into the thought-life of a race, and to urge that some other power has warlike designs against us is actually to create warlike designs in them as well as in ourselves.

Those against whom we work up our propagandas of hatred, and who may be made our enemies tomorrow, are our brothers, and there is a way to reach them — and it is not by force or menace or insult or the psychological suggestion created by piling up armaments. We have our brain-mind plans, our guns and ships and fortresses, we have our youth trained for battle and restless under the enforced inactivity of circumstance, and it is all a challenge and a daring of foreign countries. We dare and incite them to come over and test us; we announce to them our opinion that we and they are equally blind.

We have become so accustomed to believing that the victor is right that it has become a kind of creed with us, and we bring up our children to believe in it. The side that wins is in the right, the defeated side is in the wrong: it is all a matter of brute force. And we take religion and our so-called God to support our miserable theory. It is insanity — the insanity of the age! Only insanity could

confuse brute force with power.

And yet there is enough heroism on earth today to turn earth into a heaven. If the energy and time that have been wasted in warlike preparations had been given to preparations for peace, our nations would be stronger now than ever they were and infinitely better protected. The soul of a nation — the living essence of its being — is the aggregation of its thoughts, feelings, actions, and ideals, backed by the divine quality of the god within. To the degree that the people of any country nourish their national soul with thought of that spiritual and godlike kind, to that degree their country is protected, impregnable, beyond the reach of violation. Look at it rationally and you must see that this is the truth; but hug to your mind and heart the old contemptible fallacy that moral victories can be won by force and you will go on being duped by foolishness and creating misery for yourself by sowing the seeds of war.

### **The Beam Is in Thine Own Eye**

Nation against nation, brother against brother, and family against family, we shall always be at warfare as long as we place dependence on our lower natures — on physical force or on the selfish interest — for the adjustment of those affairs which can only be settled by the spiritual side of man's nature. It must not be thought that I blame too much the people of today. We are the progeny, spiritually as well as physically, of our ancestors, as they were of theirs. Century after century men have been living in ignorance and with faces turned away from the universal plan of life, which is brotherhood — an ideal we might uphold, one would think, with at least half the interest we take in our narrow nationalisms and preoccupations with war. The influence of the past lies dark on the present. For ages humanity has been accustoming itself to unbrotherliness, selfishness, and injustice,

and men have been growing, not nearer together, but farther apart.

This is true of all, so that when war breaks out we have no right to blame this or that man or nation. We must do away with this sitting in judgment on our neighbors if we are to find the divine light in ourselves. We cannot draw upon, we cannot support or awaken the soul, the part that is worthwhile, in our own nation while our minds are so busied concerning themselves with the supposed faults and various failings of some other nation. Those who have learned to distinguish between the mortal and the immortal within themselves are the most charitable people on earth: they know how easy it is for one unacquainted with his own divine nature to drift in the wrong direction.

Many are ready enough to see the duality in another but are blind to it in themselves: they will not discriminate between the two sides, nor recognize as such the obstacles that eternally overthrow them, or they would be free from the vice of faultfinding. Their only adverse criticism would be for themselves, and hence they would have freedom of the spirit and enlightenment of the mind.

Men and nations, it is this continual thought of self that is our undoing. We excuse ourselves; often we believe that we would sacrifice our very lives for humanity when really we would not sacrifice the smallest whim. Sometimes some insignificant personal desire may turn the whole nature and add unspeakable weight to the burden of the future, and we cannot see it and have no notion it is weighing us down. We sow the seeds of our misfortunes in the moments when we cannot sacrifice the small things we have set our hearts on.

We should not stand in awe at the presumption of our fellows if they excused in themselves what we excuse lightly enough in

ourselves because, as we think, we stand well in other respects. We lay up burdens for ourselves with little unexpected things we hide away in our mental life and think are of little moment. We cannot imagine they can grow to anything in *us*, and so we hold onto them. But it is the little disturbing influences that break down the most magnificent enterprises, and petty evils eat away the heart-life of man. There never was a mob yet but one or two began it; then came two or three more, and then others and others, until what had gathered together you would think composed not of human beings but of lunatics. And as it is with individuals so it is with nations. Great empires have fallen disintegrated by the small selfishnesses of insignificant people; and the neglect of some trifling duty by one man may defeat the progress of a nation for years.

Self-analysis should bring us to an inexhaustible compassion. We should have it in mind always that every living thing is an expression of the infinite, no matter what its outward aspects may be. Our supposed enemies, or the men or nations that we blame, have been educated, as we have, to look on life wholly from the outside. It has been impressed on us all, generation by generation, till the taint runs in our very blood and being, that conquest by force is sometimes possible and legitimate. And now we have quite forgotten the spiritual powers by which alone success can be achieved.

What have we to say to those who brand man from his infancy a moral weakling and have hypnotized him into the notion that he can find no salvation within himself, nor win to any grace or inward health by his own efforts? Such ideas have called him away from exploring the spiritual regions within himself and driven him to seek all light and help in external forces which he cannot control; and the result is the irreligious morals and wide unbelief of the age. It is the nature of the human mind to

approach the great mystery impersonally, with joy, affection, and reverence. But when these deadly limitations of thought are imposed on us, and we are taught to identify ourselves wholly with our personal and lower selves, our conceptions of infinity are immediately dwarfed. Joy, reverence, and affection are chilled out of existence and in their place the seeds of bitterness and narrowness are sown, because it is in the personal self that all petty and evil qualities inhere, and only there they can grow.

What wonder, then, that we have grown so prone to war-fevers, and that these brutal tendencies so easily overmaster us that we know no way to defend our rights or arrange our differences but — perhaps after a little quarrelsome brain-mind argument — by having recourse to bayonets and rifles and all the chaos and agony in which thousands of lives are snuffed out in the twinkling of an eye? And all the while the two sides pray the one against the other, each seeking to make omnipotence and infinity its accomplice in the horror and in every manner of force.

That man is still on his feet and can stand at all is proof enough of the essential divinity of man. Uncertain, changing, wandering, despairing, faltering, going down and constantly re-arising, his mind conceiving nothing of the depth, beauty, and grandeur of the knowledge his inner self actually possesses—somehow he still endures. In the hell he has created for himself he still persists and is not extinguished: what greater proof of his inner godhead could be imagined? Were he less than divine in essence and potentiality, he would bow down his head and cease to be.

The soul knows: it has brought into this life memories of other and ancient lives and of old defeats and victories. It abides forever in the light, choring with the stars and the silences of God. It soars into the infinite without separation from the body, because there is no limitation to the essential divinity of man. We

might attain vision of eternal existence by penetrating beyond the mind to the real self within, by finding there the conscious power that will carry us away from the sense-life and over the high walls of the mind. But we ignore the existence of this god within us and have altogether forgotten that the mentality, no matter how highly trained, was never intended to be anything but its instrument. Until he knows this, no man can be all that he might be. The mind, the mental being, is not the self. It is a tool the self has acquired for its use and its means of progression.

Greater things than these shall ye do," said the Nazarene, and he did not mean by scholarship or mental attainment or scientific discovery or invention. He spoke as a theosophist, and theosophy accords man the right to be eternal, calling forth from the obscure and the unknown that eternal side of his nature which is the great soul, undying through the ages. Human beings cannot think deeply and fully until they have moved into the light of that divine human nature. All that was ever said that was true and wonderful and revealing was touched into life by it: even the materialist may become so inspired, even when writing on his materialistic doctrines, as actually to reach spiritual heights and contact the infinite in spite of himself. For the higher self is mightier than the mind altogether and may move the latter in its own despite. It is divine by nature and origin: through infinite experience it has risen to the heights. It dwells upon the mountain tops of being: beholding, cognizing, loving.

It is only our minds which are so confused that they do not feel it: they do not hear its song that permeates the silences, they do not see that which is before them to be seen. So we sit in the shadows and add ourselves to the aggregations of despair. We drop into inertia, finding nothing for ourselves nor seeking anything for others; we build ourselves worlds of suffering, each in his own selfish way. It is reliance on the brain-mind and merely mental

part that holds us away from our greatness. We have fettered and bound our consciousness, we have shut ourselves in and built our dwelling among the shadows, whereas we might have used the large vision of gods and be generous expressions of universal life.

With no more than brain-mind knowledge and scholarship, however great these may be, a man is half asleep. He has not found himself or the key to life. He cannot see ahead, he has no vision. Reason has its place, but it is the spirit of his work that makes a man a god; and as his life is, so will his understanding be. There is of course great value in acquiring knowledge and sharpening the mind, but there is that which is infinitely more important: to discover within the mysterious recesses of the soul the operations that illuminate the heart and vivify the mind with spiritual light. Character is higher than mind, but highest of all is the spiritual life.

It follows that none of the great world problems can be solved by mere cleverness. The man who depends solely on that can make nothing of any of them. In the direction of the mind our powers are always and necessarily limited. That is not the part of us which is immortal or without bounds. Therefore war cannot be abolished by argument or political intrigues or manipulations, but only by bringing to bear on our international questions the instincts and inspirations of that divinity which stands now in the background of human consciousness awaiting the summons of a humanity at last grown aware of the tremendous dignity of being human.

While the shadows are over us and the darkness still is about us, we should turn our eyes to the east and realize that from within these death cells of the body and mind we can look forth and see, faint as yet and far away perhaps, the promise of a new most glorious life for mankind. The divine laws are greater than

human laws. They are permanent and eternal and there is no change in them: political systems do not touch them nor sectarian influences corrupt. Right thought and action can lift us for the time being, always, onto the plane of the soul, and when we are there we are raising the whole human race towards the level of its rights, possibilities, and spiritual heritage.

We have but to grasp that central idea that none can ever find the soul's way, or conform to the great universal scheme of life, by mere exercise of brain-power; that the brain-mind can never bring the nations into stable peace or create any genuine fellowship or union. There must be that common divine-human something which dwells behind the mentality. The soul must hold the scepter and be given direction of affairs. If but a few could understand their duty in this matter they would look into the future with broad and far vision; they would put away every fallacy and selfish aim in order to prepare for humanity a civilization in which war would be impossible. Their noble efforts would be directed towards welding, first their own countries, then the whole human family, into one impregnable unity.

They could not, perhaps, put an end to war at once and forever; karma will work itself out. But they would set their faces against the reign of brute force. They would move heaven and earth to put a stop to newspaper agitations in favor of armament against this or that foreign country. And they would see that there should be, as far as they could bring it about, a general recognition of the meaning and consequences of certain things we permit and even foster in our midst in peace times and always: the cruelties, the upholdings of brute force as against decency and justice, the horror known as capital punishment, the vice our indifference allows to flourish, the unimaginable disgrace of vivisection.

## **A Word on Vivisection**



A word or two as to that last: it is only the insanity of the age that makes us imagine we can save life by sinning against life, or achieve good by doing what is so obviously evil. The higher law is direct: you cannot play with or misuse it. The vivisector is sowing seeds in his nature whose ghastly harvest he will have to reap. He is hardening his inner and finer sensibilities, tearing down a part of the better structure of his being, misusing his mind and insulting the higher qualities of his nature, and losing something that he will never find again.

Consider what the thing means. Every function and organ of the animal is experimented on: if it is the brain, it is sliced and galvanized and plowed into with red-hot irons; if it is the spinal cord, it is explored most minutely with forceps and scalpel; if it is the blood, it is pumped out of the living struggling animal and pumped back again. The victims have been boiled alive and burned alive; poisonous gases are poured down their throats; they are shaven and bathed in icy water to see how long it will take for pneumonia to develop!

Conceive of the psychological influence of a physician who, however pure his motives may be, has hypnotized himself into a determination to carry on his work through such means as these. He does not realize that every time he makes such an experiment he is brutalizing his own nature, and therefore also that of his posterity, or that he is shutting the door against the higher knowledge which would come if his efforts were on higher lines. For here again there is reliance on nothing better than the brain-mind vision, and actually on the very lowest phases of that, to gain a knowledge that can only be won, really, through exercise of the spiritual side of the nature — that very higher self which by the practice of vivisection a man insults, excludes, and sets back. Always the key to the higher self is compassion.

The more these fallacies of the age are followed, the more we shall have brute force enthroned, and wars, wrecked homes, broken lives, prisons and insane asylums, and new and unnameable forms of vice. Courageous souls must seek and discover the way or, before many generations have gone by, because of its iniquities, mankind must go down and be blotted out.

## **The True Remedy**

If we can so easily be carried away by these war-fevers and psychological waves of confusion, why should we not be lifted by the opposite kind of force to heights of clear discrimination, and in place of finding flaws in foreign countries and preparing for wars with them, set ourselves to clearing of their weeds the gardens of our own countries' lives? Why should not our eyes be fixed on golden ages to be, when the seeds of genius, dormant now in all human nature, shall be developed in the glow and sunshine of the infinite law? The mountains shall be covered with the unselfish and courageous who walk the rugged paths with their eyes upon the light, and they will look down into the valley of the shadow that was and see there no longer heartache and sorrow, ignorance and degradation. For their compassion and love will have kindled the hearts of the dwellers in darkness, and they too will have begun the grand ascent.

No man can take a step forward towards the goal of human perfection without becoming aware that hundreds are on the way who started before him and are now in advance. He cannot see them with his eyes, but is aware of their companionship. The light that made brilliant every golden age of the past is still discoverable; for men and nations alike, every tomorrow may be a new day, a royal day of conquest, and the beginning of a progress that will never end. For there is an undertone in human

affairs, and the harmony of the spheres pulsating; there is an anthem singing itself through the silence behind life, singing itself to the men of this world and calling them homeward.

God is in the human heart: let but that divinity be aroused until it sweeps in divinely forceful, freeing the general mind of the race from the rubbish of lies it has accumulated, so that men may see how superb life is. The grandest music that ever was heard cannot express the glory and power of the divine in ourselves and in the universe. Yet one can find suggestions of it through one's own sufferings, aspirations, ideals, sacrifices, and courage to push on. And when we have gone through the round of our experiences, in our disappointment and unrest and loneliness we shall come back to the great reality and make obeisance to the divinity within. It remains in man even when man most ignores it, though it has been shut out from life and but glimpses caught of it here and there, and though the limitations that have been imposed by the brain-mind wholly obscure its light.

For though a man wander from the path and err, in the economy of nature he cannot be lost: none is so far from the splendor of truth that he cannot turn tomorrow and find it within himself. He can rise above all the obstacles in life and look down on and overcome them, because we are this something more than we seem — the highest expressions of life that we know of.

The hidden truth about us is that we *do* love our neighbor as ourselves, though we have not found the way to express the love which we do not even know exists. But it is there: the love of our fellows sleeps latent in our hearts with the deity that watches there. Though we are quite unconscious of it, our very humanity implies its existence. It is in the inmost depths of the nature even of the most brutal and debased: in us, and equally in those whom tomorrow we might come to look on as our enemies, whom we

would kill, and delight in killing, were war declared. For wherever human life is, there the god is seeking its expression. It would put forth its leaves as the trees do; it would blossom like the flowers, and its blossoms would be deeds and thoughts full of gentleness and courage and beauty. It desires to sing as the birds desire to sing, and its song would be honor, friendship, justice, ringing through the clear serenity of our lives.

As it begins to push and urge itself through the mind and into the life of us, we shall see the light of it grow ever brighter and brighter in the world, until we too may echo the spirit of its grandeur and be clothed in the glory of those who have preceded us on the way.

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For this eye of the soul which *can* guide us to the vision of Good if it is set in the right direction, is normally bound down by the soul's preoccupation with the things below; and while that is so, it may make us very clever at seeing the things which are *not* true, and may help us to go far — in the wrong direction; but it can never lead us to the light until our souls are converted. — E. J. URWICK, *The Message of Plato*, p. 123

### My First Meeting with William Quan Judge

Long before I became Leader of the Theosophical Society I had seen much to convince me that we do not know what remedies to use for crime and poverty nor how to apply them. A terror grew in my heart, and I became sick and discouraged, because I saw so much cruelty and indifference: so much suffering and so little done to relieve it. To establish schools of prevention — that was my dream. It was not born in a day but came after long experience of work among the destitute in New York, mostly on the East Side. It was impressed on my mind during many visits to the prisons there, and to Ellis Island, and in much rescue work among the unfortunates of the streets.

It was plain to see that little could be done really and permanently to help them. What was needed was a new system of education for the prevention of the conditions I met. To reorganize human nature when it had already lost faith and become awry and twisted, skeptical and cynical, seemed almost or quite impossible. I saw that the only way was to mold the characters of the children in the plastic first seven years of their lives and then, somewhat differently, on from seven to fourteen.

These thoughts and feelings grew acute one bitter winter when the East Side was seriously affected by a strike of the cloak makers. Day after day these people were holding out for what they considered their rights, and the destitution had become terrible. They had no resources left and their children were on the point of starvation. One morning a baby died in its mother's arms at the door of the Do-Good Mission, an emergency relief society I had established with its headquarters in an old tenement house in the region of greatest privation — crowds used to come there daily for soup and bread and what else I could provide to help them.

I remember that day well. Snow was falling when I started out in the morning to go down to the Mission to meet those discouraged persons in their poverty, an ordinary snowstorm that gave little warning of the tremendous blizzard that was to rage later in the day, the fury of which was beginning to be apparent when I arrived. In that fierce storm, now increasing momentarily, over six hundred women and children were waiting in the street for relief. They were but half-dressed — they had pawned most of their clothes — they were perishing with the cold; they were wailing out loud, many of them, and clamoring for help.

The rooms we had taken were on the first floor — the best we could get, though the house was old and ramshackle; and to have

brought or tried to bring those six hundred in would have meant death for most or all of them. The landlord warned me most peremptorily that the floor would hardly bear the weight of fifty without collapsing and falling into the cellarage. And all the while the cry of those women was ringing in my ears. I could not send them away hungry, and it would be some little time yet before the food that was being prepared would be ready.

There was nothing for it but for me to go out and talk to them, to keep them as well as I could in humor and patience while waiting. So I had a large grocery box placed on the sidewalk beside the door and, standing on it, told them why I could not ask them in and that the soup was not yet quite cooked and the bread not yet delivered from the baker's, but in a very short time both would be ready. All the while the crowd and the storm kept increasing, and with them my own distress, till I felt my heart almost at breaking-point to see so much keen misery and to know that all I could do was so wretchedly little, so ineffectual: to lift them out of their present trouble and keep them secure against as bad or worse tomorrow or the next day.

Suddenly my attention was caught by a pale face on the outskirts of the crowd — the face of a man standing under an umbrella, with his coat collar turned up and buttoned round his neck and his hat low down over his face — clearly not one of the strikers; a gentleman, I thought, suddenly reduced to destitution and ashamed to come forward with the rest and ask for the food he sorely needed. A face fine of features and strikingly noble of expression, with a look of grave sadness, too, and of sickness — caused by hunger no doubt. All this flashed through my mind in that one glance, and I turned to call one of our attendants to send her to him. But when I looked round again, he was gone.

Two days later he presented his card at my home: it was William

Quan Judge, a leader of the Theosophical movement and H. P. Blavatsky's successor. He told me he had read of my work among the poor and had gone down there to see it for himself. He had found it, so far, practical and valuable, he said; but also had divined my discontent with it and my hunger for something that would go much deeper, removing the causes of misery and not merely relieving the effect. It was then, when I came to know him, that I realized I had found my place. The more I became acquainted with him and with his work, the more I felt assured that some of my old dreams and hopes might yet come true. Fully and accurately to describe him would be beyond my power, he so stood out above the run of men in deep wisdom and lofty nobility of character. He had made theosophy the living power in his life, and none could be so bitter against him as to exhaust his tolerance or his compassion.

It was he who first gave me glimpses of the power of thought and made me realize what it will do to build or ruin the destiny of a human being. And in doing so, he showed me how to find in theosophy solution of all the problems that had vexed me: how it points the way to the right treatment of the downtrodden and outcast of humanity, and to the real remedies for poverty, vice, and crime. On all these subjects the first word of theosophy is this: he who would enter upon the path that leads to truth must put new interpretations on the failings and mistakes of his fellowmen. He must come to understand the law of eternal justice — karma, that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" — and to know the necessity it implies for an unconquerable compassion, because those who fail and fall short do so always through ignorance. Crime is always the result of ignorance, and there can be no cure for it until this is recognized.

## **The Higher and the Lower Natures**



What, for example, does the criminal know about the god within him or his responsibility as a human being or the large scope of life? What does he know of the power of the immortal self? It is because these unfortunates are wholly ignorant of the difference between the brain-mind and the divine life, between the angel and the demon within themselves, that they have moved on blindly down and out of the better life.

Their criminality, if the truth were known, has grown up upon the idea that dread of punishment is the proper, natural, and only effective deterrent of crime and the one reasonable motive for avoiding wrongdoing. And what is this but the natural corollary of the old mistaken teachings? Consequently, once a man has fallen into error — once he has made his primal mistake and taken the first step downward, braved the thing and broken through the glamour, so to speak, though it were but by the stealing of a loaf to appease his hunger — he becomes, in all probability, a formidable menace to society. And is it not ignorance that makes him so? Ignorance: that false, pernicious fear of forces or powers, a deity, outside of himself; that lack of the sovereign knowledge of the god within?

How then dare we condemn any man? How do we know what we ourselves might have done if placed as they had been, in other lives long since forgotten? Even the best of us may have made mistakes as grave as those of any convict in the prisons. How do we know? The road to crime is the road of ignorance; he who would have assurance that his own feet shall never tread it, let him cultivate a large toleration for all and a grand compassion for the erring. Let him beware of harsh judgment, lest the taint of it should follow him through many lives. The soul is judged by the divine law, not by man. The moment we condemn our neighbor, that moment we doom ourselves. For we are all part and parcel one of another: brotherhood is indeed a fact in nature, a truth

which would be obvious but that we go through life masked in these personalities or false selves of ours and are unaware of the real selves within, which are divine.

What is needed is that we should do away with the idea of punishment altogether, and in its place put correction, redemption. I would have the word *crime* erased from the dictionaries and from human speech. Crime is a disease, and calls not for punishment but for cure. We must deal firmly and mercifully with those afflicted. They need hospital treatment — brotherly, educative, karmic — wisely administered, and not prisons and cells and scaffolds.

We ought not dare to be content or indifferent when we hear of a man imprisoned. One so suffering through his ignorance and errors should become our charge, not in such a way as to pauperize him or increase his weaknesses, but to put him on the road to overcome them. One who has strayed into the wrong path, even so grievously as to have taken human life, should become our charge that we may reform him and make him a useful citizen. He is an invalid and should be treated as such. He has been infected with the psychological influences of the age. He is a victim of its ignorance, bowed down under the pressure of its conditions and burdened and hopeless with the weight of his own mistakes. Yet he is susceptible to curative treatment; he might be made of value to the race. Somewhere in the nature even of the most wretched, spiritual life is still pulsating, a ray from the great eternal still shines. A man lost to society, as the saying goes, degraded utterly in his own and the world's estimation, can still be lifted up and put on his feet. The higher nature can still be aroused in him.

Study the development of the minds and characters of the so-called criminals and in the course of time you will discover that it

is the agony of the battle going on in their lives — with the consciousness of the higher self pleading strongly and working to redeem them from the temptations of the lower — which has unstrung them and made them abnormal. Inquire into the inner history of the boy with the morphine habit and you will find, often and often, that he took to the drug to quiet his conscience. That is at the root of the trouble with these drink and drug addicts in all cases except those caused by heredity. Conscience, that light out of eternity which is a part of every human life, is so strong and powerful in them and so works upon their lives, making them miserable, that they must do something to escape from it. They would kill themselves, but very fortunately for themselves have not the courage; and so they take to the dreadful "panacea," and the habit grows.

There is no man who commits a crime but he is, in respect to that action, abnormal, insane. Every boy and girl, and every man or woman behind bars is irresponsible. They do not understand the laws of life, they are at the mercy of their own ignorance. How can we doubt that the moment a man feels murder in his heart he has stepped beyond the borders of sanity? When the lower nature is fired with resentment, hatred, or fear to the degree that it is ready to kill, the real man has lost all control of the mind. The impulses of the demon-self, when it is fired to a certain point, become uncontrollable: the mind is distorted and disarranged, the man is insane.

When a man is charged with a crime and brought into court to be tried and to receive sentence, how much do we know, how much do judge and jury know, of the environment he has grown up in? Of his prenatal conditions, his heredity, his physical disabilities? Of his education or lack of education? How much do those who condemn him know about his life, inner and outer? A diseased body may easily cause mental and moral disease. A man's

heredity may be such that, though his purposes normally are high and his intentions of the cleanest, he may drift and go wrong through lack of self-understanding. The mark was put on him before he was born — the very vehicle that produced him may have carried the family taint.

Yet constantly we brand such men criminals and impose on them punishments instead of correctives. It is always punishment, severe punishment: isolation, and to be locked in a cell for months or years according to the nature of his misdoing and the decision of a judge who knows no more about the man he is sentencing, really, than he does about the atoms in the deepest parts of the sea — who does not so much as know himself, nor has ever discovered or analyzed his own possibilities, divine or demoniacal, and therefore cannot fall back upon those sublime resources in his own being which would enable him to do real justice to his fellowmen.

Then too, let the best of us examine himself and say truly whether so great a gulf divides him from the prisoner behind bars. A man may be essentially mean and selfish in his character and yet go through life a model of respectability because he has been too inert and forceless, or too cowardly, to break the laws: it is not the worst men that we hang or imprison by any means. With many criminals, the very force that went into their crimes would make them fine servants of humanity if their crime-insanity were cured.

A man may be today a hero and a saint and tomorrow, under the impulse of his lower nature, may be brought quite down by some remarkable temptation. The wavering mind is in the light today and tomorrow in the shadows: it may drop below the level of the soul-life at any time and do disastrous things. Here is the divine overshadowing, the illumination, the high endeavor, and the

purpose; and yet upon a sudden urge, in a moment — for a bagatelle, a nothing — the greater self may be shut away and banished that the mortal and the animal self may have sway and power.

I remember an orator with the wisdom of the gods, you would say, in his speech, yet nestling in hidden places in his nature were lurking demons that he had suppressed but had not conquered. He had not heretofore been subjected to any really great temptation, and in his egoism and foolish pride he had hugged to his heart the idea that he was on the right lines of evolution. But all the time these insidious hidden foes in the passionate and selfish side of his nature were eating like cankerworms into the fiber of his being. When the great temptation came — as come it must in all such cases — the intellect was overpowered and the heart lost sight of, and the passion of the man which had been but a half-desire a few weeks before became the dominant power in his life. The spiritual will was set aside, and what was left of him was a brute — a moral wreck and a complete inversion of the man the world had known.

He who yesterday was the admired of the world, who perhaps was trying to do right, tomorrow may be behind bars and awaiting in the dreadful silence of the condemned cell the steps of the dreary procession that will lead him forth to be hanged, and for no more strange or improbable reason than that there was unbalance in his character, unbalance in his education: overdoing on one line, neglect on another.

## **Capital Punishment**

There is, in truth, but one kind of crime which is committed by sound and disposing minds, and it is that form of murder which is called capital punishment. A man's life does not belong only to the community. It is a part of the universal scheme of life. Each of

us is placed here by the divine law for divine and universal purposes, and nothing can give us the right to legalize the taking of human life. We are committing a crime ourselves when we permit it, and it is the crime against the Holy Ghost, the higher law.

Look below the surface appearances; look into the depths of life. Here is a man to be hanged for his crimes tomorrow: we know what will happen to his body, but how about the soul to which that body belongs? In what condition will that go forth — in sympathy with the human race, perhaps; at peace with man and the world? On the contrary, as he leaves life he will be but little impressed with the love of humanity, or with the love of the good, the beautiful, and the true. He knows nothing whatever about the divine nature within his human nature: as he sits there agonizing in the condemned cell, there is no atmosphere, no reminder of divine things about him, within or without.

"Love ye one another!" said the grand Nazarene: since this man was taken for his crime, he has had nothing to love or be loved by but the iron bars of his cage where he has been kept in a hideous silence and made to realize every moment that he is doomed, a *thing*, an outcast from humanity altogether. He has come to hate mankind — which, truly, never gave him reason to do otherwise. He is at war with everything around him; his whole being is alive with bitterness against those who condemned him, with lust of revenge, with horror of what is approaching. He has heard preached this doctrine and that doctrine, from this pulpit or that, at one time or another, but never a word nor thought to give him any real understanding of himself.

He has not the enlightenment to know — how should he have? — that what we reap we have sown, and as we sow, we shall reap. He has missed all in life that might have helped him, and met

with all that could possibly hinder and mar, and he has reveled in the lower side of his nature till now in the world's eyes he is the worst thing on earth. As far as we can, we allow him no memory but this: that he is accursed and unfit to be alive, and so must be pushed forth with every circumstance of degradation into the great unknown. All he can think of is how to save his body from being hanged: he is crazy under the scourgings of the thought and cannot be calm for an instant, and there is a hell of hells in his mind of which we can know nothing.

The soul is there — a human soul is there — he has still the spark of divinity within him, however faint recognition of it may have become. Because he is human, he is essentially divine. We know so little of life as yet. Of this man, this much may be said: though the soul has been shut out steadfastly from his consciousness and has found no way to express itself in his actions — though he has been living apart from it and is sunk in the deepest degradation — the immutable law that governs all life holds him in its keeping as it does the greatest of the saints, and I know that somewhere beyond death that divinity will open up vistas of hope for him, and the realization that the way he followed was mistaken and that other chances will be given him.

Truly, the divine law is more merciful than human law: beyond death there is peace, and knowledge of our greater selves, and recompense for what injustice the world may have done us. We human beings are divine — born to evolve! We are sons of god, incarnate here to work out superb destinies for ourselves and the world we live in. But we should remember what deposit of thought, as it were, he has left on the brink of this world, and realize that when through the divine urge of the law he seeks his place on earth again, as he will — as all must — and takes up again the burden that he laid down, it is not in the halls of the learned we shall find him, nor in the places where beauty and

truth abide. He will of necessity move to an environment akin to the thoughts and feelings with which he went out: such was the door of his exit, and such must be the door of his return.

Here is another aspect of it: for our own and our children's and our civilization's sake we should turn away from this legalized iniquity. We must consider the thought-influences that are pushed, so to say, into the mental atmosphere of the future child, there to stamp their image on its character. Some crime has been committed and is making a stir in the newspapers. Much feeling has been aroused against the man supposed to have committed it — the case is being discussed in many homes — and here is a woman about to become a mother. She listens to two or three such discussions, and under the psychological influence of the general opinion she admits into her mind the thought that the man should be hanged — even she formulates it in words, and says, "I should like to see him hanged."

Think of the effect of such a thought, such feeling, such a desire taken as poison into her mind to flow as poison in her blood, upon the character and future of her unborn child. For when one stirs his lower nature to a desire for revenge he is arousing forces which then and there become an actual poison in his body. People are destroying themselves every day with their lust of vengeance and their hatred, not only destroying their higher and mental possibilities, but literally poisoning the very blood in their veins. Every atom is affected; and thus they prepare punishment for themselves, not far off in another world or state of being — no hell is threatened — but at the moment when the thought is conceived, here in this world, in their present bodies, physically, the poison begins to take effect. You have but to follow the lives of the people who are determined to do wrong to see how these forces are destroying them.



## **Prisons and Prisoners**

Look at our prisons, those monuments of iniquity, and then say that our religion and our politics have lifted the standards of life. Is it not obvious, a truism, that every house of correction should have within itself the means and power to correct and redeem, and yet of what avail are our legal systems and prison systems for the moral correction of the criminal? What feature in them is calculated or designed, and efficacious, to lift him out of the mud and the shadows and darkness of despair? What is there in the law that is corrective, even in the least degree? Nothing — and it was never intended that there should be. All that is thought of is this utterly futile idea of punishment that can serve no good purpose in the world. A man commits a crime and is put behind bars, and the whole thought is to punish him harshly and severely — no one thinks at all to serve what end or accomplish what benefit for any man.

How easy it is to make a criminal! If there is poverty in the family, or ignorance, or some hereditary taint that manifests under pressure — it might otherwise never manifest at all — a child may grow up without ever having experienced one of those spiritual states of consciousness that are normal and necessary to the inner health; may never for a moment have felt that it came from the god-world and the great mystery, and is cared for by nature in a myriad wonderful and delicate ways. How shall such a one, so weaponless and undefended inwardly, be secure against temptation when it comes?

Or think of a boy who has been brought up in a home where all was tender kindness indeed, but where the old sectarian ideas filled the atmosphere. Either he is in harmony with those ideas and thus prepared to go through life in utter ignorance of the truth about life; or he is likely to be, at about sixteen or

seventeen, in a state of fierce rebellion that may be disastrous to himself. The revolt of his awakening mentality against the childish falsehood of the old teachings may have spread to the rest of his nature and infected that with doubt of and contempt for the moral law.

We may pick up such a boy tonight under the vagrant law. He has rebelled against his parents, thrown off their authority and left his home. Very likely he is intoxicated, perhaps under the influence of drugs. What can the detectives and police officers do? Their sole resource is the jail; there is nowhere else to take him. And it is not to be expected that they, or the officials of the courts and prisons who will have to do with this boy in due course, should understand the spiritual laws that govern our being. No doubt they all try to do their duty. They can but use their judgment, this poor brain-mind judgment of ours which only too often is all that is available.

So this boy goes to the city jail to await his trial and is shut up in what they call a tank — and they *are* tanks, not rooms. He is put in there, not alone but in company, very likely, of the most desperate characters in the city: of those who have fallen so low that it is second nature to them to do, and to teach others to do, the vilest things that human beings can do. There they are, elbowing this boy who has but made his first mistake, probably through ignorance, and who has never heard of the divine spirit within himself nor of the lower nature which is the tempter — and what is going to become of him?

There at his side is the drug addict: wild, and intense, hungering for the poison he cannot get, fierce, profane, obscene, filthy. There too is the professional thief, who laughs over and rejoices in his achievements; whom the world has not treated kindly, and who has lost his conscience and the way and habit of right-doing

and is moving downward as fast as he can. He too is elbowing this boy-novice of crime day and night: they sleep there; they have their meals there. The whole atmosphere of that tank is filled with what would horrify the most case-hardened person in the world. The human mind was not made to live that way. Idleness breeds vice — anywhere at all idleness breeds every kind of evil, but in that environment of the prisons!

One thought generates another: the influence of thought that can be celestial, can also be terrible beyond expression. Let a weak mind and will come into contact with one who is merely pessimistic and discouraged, and they will become dangerously affected. One whose mind is negative, depressed, or running along lower lines — and this boy's mind will surely be all three — may come in contact even with a man who seems quite honorable and never looks at him with hypnotic intent, yet the evil in that man's nature, akin to that which may be unaroused and merely potential in the boy's, will creep into the latter's mind unawares, so that whatever weakness there is in the one, the other acquires a share and taint of it. That is why our prisons may be cesspools of vice. The force of the mind of a man strong in crime will dominate and poison any weak or unbalanced nature that may come into his vicinity. There are always such men in the prisons, and we are always supplying them with new victims.

Is it a thing to wonder at that the monster vice is closer to us than we know; that there is so much coming to the very doors of our homes and into the chambers of our lives — vice in all its shocking forms, with ever new and unnameable expressions — a great psychological power that has no choice of its prey, but holds and devours all that it can? It goes into the homes unawares through the negative side, through the weakness of the children, through some hereditary taint, so that before the child touches the school or goes out into the world the seeds are growing that

we do not dream of. In the course of time they will come up in one form or another, and the fruit may be the whole nature undone, the life a failure.

Is it a thing to wonder at that dissatisfaction pervades the very atmosphere we live in, and that it is old and putrid and unwholesome? That our hearts are weighed down, and heavy with the agony of the age? Surely, surely, when you see youth imprisoned, you see something that demands more consideration, further thought; and when you see the hardened criminal imprisoned, you see something that demands more consideration, further thought!

In time our novice is brought up for trial and sentenced to such and such a term in prison. If I were accused and locked up for ten months and then carried into court and tried, I can conceive that everything I ever heard of that was wrong would possibly be aroused in defiance of the whole business and system. The judge has perhaps the highest motives in the world, and yet he is not infallible: the simplest attack of indigestion, for example, may well deflect his judgment. He sends the boy to prison — he cannot do otherwise: the laws are on the books and must be obeyed. To prison, with all the associations of it: the agony, the discouragement and horror, punishment written large over all, sunshine left out of life altogether, the general pressure of the gun and the club, even in some places still the floggings and the mental torture.

He finishes his term and comes out to a world that has forgotten him and that he has learned, in all probability, to hate. To build up in him a new faith in humanity and himself, to lessen his hatred of society, he has a few dollars in his pocket and harshness, criticism, prejudice, and unbrotherliness to meet wherever he may turn. He has been shut in like a dog and held in

worse than chains; now he is sunk beneath contempt even in his own estimation. He is supersensitive — he cannot shake off the feeling that the whole world knows he has been a convict. And in this condition he goes to look for work and must find it while the few dollars hold out.

Almost, of course, there is that in his appearance which makes people shrink from him. He has no credentials; within a day or two he has no money. He trudges from place to place hunting for employment, and for his night's lodgings he must take the roadside or the shelter of a haystack or some old boat on the shore: there is nothing else for him. Then presently he passes some corner in the underworld where he can get his whisky or his cocaine, and in the course of a week or two where in the very nature of things are we bound to find him? Back that boy must go to jail. When first we arrested him, we condemned him to a life of misery, jail-haunting, and crime, with almost no chance or hope of anything better. Now we offer him no possible opportunity but to go back to the tank and the cells: no chance to recover, no chance to redeem himself, no chance to make good.

Why is there not in every city — just for our own sakes and for the protection of society — an institution above criticism, where the man who leaves prison can find work and build himself up; where he shall be protected and sheltered, yet not in durance vile; where he shall have a chance to live decently and not be thrust back into the mire of despair?

As it is, the rest of his story is soon told. When he was in prison the first time, he had to listen daily to those tales from the hardened criminals; now, weaker and more unmaned than he was then, he has to listen to them again. The thieves do not fail to let him know, in all the vivid language they can command, how easy it is to live and get money by the means they know of — to

get money and live a life of pleasure — and he listens now with real interest. He has had the experience of trying to be honest and thinks that that is the one thing the world will not allow him to be. He contrasts the life they paint for him with what he has been through, and it is not long before he has become in thought and feeling thoroughly one of them.

How many of those who have never fallen from respectability would do better? He would have to be a hero indeed to stand out. He heeds them and is no longer the boy who might well grow up into an excellent citizen, who was erring rather than evil, whose mistake was recoverable because made through ignorance and thoughtlessness and not malice. All that phase is gone by. He is now a professional thief, a member of the criminal class. He has gone into the business thoroughly under the direction of experienced professors of it; he is an enemy of society, a menace and peril to the state. The criminals into whose power we have thrust him willy-nilly have got hold of him completely, and henceforth he is to be their victim and catspaw. They push him on — they hurry him into the tight places and themselves stand in safety behind. They teach him to carry his gun so that he may defend himself at need.

He comes out of prison the second time and now knows well enough where to go. He is no longer hungry and cold, nor need he sleep under the haystack or in the old boat; he goes no more unkempt and dirty. He is a new man, smart and well-kept, rebuilt by the thieves' psychological influence upon the thieves' model. And in due course he is cornered, draws his pistol, shoots, is taken, tried and convicted, and hanged.

Thus we are manufacturing criminals — the regime we tolerate is doing it. There is no attempt at correction or reform in it; it is simply cultivating crime as though crime were our best treasure.

In doing so, it is wasting human material, injuring the nation and the race, and imperiling the moral life of our children and our children's children. Whether we hang these victims of our stupidity or not, the system itself is vile. They are shut in and there they sit with no light from the blue heaven to shine in upon them and never a sound in their ears of the singing of birds. Never a kindly hand is reached out to help them; on all sides, instead, the stern hand of the codes is there to menace, hedge in, or strike at them. In their rebellion against what they are made to suffer they are creating a certain atmosphere, mental and moral; and living in and breathing it, they are going down and down and down. It affects everyone who comes in contact with it. The aggregation of such deadly thought in a prison is awful: it pollutes our whole civilization and injures not only the living but the unborn.

Three weeks or a month of the treatment they undergo would make rebels of us all; we could not stand it. The injustice and inhumanity of it are such that everything that was low in them becomes lower, and everything high recedes. Were I continually in the presence of those who had found out some of my weaknesses and were constantly reminding me of the fact, whether with words or not, it would double back on me and become the larger part of my life. I should perhaps not have the strength to bear up against the pressure of it. In many prisons these conditions exist. The convicts live in an atmosphere of despair. They have made their mistakes and cannot free themselves: from the first they are utterly discouraged, and it is that terrible discouragement which is the soil in which criminality grows. There are those who talk to the unhappy ones urging on them above all things remembrance of their sins. It never did any good and never will. They are sick and tired of the wearisome ways of men.

The prison worker who would do any good at all must put aside every thought of condemnation and speak to the men, not of their mistakes and errors, but with utter conviction of their latent godlike qualities: the godlike qualities that are in every human being. He has to begin with a grand generosity of heart and let his thought be wholly as to how he can serve and help them.

Applying the master key of sympathy and good-fellowship, which is greater and better than pity, we shall get the wisdom that illumines the way to right thought and right action. Sympathy is always imaginative and brings true knowledge of what is needed. He who uses it finds his resources grow and his own portion not left desolate. It makes a man's mind so plastic that words are hardly needed to find out the cause of another's trouble. It translates itself into action almost without the need of intermediary speech.

Let a man possessing it do the utmost with what means he has, and strength shall be shed through him and it shall go far enough. He will show it in his manner, unintentionally as it were. Words can express nothing real of it. The gift of a flower or a book may say something; that genuine interest which strictly avoids referring to the mistakes or present position of the prisoners expresses it perhaps best of all. Compassion, remember, is the key and secret talisman; it alone can open the way to that divine-human part which still remains even in the most degraded. And none — not the greatest of reformers, not the most erudite of mankind — can find the remedy for the ills of life unless he has found the key within himself.

## **The Causes of Crime**

There can be no remedying the suicidal insanity of our prison system until we turn away from the spirit of condemnation and go to the causes of crime. Many of those in the prisons now had



bad examples before them in their homes when they were children. There was disharmony there, overindulgence, indifference, or awful ignorance, bestiality, or selfishness and vice hidden under the cloak of respectability. Where there is one true marriage that has been entered into understandingly and sacredly, there are hundreds and thousands entered into for selfish reasons: because of physical attraction, or the desire of parents or friends, self-interest or the social dictates of the hour.

No man ever goes to the dogs in a minute. None goes to pieces all at once. Crime does not fasten itself in the nature of a human being in a moment or a day. It had been growing underneath the surface: in the general negativity of character, in the cultivation of appetites until the nerves were undone and the digestion ruined. Then came the stimulant, and the mental unrest, and the weakening of the will. Then the first crime — which may have been stealing from the parents or from a neighbor — and in trying to cover up the theft, deceit and falsehood. The lower nature accustoms itself gradually and by practice to wrongdoing.

All the forces of that lower nature are necessarily present in a child's makeup: the imperfect, animal, undeveloped, unspiritual side is there with its appetites and desires. The child has brought them over into this life by heredity, by half-memory: these rigid and forceful tyrants were not conquered or corrected in the past, and now they begin to appear and to win their sway. A mother who allows her child to enter into a paroxysm of temper, and does not there and then find the secret of overcoming it, may be nurturing something that will end in the wreckage of the child's life, and this though she may never have been aware that something should have been done that was not done. Why? Because in the truest sense the religious life was not there: there was no enlightenment and so no conception of the inner needs of the child.

It is desire sleeping in his nature that leads a man into crime, and perhaps it was first encouraged in him during his childhood and grew out of one of those little wants to which parents so often cater: trivial-seeming things, easy to grant and not so easy to deny. Yet to grant them is often to pave the way for disaster, for it means letting the life of the child flow into the channel of desire, to accumulate as it were in the baser aspect of his nature, and to let him make his home in the animal part of him. It is to strengthen his character on the wrong side, so that even while he is toddling his feet may have been set on the road to crime.

There are so many facets of child-life that seem fascinating and sweet, and that parents cherish in their hearts and love to evoke in their children, which are yet by no means the best things that might be. Think how your children have attracted your attention by doing new and surprising things, and then how you have fanned their egoism and fevered them up with a sense of self-importance: flattering the outer self and the personal pride, and ignoring — indeed driving away — that rare and royal impersonal dignity which is the higher side of child-life.

A thought awry can make a hell on earth. A mother will often unconsciously fan the vanity in her small daughter by too much concentration on her outward appearance. I remember a little girl, most attractive and interesting outwardly, and with all the charm of childlike innocence, who yet had vanity innate in her. Then when she had become a young woman away from the protection of her home, her love of adulation led to her downfall.

The seeds were sown in childhood: first of selfishness, then of vanity and false pride, deceit following in due course. Then, though the outward beauty and charm remained, the better part of her nature was receding: it had no place to work in, it found no room for itself in her mind. The foes within — the foes of her own

household — had conquered and occupied all her mentality, and she drifted and drifted into danger. What sorrow was now in the home she had left! The mother wondered and questioned, repeating over and over again that she had always protected her darling, shown her the best of examples, given her the best of books to read, taken her regularly to church, to Sunday School. The case is typical. It becomes natural for both mother and daughter to blame everybody and everything but themselves, because neither of them knows or has been taught anything about her real nature or how to recognize and oppose the enemy within. The daughter had never been taught that within herself is the power to redeem herself, and that the condemnation of the world is as nothing compared with that royal and inward talisman she possesses in her own soul.

At some point she may have turned to others, perhaps, in her despair, for help, only to find pious hands held up in horror or pious lips with no word of hope or comfort, but only insistence on her sins, and that she should drag her soul through the mire of remorse and repentance. Such "good tidings" are the things of all others she should least be made to hear — the things least helpful for her mind.

Do not condemn; many go down, not as a rule through depravity or love of wrongdoing for its own sake, but because *society does not allow them another chance* and because there is nowhere they can turn to for hope. We might bring about their correction, hundreds of times, by placing an open way before them that they might see ahead a day of sunshine and peace.

And what was the beginning of it all, with most of them? There was the vanity that the mother pampered in her child. And farther back still, if one could trace it, one might find its seed in the mother's mind in the prenatal period before the child was

born. Can we not sow the seeds of harmony where now is all this blindness and misunderstanding? There are women who think of these things seriously and carry themselves during those prenatal months like priestesses of the gods, but not many. Wrangles and trivialities and quarreling fill the lives of many. It is in the homes and in childhood that the wreckage of human life begins. No woman is fit to be a mother until she understands these mysteries of life. No man should presume to undertake the responsibility of fatherhood until he has cleansed and purified himself, and brought himself to a realization of what it means to bring a child into the world. To live as the majority do in this respect defeats the divine laws of our being — and truly it is to stand at the deathbed of humanity.

The idea of a personal God that punishes, ingrained into a child's mind at the time when it should have all the sunshine and joy and love that can be put into it, begets fear there — that awful thing that never should be allowed to come into the minds of children at all. For once it has come in — once the child has been taught to be afraid of God or Devil or anything else — it begins to grow timid and acquires an instinct to hide its mistakes and weaknesses, and that is surely the beginning of the shadowy road.

Think of a little boy who seems most promising, with everything about him physically and mentally to make his parents' hearts rejoice, who is naturally refined and with innate gentle tendencies and yet who has another side to his character, too — for there always is another side. He may have inherited from both parents a strong, intense, and determined nature, which could become a great power for good in his life. It may have been a great power for good, in the lives of his father and mother, because rightly directed. But then he has other tendencies as well, and when he reaches the age when a youth should have the wisest and most careful protection, when he is face to face with

the mysteries of sex, he has difficulties.

His mother and father cannot explain these things to him, for they do not know. There is no one to explain to him the impulses that now confront him — the passion that springs up in an hour, whence or why he cannot tell, the desire that makes imperious demands on him. He sees here and there the seemingly righteous men who occupy high places and pose as fine examples, and if he notices at all he sees the other side of their lives; and with that intense nature of his, perhaps he follows their example.

Oh, there are young men who just manage to go past certain dangerous places in life by virtue of pride or even conscientiousness which emerges into their conscious selves in time, but there are thousands and thousands who simply drift. The temptations are there all the time for this boy with the growing intensity of nature. His tendency may be towards drink, or towards worse things; but let him once have made his first mistake, and it becomes an agony with him to think at all. He has fallen and is disgraced in his own eyes. He does not know why he did it, nor what it was that pushed him on in the way he would not have chosen for himself. His God, he thinks, deserted him at his need and now has forsaken him quite. He does not know that that superb and heroic part of himself, the god within, was and is there all the time and only needed to be resorted to and invoked, for the god within awaits. He has never heard of it: never heard of the dual nature and the difference between the higher and the lower. All he has been taught was that he was born in sin, and a sinner because he is human; that he might have no self-reliance to be brave with because there is nothing reliable within himself.

So the seeds of disaster grew in him from his childhood under the shadow of the love and care of his parents. With all the education they lavished on him, he has never learned anything about life,

and now he finds himself in a psychological sea of trouble, at the mercy of its dreadful ebb and flow. Perhaps he forms an acquaintance or companionship and has not the discernment to see the young man he meets as he really is. His finer nature has not become so sensitive as to warn him to be on his guard. He goes into it with impulse and goodwill and no wrong intention in the world, and presently is under the influence of this other. And to the foes that are of his own household, that he has had to meet with daily heretofore, are now added legions of others; for these impulses are often doubled and trebled by association with the wrong kind of companions. Evil tastes are nourished, and as the stronger will goes down and down, the weaker follows.

I remember talking to a prisoner at San Quentin, a boy of about twenty or twenty-one who was serving his term there for forgery. When I had gained his confidence thoroughly, I asked him what it was that had brought him there, really — what was the first beginning and root of his troubles. He said he supposed nearly all the prisoners would tell the same tale, if one could get the truth from them. It began, he said, when he was quite a child. But where were his parents, his mother? One does not take those things to one's mother, he answered. And that is the fact: the parents are often the last people in the world to see the things that are eating out the soul of their child.

This boy had never heard a word of warning as to the danger of self-indulgence of any kind. The mother was a very timid woman, and the father one of those good-natured go-as-you-please people one so often meets with, who take life as it comes and have insufficient sense of responsibility. Their son was allowed to grow up haphazard and go where and with whom he wished. It all began with self-indulgent habits that mothers shrink from correcting, which are the curse of the world today — the insidious growths of ignorance and passion that ruin our children

sometimes before they can protect themselves.

As his mind grew, he found that he had no will. He became nervous, restless, unduly reserved, negative, and open to all influences. At home he might be well-intentioned enough, but away from home he was at the mercy of any company he might find himself keeping, and had no moral stamina to resist evil suggestions. And so he went from one error to another: drank, fell under the influence of a woman, to get money for whom he presently committed the forgery. He still loved right and could discriminate between it and wrong — he had not strayed so far from the normal tracks of life as to be unable to do that. Because of his nervous, intense temperament and lack of self-knowledge he fell, and his first serious mistake was made. An hour before he did it he was as free from intention to do wrong as any man could be; an hour after, the horror of what he had done had already been to him a long age of suffering, punishment enough and more than enough for his crime. Our prisons are filled with these occasional criminals, found in the tank or cell with the man born incorrigible, the monster in human form.

The child springs into life with all nature behind it and the whole glory of this living universe. Yet it is closed in and in darkness, held by the curse and psychological influence of the age; so that if it comes through and is not sooner or later branded a criminal, it is because of high experience in some other birth in the past or because the parents have given it a touch of something that reached and awoke its spiritual or higher self.

Very often children are born sane enough and yet have latent in them all the elements of insanity, which may manifest under the forms of extreme nervousness of temperament and physical weakness. A child of that type can be perfectly normal at birth, but as time goes on in this great battlefield of consciousness and

arena of human duality, when those strange conditions and feelings come in from the uncontrolled lower nature and self-indulgent habits creep in and gain power, he may break under the very protest and urging force of the higher nature that protests against the other and which he does not understand until, as he grows to a certain age, his mind may become disordered.

If we love our children, we must not hesitate to state the truth. It is death to my soul when I think how all down the ages the children have been punished, labeled naughty, bad, incorrigible, and so forth; when I go into the prisons and see the young men — boys, sixteen or eighteen years old, with the marks of innocence not yet gone from their faces and their voices still carrying some reminiscence at least of the note of aspiration and spiritual longings; it is death to my soul, I say, when I see them bewildered, hunted down by their own weaknesses, and undergoing punishment again and still further degradation in their own sight. The whole hateful method is born of the system of the past that dwelt forever on the idea of original sin and punishment, and always looked for the wrong side of human nature.

I saw the other day an account of two girls who committed suicide. At the bottom of it all was a perverted mind. Their natures were unsettled by it and their wills weakened, so that the dark and despairing elements of life crept in and there was no power of endurance. Nothing seemed to be left to them but surrender to their troubles, and suicide offered itself as the only possible release. Pity them — but pity still more those parents who will not see or learn, who take no action, give no help!

Were the history of our suicides investigated, I am sure it would be found that the downfall of many begins by their being subjected to the will of another. The basis is always self-indulgent



habits, and the evil is started time and again by a hypnotic influence which should be shunned, together with the books that deal with it and the people who talk about and above all practice it, as we shun whatever is most perilous. The leper may keep his soul stainless, the man afflicted with pestilence and all the horrible ills that come to the physical may keep his soul pure and white, but hypnotism enters into the inner life of a man and undoes it. It unfits him for service; it unfits him for life.

A child with no knowledge of evil goes out into the world and contacts a boy a little older than himself and forms an attachment for him; or contacts a man maybe, for we have demons in human form all over the world, and a boy can be corrupted and led on the wrong track no less than a girl. So your little innocent child is taught vile and degrading things, and the moral principles that were latent in him when he was born, not having been nurtured from the standpoint of the soul, are not strong enough to resist the temptation. He grows negative and his mentality becomes dense. All the energy that might have gone to his upbuilding, goes into his destruction instead.

There is no reason in this lower nature: it does not protect itself, and cannot. There is nothing but a mad passion or desire that gets control, and what ensues is the most dangerous kind of lunacy. Hundreds of parents never dream that such things could be. They would be utterly incredulous if they were told. "Oh no!" they would say, "He is *my* boy; see how loving and intelligent he is!" And all the time these same loving and intelligent children are making a mock of them: the mother the son's dupe, and he secretly laughing at her blindness. Why? Because his nature is growing decadent, impure action is corrupting it — and the parents, as usual, all unaware until too late.

At the base of the whole danger is desire: love of the things "I

want" and not of the things "I need." While the children's wants are pampered — the cry of the palate, the vanity that expresses itself in dress — we can expect no change for the better. Desire thus catered to grows and its demands become ever more and more exorbitant and more and more debased.

Here in brief is the life story of most criminals: there was first the desire in the child for that which he ought not to have had, and it grew and was not checked, and on into young adulthood, when passion came — and passion is the creator of crime. Thus the ignorance of the parents brings disaster upon their children. Parents do not know the peril that lurks at their doors. They strain to build up their child's material life — they take infinite thought for what he shall eat and what he shall drink and wherewithal he shall be clothed — and then too often rest satisfied and see no farther. Again and always it is ignorance, lack of moral knowledge, that opens the doors to peril. All unawares, the parents may be putting their children under the influence of one in whose inner nature is a strain or undercurrent of disintegration which subtly corrupts the natures of the boys under his charge.

## **The Cure of Crime**

What, then, can the mother and father do? They may take the most senseless course, which is to question the child. It will never tell. It will choose the most abnormal means to hide and disguise the fault that is ruining it. Mothers who have children with bent shoulders, white cheeks, restless eyes; children who are always tired, who are irritable, sensitive, and timid; who as a rule dislike to be in company, and then on occasions are intensely eager for and excited by it: such mothers should watch their children in a new way. You can tell the child that is afflicted by its walk. There is a listlessness, an inability to lift the feet. Everything in its

nature is awry.

The only way to handle this condition is to treat its victims not as sinful, but as diseased. That does not imply sentimentality. It does not mean weeping over them and covering them with caresses. Give them an environment that will help them to health. Give them the best of home life, the most careful associations, the best of reading only and not too much of it, and music. They must be impressed daily, simply and without strain, with the idea that they are potentially good, that they have the power to overcome, that there is no real need or occasion for them to surrender to the cause of their troubles. Indulgence will not help them; self-control will. We cannot lift humanity with emotionalism, we cannot lift humanity with fanaticism of any kind.

When the mistake is made, regret will do no good, repentance alone is worse than useless, promises will straighten up nothing, nor will pledges and tears. The only thing that will turn the mind away from the enemies that lay siege to it is knowledge of the divinity within: the sense of its companionship — of the nearness and actuality of the divine self.

The time is coming when false teachings will disappear and with them all outward forms and current vagaries of thought, and we shall have a new universal philosophy which will center the religious sense of mankind in the home life. Its temple will be the homes; for every home is, potentially, a workshop of human redemption, where strength of character and the beauty and nobility of the higher self may be impressed on the plastic nature of the men and women that are to be. To do this is to work for permanence and sow seeds for eternity.

A boy who has grown up in a family where the laws of life are understood, and who is himself entering the path and seeking understanding, when he comes to choose his life-companion will

meet that situation in a manner very unlike the ordinary. With the impulse will come a sense of the deep responsibility attaching to the step he is about to take, and the home he forms eventually will be ideal for that reason. The children born will be of a higher type than we meet with commonly, because in that home there will be a constant cultivation of everything that is the opposite of the tendencies that make for human undoing.

His children from the first will get an impress of the higher nature. They will be made to know, from the time they can first caress a flower or love the stars in heaven, that they too, like the stars and the flowers, are a part of universal life. From the time they can speak they will be taught to believe in the power of the inner nature to direct their lives. They will learn to stimulate all their thoughts and actions with the consciousness of their essential divinity and their power to overcome all the evils that may assail them.

The parents will not talk to them about the ego, will say very little, perhaps, about the god in man. They will have no catechisms defining the principles of theosophy, but they will bring home to their children's minds the sacredness of life in such a way as to make them realize that even the body, the mortal part that is to die, is sacred, and that to profane it would also be to profane all that is best and noblest in the nature. And they will not be satisfied until they know that it would be utterly impossible for a child of theirs ever to deceive or to stoop to pollute himself, mind or body. Believing that the children are in themselves as all human beings are and must be — essentially divine — these parents will hold that if they give them the right environment and example and love, and are absolutely just according to their best capacities and opportunities, the children have that within themselves which will cause them to grow.

They will not plan too much, lest they should overdo and be disappointed. Truth may be shut out from the mind not only by prejudices and misconceptions, but also by set plans for the future. Many map out their children's lives or their own to the last moment, intending this and intending that; and all their plans are from the brain-mind and mortal self, and defeat in advance the unknown plans of the soul. They will not plan too much, but they will take their own lives and fashion them according to the inner laws of life, so that when their children look at them, a clean record will appear in their eyes and atmosphere.

They will know that in education something more is needed than intellect, scholarship, or theory and that is the beauty of the inner, the spiritual life. There is always a danger that in the effort at culture we may forsake or forget the higher path. We have to understand the laws that govern our lives, lest we establish conditions that will bring about a reaction. A teacher holding these views would not be content with training the minds and bodies of his pupils, but with each he would begin in the undertones of the child's nature and seek to push forward and evolve the divine within, which is that which parents really love in their children: the immortal self on which their true hopes are set.

And, of course, they will have an understanding of reincarnation and will know what the problems are that a reincarnating soul must solve; and that eternity is behind and before them, and the children with them for a time — for a little while only, perhaps, but for all eternity if they do their duty by them. For where the link is forged in truth, neither death nor time can divide it; and we shall say of our loved ones who are gone: when everything in nature has been working to free the soul, it is not for me to hold it back with tears and mourning — we shall meet and know each other again, and our love shall be greater than ever was told.

But those whose minds and souls are shut in with half-truths and limitations and who, giving their children only the external and objective, ignore in them the life of the soul and starve them of the higher things, lose their children even in this present life. For our children are souls; before they came to us they existed. They have journeyed down the ages burdened with difficulties and weaknesses they may have inherited from other ancestors, tendencies, and characteristics they may have evolved under the influence of other conditions and parentage of old. They come to us sent by the divine law to evoke something higher in our nature that without them we could not have attained to expressing for many years: to become our teachers in a sense, teaching us lessons out of the wealth of their ancient experience, and in turn to be taught by us that which we alone can teach them.

It behooves us then to take larger views of their lives, to live outside the limitations of the age and of our present lifetime and to school our natures as never before, discovering our strength and weaknesses. Our children are born to seek and receive something they could find nowhere but with us, and a real love would aim at eliminating fear and self-consciousness from their minds. It is the narrow view that is the curse of humanity today.

If we are to treat them as something more than mortal — something more than mere machines or things created out of nothing — we must realize this much as to their antecedents: they come into human birth proceeding from the divine source of light and life. They have lived through many schools of experience in the past and will again in the future. There are endless possibilities latent in them: wisdom gained in ancient lives which may manifest itself at any time and which a true system of education would tend to evoke.

So when rare and interesting qualities appear, and a child

without special conditions or privileges shows great gifts in music, poetry, painting, or some other subject, the true teacher will not say, "I taught him this," nor the wise parent, "He had this from me." They will understand that it came from the stores accumulated in the child's own soul which, with all its previous lives behind it, is potentially a mine of great wealth. They will understand, too, that the child is not more favored, or created with a richer endowment than the rest, but simply that it was at pains to acquire in the past those powers or gifts that it displays now.

We have not the history of that old time in which the sacred Mysteries were in their prime: an age far preceding the classical period when Greece is supposed to have reached the highest point in her culture. We have no records in evidence of the wonderful life that parents lived in those days for the sake of their children. All we know is of later epochs when men's minds were becoming clouded and the heart-life and spiritual needs of the children were no longer looked on as the most important things in life, and the word and doctrine of the soul had been forgotten. Parents no longer thought of their children as souls, because reincarnation was no longer vividly present in the imaginations of men.

### **The Message of Theosophy**

A theosophist, working in the prisons, would never make an effort to convert a man, never remind him that he is a sinner, no matter how degraded he may be or how low he may have fallen. He will tell him that he has missed the way — the best or right way — to live. He will tell him of the duality of human nature, and how passions and inclinations, selfishness and avarice, can be changed and the lower nature made the servant of the higher. Let me say that there is as much enlightenment and promise, in

spite of everything, in our penitentiaries as I have ever found among an equal number of people anywhere. There are, of course, born degenerates who can be set aside; but take any group of average people, put them in stripes, crop their hair, and let them be locked in cells and treated like hunted things — and I question if they would look any more prepossessing than the convicts do or show any more signs of promise.

When I have wanted to study human nature in its deepest aspects and to see things as they are, it is precisely among those considered most degraded that I find I have learned most. Some of the best men and women I have ever met have come out from just such surroundings. Some of the noblest workers for humanity are those who have been through the dregs, through the fire, through the dreadful crucifixion of vice. They have come out so strong, so earnest, so full of sympathy, that nothing could stay them. Out of the thousands I have interested myself in and tried to help, nine-tenths have not disappointed me, and even the rest have not disappointed me altogether. Because of their heredity or some unexplained condition they have drifted back, but I have known that something had been sown in their lives and that after a little more suffering it would grow.

We ought to remember that they are our progeny, spiritually speaking. We have helped to make them what they are, and we need to make provision for their rescue. We can do nothing real to help them until we have brought our own bodies, minds, and souls into such balanced health and harmony that some real spiritual influence may pass out from us, in a smile or in the raising of a hand, to those who have lost their way, and without words convey a vital benediction. Money will not do it, mind will not do it, nor will a kindly disposition or incessant energy; but only the heart-force that flows into a man's nature from the higher realms when he pours out the coffers of his heart that



others may be enriched. What inspiration, what flashes of light and wisdom and justice, would shine into the community where these things were known and done!

There can be no real reformation of the laws until the heart speaks. The brain-mind can work out no plans of improvement until the heart is touched with that compassion which is the sign manual of the divinity in man. Sympathy is the great factor that must be cultivated if we are ever to come into our own. None can grow in the truest sense spiritually, unless he has suffered till his heart and mind are attuned to the heartache of the world.

Though justice is written in exquisite language in the book of nature and in all the sacred scriptures of the world, our chief preoccupation, it would seem, is still man's inhumanity to man; and we go on hanging men and casting them into prison. But the message of theosophy to these unfortunates is always one of hope and encouragement: it tells them that their course is never run, nor their defeat final and absolute; that the divine law is more merciful and just than man's law; that there is always another chance. For the drunkard, another chance; for the prostitute, for the thief, and for the murderer, another and another chance. It would have them learn from their mistakes, yes; but never weaken their better selves by brooding and remorse, for the way to improvement is always hopeful and cheerful.

To the one who is most discouraged, who has been hunted from town to town and branded as a thief or murderer, I would reach out my hands in the spirit of justice — him too would I serve, him too would I forgive. That which we condemn in him is but a part of himself. It is the lower side of his nature, and the higher has never had its opportunity.

To live rightly, a man must live close to the sunlight and the pure air. He must be able to fall back on that interior self in himself

and in the air and the sunlight, which is like the aroma of a flower we cannot touch but know that it is there and that it is divinely beautiful and inspiring. Therefore I would open the doors of the prisons and lead the unfortunate into a garden of flowers and into buildings where they should have music and instruction: sunshine for even the meanest and work that would educate and reform. Lifting humanity out of the shadows, I would take a stand for the rights and dignity of man. I would unbar the prison doors, and bring out the shut-in and the condemned into a great area in the open fields and among the hills, and teach them the meaning of life and how their digressions began.

In the institution I would build there should be neither cells nor bars. In the beginning, so as to be reasonable and meet the public needs, and not encourage in the wrong direction those who have fallen too far to realize their responsibility and feel the sense of honor, I should have a wall built somewhere — but it would be so far away that you could hardly see it. I would give them room enough to breathe, I would bring them into healing contact with nature: they should have the curative influence of gardens to work in, and flowers. I would give them helpful discipline and not indulgence: strict and wholesome discipline, but not the sense of degrading durance. There should be every kind of shop in which to learn or practice their trades. I would help each one to feel his own energy and live his own life, and I would educate them theosophically.

Conversion in the ordinary sense means nothing. But there is a change that can come through a man's own higher nature, when he stands face to face with himself right squarely and truly and recognizes the two in one that are there, and recalls how he has moved first one way and then the other: now upon the path of self-directed evolution and now under the stress of temptation falling away, one day on the heights of hope, the next in the

depths of despair. So I would teach them that this is the only true conversion: to change one's position and come out from the little mental house of our limitations. For no one can get the great new viewpoint while still looking out through the small windows of self.

As for repentance and remorse and praying for forgiveness of their sins, I would teach them not to wither their strength and aspirations with condemnation of themselves, nor ever to look back on the past at all, for it is buried and dead, nor to underrate their innate spiritual possibilities, nor to ungird their armor with fear — because the soul of man is immortal. No matter how heavy the shadows now, or how many or how great the mistakes of the past, he can turn when he will from them all. The power of the divinity within, and the best and noblest things we have strived after and forgotten, remain in spite of all our errors, a light to lighten our path into the eternities.

I give humanity credit for having ten times the virtue it would claim for itself. I believe in the divine in man: I have known knowledge of it to bring a smile to the face of the condemned murderer while they were adjusting the noose about his neck. I know that we have but to arouse it within ourselves in order to work as the gods work, in harmony with universal law. And because there is in every one of us this spark of the divine life, our lives, no matter what their outward circumstances or aspects may be, can be made wholly a joy and a glory.

When we begin to live, and duty and responsibility become realities to us, we thrill to the majesty of the law made manifest in us as the delight of giving and serving and lifting the burdens of the world. A new love comes into our lives that will abide with us always: it is the companionship of the real, the warrior, the eternal man. All our difficulties become the experiences by which

we may grow in strength. We work no longer for ourselves, nor live the doubting or the commonplace life, but are out upon a broad and noble path of service with many vistas of hope in front, and constantly the god in man at our side with us, and awareness of the presence of that which is forever seeking to express its divine eternal self through us.

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## Chapter 4

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All waits or goes by default till a strong being appears;  
A strong being is the proof of the race and of the  
ability of the universe,  
When he or she appears materials are overaw'd,  
The dispute on the soul stops,  
The old customs and phrases are confronted,  
turn'd back, or laid away. — WALT WHITMAN, "Song of the  
Broad-Axe"

### My First Meeting with H. P. Blavatsky's Teacher

It is because we build our hopes, such as they are, not on knowledge but on faith — on blind faith and, at that, faith in a personality and powers outside of ourselves — that we have drifted away so pitiably from the inspiration and beautiful philosophy of nature, who with her stars and all her hierarchies of beauty could reveal to us the wonderful doctrine, if we would turn and heed.

I remember very vividly the morning I met H. P. Blavatsky's teacher on the mountainside near Darjiling. He was dressed plainly in the Tibetan style, and had an English pocketknife in his hand and was whittling a piece of wood with it. In the field below, not far away, a young Hindu was plowing with a brace of oxen; and the whittling, he told me, was to make a little plug or peg

which, inserted in the yoke, would make it easier for the beasts. He drew my attention to the plowman, one of his own chelas he said.

"Were a battery of guns firing and the shells falling all around him," said the Teacher, "he would not stir from his work. Indeed, he would hardly be aware of the noise or the peril, so absorbed he is. Those two oxen with anyone else are most unmanageable creatures; with him they are always, as now, perfectly quiet. He does not control them with his will; his mind does not concern itself with them at all. But you see there for yourself proof that those dumb things can feel the atmosphere of purity of thought.

"And when he goes upon a pilgrimage, he will travel more miles in a day than any of the others and come in far ahead. You know how the women here in India lave and anoint the feet of the pilgrims? Well, his feet after the longest day's journey have never been found hurt or damaged by the road. Why? Because he never dreads or even thinks of the distance, but goes on his way happily; and it never occurs to him to be troubled as to whether or not he may have missed the road or taken the wrong turning or the like. His mind is so buoyant with the joy of the spiritual life that it actually lightens his body for him.

"You know, the atoms of the human body become weighed down as a rule with the burdens of the mind — the irrelevant ideas, the preoccupations and anxieties. They go through series of changes momentarily, affected by the thoughts of the brain-mind. The lack of trust, the lack of inspiration that people suffer from — the hopelessness — bring these atoms down halfway to death. But they can be quickened to a kind of immortality by the fire of the divine life and attuned into universal harmony. Men anywhere could get rid of all that burden of unnecessaries, and carry themselves like that young chela does, if they had the mental

balance.

"If you had to go from here to America," he continued, "you would not sit still and dream about the place you wanted to go to, and think that was enough. The trouble with some theosophical aspirants is that they waste the strength of their lives looking at the goal ahead, rather than at the immediate moments and seconds of which the Path is composed, and so their better selves become exhausted. They should let the beaming thought pour itself into each arriving moment and be indifferent to the morrow. One can find in every instant of time, if one has the desire, the door into worlds of golden opportunity, the gateway to a glorious path stretching out into the limitless eternal. . . .

"To move away from the material plane of effort and thought and personality — that is what the soul is urging us to do: to move out into the hidden vast realities of life and understand that within and above and around us, and in the very atmosphere in which our thoughts and feelings exist, universal life is pulsating continuously in response to our yearnings and questionings. When people say that they are seeking happiness, they mean that they are aiming at that stage in their evolution where their present problems will be solved. To reach it, one must withdraw from the allurements of life and all its outward and discouraging aspects, and find himself in the solitude of his own being, in a silence unbreakable within his own heart and mind.

"The outer life is transient: he must gain the inner power and live in the spirit which is eternal. He cannot step free-souled into that light without having learned concentration, which many these days advertise they can teach, and lecture on it, forming cults, holding classes, and taking dollars. But all they can do at last is to lead their victims away from reality and farther and farther away from the true self within themselves. For concentration is a

power inherent in the self and above and beyond the mind: it cannot be found in the objective world, for it is not there. The kingdom of heaven is on earth, and the gates of it are to be sought and discovered in the heart of man.

"So the aspirant should not think about the cultivation of powers, but live in the light and strength of his own higher nature. The divine law is in every man and woman, and each must find it there for himself and make it manifest in his life. No one can pour pure water into foul so that it shall still retain its purity. Selflessness attains, selfishness defeats: men's possibilities are in direct proportion to their ability to see beyond themselves and to feel for others. . . .

"To throw the mind, on moving out of sleep into waking, directly upon the outward things is to lose half the life of the day. One should awake in the morning with a beautiful thought, reminding himself that the battle for the day is before him and that the god within desires a moment's conference with the mind before the arduous duties of the morning begin.

"He should find something in the silence and sunlight of the first hours which should link itself with his own higher nature and bring forth the blossom and the fruit. He should free himself in the morning in the sweetness of the sunlight, beginning the day as gently as though he were waking a little child from its slumbers, bringing forward the truer and nobler side of himself — I do not mean working it out in words and language, but in thought approaching the richness and fullness of the spirit and letting the god within blossom into each moment as it rises. Then, reaching out for the most difficult duty that one *knows to be one's duty* and overcoming it, he will learn the secret of being on guard, and in a little while have thrown away unawares all the burdens that obstructed him. Many have been working hard and



conscientiously to get rid of these burdens: there is no need to spend a moment on them. It is but to put aside the doubts and misgivings, to enter the chambers of the soul, to bask in the sunlight and strength that are there.

"The first three hours of the day," he continued, "are the great opportunity. He who does not rise with the sun loses an immense amount of power. He who rises before the sun, and by daybreak has finished with the duties of this plane and what may be necessary for the care of the body and is ready to step out with the sunrise and work with the sun, he has the cooperation of a force he little knows of — the vibrant blue light behind the sun.

"The trouble is with many of our aspirants that too often they begin with the letter and go backwards in search of the spirit. But let them hold to these things in the silence and create a noble future in their hearts, going alone in the morning into the silence of nature. Freeing themselves there from their old trying memories and from all anticipations of trouble, let them make themselves at one with that light in nature. And it will not hurt them to look at the stars with wonder occasionally, or to listen with delight to the music of the birds, or to spend whole days in silence, brooding on these sacred things whilst performing all the duties that come to them to do."

I think he placed a talisman in our hands, and gave us the real secret of life.

## **The Eternal Alliance**

When the conquest of self is made, the whole aspect of the universe changes. We move with divine affection close to the Mighty Mother and realize that all these years the silence and the stars in heaven have been pleading with us, and that for us the trees have put forth their leaves and all the flowers their

blossoms, and that every bird that sang, sang for us, and that for our sake all beauty has been.

I recall how Carlyle after years of doubt came to a place in his life where the whole world seemed dead to him, and he could find no answer to his questions in books or in his Calvinistic religion. Then one morning, as hungering after truth he looked out over the hilltops, it came to him: in the glory of the morning light above the mountains he realized the power and grandeur within nature, whose secret beauty was reflected into his soul. He found the divinity within him and the truth and message he afterwards wrote so brilliantly for the world, a message of perfect trust in the divineness of the universe and man.

And this revelation is awaiting us all, for the Infinite is in everything and all things are expressions of the spirit. The invisible forces lying behind external nature are identical with the invisible forces working through ourselves, and in both are many hidden things we have not discovered and do not understand. The spirit that shines through the beauty of dawns and sunsets seeks equally to express its grandeur and dignity through our human lives. The spiritual will that urges us towards noble and righteous living is a part of the same great essence that breathes through all nature, expressing itself in the hue and perfume of the flowers, in the whisper or crying of the wind, in all the music of the wild waters and the rolling billows of the sea.

In the search for freedom, in the quest for sublime perfection, there is eternal alliance between man and nature. The waves and winds can shout for us the battle cry or sing for us the song of our peace or whisper to us their dreams of sunlit ages to be. Under the blue of heaven in the free air we can always find that which is akin and most intimate to ourselves, and a friendliness in every green and growing thing, and the new life, which is the god-

essence, everywhere. It is in the plan of evolution that we should enjoy this noble silent companionship and that all nature should constantly appeal to and invoke that which is impersonal, and therefore godlike, in ourselves.

Go into the secret chambers of your heart, go out under the magnificence of the constellations, arise to the viewpoint of the godhead you shall find in both, and the stars themselves will bring forth new manifestations of wonder for you. You shall know certainly that where life is, in that place is the divine, and that the glory of the sky and the sweet silence of the air, the wonder of music, the richness and vitality of color — all these things are but manifestations and permutations of impersonal deity.

You cannot think of a beautiful line of poetry without awakening in some degree that divine inner glory within yourself. You can read such a line again and again until after a while you have lost sight of your surroundings and are out in an ideal world all beauty and sublimity — the trouble with us is that we never remain there long enough to find out who we are. We do not catch the undertones of the silence there; we are in too much hurry to return.

Seek the upward and ennobling path and you are no longer alone: your own divinity is on your side with you and what you can encompass of what universal nature affords is with you to support you towards final victory. For music you shall have hearing of the symphony of life and the stars in their courses shall sing to you, the trees shall chant to you the hymn of their beautiful being, and all nature shall greet you with the salutation of respect because of the noble effort you are making. The glory of death shall be made known to you, and you shall know the path you must travel though you may not foresee the goal, for the

soul shall implant in your mind knowledge of its high possibilities. But he who chooses the downward path and uses his energies on behalf of the evil in him has at his elbow likewise the evil of the world.

I remember how the wonder and power of theosophy were born in upon me on my first visit to Egypt. There the footsteps of the ancient times are visible, and the truth men lived and brooded of old endures still and cannot die. In the clear motionless air, in the mountains and old temples, there is a silence and an impress of ages gone which awaken the imagination. One feels the presence and potency of the truths that shone through the Mysteries of old, and that the great hierophants and teachers have left the touch of their inner lives in the atmosphere. Those silent hills, worn with age — how they spoke to me! They were full of the mightiness of ancient times and the spiritual activities of the great Egyptians. The old Nile talked to me, and the moon above the Nile, until I knew that the greatest and most eloquent power in nature as well as in human life is silence.

It was borne in upon me in the tombs of the pharaohs. I remember the day when we rode from Luxor along the bank of the river, and up over hills and down through ravines, and then walked through a door in the hillside and by galleries and galleries underground, and by flights of stairs carved in the rock, into a room lit with electricity — the tomb of Seti I. The mummy was there: the lid of the sarcophagus had been removed and the lights were disposed so that one could see the great king's features. I had never before understood why they mummified their dead, but as we went in there and looked at the face of that mighty monarch — he was one of the very greatest of the pharaohs — a silence seemed to descend upon the whole party: an inner and majestic silence which was in itself a symphony of symphonies, as if we had been ushered into the presence of

something that still remained, and was in its essence imperishable, of that long-dead ruler's greatness.

There were many periods, anciently, when the soul was better understood than it is now — when men fashioned their lives simply and beautifully in accordance with the magnificent aspirations of nature; when they listened for and heard, as we do but very rarely, the melody of life which is the voice of the inner divinity; when they talked with the stars and had no fear written on their faces; when they knew no dogmas at all, nor fear of death, nor spiritual nor moral terror. All that was best in the history of those early races is here now in the very atmosphere in which we live. It is not lost; it is in nature. It has made itself a part of the harmony of universal life.

In such periods, wise teachers instituted the festival of Easter in honor of the Mighty Mother. They knew that the depths and powers hidden in nature and in man are infinite, and paying tribute to the beauty and glory of the universe invoked at the same time the infinite divine beauty in themselves and in the general human heart. For there is that undertone in life: it is in all of us and we are bound together by it inescapably, each his brother's keeper, though it is audible only to him who is great enough to hear it because he has found his true self.

Knowing this, and that the divine essence is everywhere, those wise ones of old time knew that through our own efforts we may lift the veil and understand the mysteries of being and the whole meaning of the conflict within ourselves, and so work out our own salvation; that he who will crucify his earthly passions will find strength to roll back the stone from the doorway of his own inner being wherein the divinity lies entombed, raising as it were the Christos from the dead; and that this is the resurrection and the life. And they instituted and ordained Easter in

commemoration of it.

How joyful, how sublime, our existence in this world becomes when viewed from this standpoint, and with the key to all its mysteries — which is knowledge of the essential divinity of man — in one's possession! In the sunshine of that wisdom all the thoughts that we cling to and love because of their fineness will blossom; and the small aims and prejudices of our minds and the conventional opinions we accept without thought as to whether they bear any relation to truth or not — how infinitely trivial they will seem. We have limited Deity according to the measure of our own minds and conceived of the limitless as personal because we have been oblivious of all but the personal within ourselves. Yet that self-knowledge for lack of which we suffer can be attained, and it is a consciousness of the regal powers of the soul.

### **Impersonality of God and Man**

No man can make his own divine potentialities actual until he has recognized the universality of the divine and asserted its presence within himself, aware that by will and conviction he can make manifest in his human life every quality and aspect of Godhead. One has not to run away from present duty in order to find this knowledge, but in the inmost spaces of the heart is the throbbing life of the divine wherein all wisdom is discoverable because it is there that all wisdom inheres.

Let a man work with nature, understanding her fundamental laws and living by them: knowing what she demands of him and building his life on the knowledge. Unsatisfied with the personal God idea, let him know that God is the divine life unfolding itself through the power of its own essence: the one universal law inspiring, flowing through, directing the infinite interweaving of laws that express themselves through life and govern its manifestations. And in the performance of every smallest duty, in

the bearing of every sorrow, in the conduct of his severest and most discouraging struggles, that divine force, that knowledge, seeking its expression in the transformations, will be at his hand. For it is a power whose secret is in the heart and mind and soul working together, and is to be evoked only out of the hidden realms within ourselves where all the splendor at the heart of life is to be found.

He who finds it within himself, and knows it wonderfully to be himself and the sole reality in himself, lives absolutely for humanity, because to touch human nature at any point is to touch the whole of humanity, and to evoke the god-self within ourselves is to employ the power underlying all things. This is the reason why no one now is quite at ease within himself or wholly satisfied: the ray of the divine nature in each of us is eager after self-expression in a larger life than any we have dreamed of. We are not brought into existence by chance nor thrown up into earth-life like wreckage cast along the shore, but are here for infinitely noble purposes.

All humanity should know its heritage, constantly striving to become and overcome, yet never depending on forces outside of self. Rising in the morning, we should be conscious of the divinity within; retiring at night, we should be enfolded in the protection of the law. For none of us is overlooked, left out, or forgotten in this scheme of life of whose sweeping beneficence each is a part. In all situations from the most trivial to the most important, in all temptations from the smallest to the largest, a man can find in his own reflections and inner consciousness that which will convince him that he is more than he seems — a knowledge that leads not to egoism or self-importance, but to great simplicity, impersonality, and balance.

For man is the soul, and there is no wisdom so divine that he

cannot attain it: the soul belongs to the beautiful eternities and we are here to make all existence beautiful. Life would have nothing in it for me, I could not live through a day of it, were it not for the consciousness within that this apologetic bit of myself is the temple of the soul, the shrine of a god ever pressing towards grander expressions of life. The soul can rest on nothing this side of Infinity: it loses its vitality if it seeks to do so. All eternity awaits it; how should it be satisfied with the half-life we live and the many imperfections that mar us? The nature of the soul is to be winging its flight forever towards the boundless; to be working, hoping, and conquering; to be going forward forever and ever.

It is therefore no question of our likes and dislikes: advance we must, seeking within ourselves the secret of our god-selves which sing to us eternally through the silence. If the meaning and the music of the song be lost before it reaches our hearing, it is because our thoughts are too full of the things of death and because we are weighed down by needless burdens and grow old in our youth with wrong thinking, filling our minds with desires that emanate from selfishness and allowing them to accumulate until they, and not we, become the living force behind our actions.

It is not only the mind but the whole being that must be prepared for the search for truth. And for this there are no rules that can be given, no precise directions nor yardstick recipes. But conceive, if but for a day, that you are greater than ever you dreamed you were, that in the essence of your nature you are divine and cannot suffer perdition; and remember that you never could have walked if you had not tried, that you never could have spoken if you had not made the effort to speak, that you never could have sung if you had not felt within you the urge of the living god there.



Theosophy is as old as the hills and all the world religions are based on its teachings, although only a minority now are familiar with them. It is not superstition nor speculation, not dogmatism nor blind faith nor the product of the brain-mind of any man, nor yet miraculous. It comes to humanity like an old traveler who has trodden all the highways of experience and, having achieved after long journeying a full understanding of life, returns to the place from which he started that he may bring to those who dwell there the saving knowledge he has acquired. And it is knowledge of the god within man and of man's power to advance and to overcome, which is what evolution means.

Superficial examination of its teachings will avail nothing. As none could become a musician by mere study of the theory of music, so none can come to an understanding of theosophy by reading of it in books. In both cases practice is needed: one must live the life if one would know the law. An artist never attained excellence in his art nor a musician in his music who did not begin with the basic principles.

Where there is satisfaction with self, there look for danger because there no growth can take place. A certain conflict within, of thought and feeling, must be going forward, until we arrive at some knowledge of our own — at some perception of life's meaning and purposes, of our origin and destiny, our duties, obligations, and responsibilities.

No man can really grow until he has trust in himself. The successful inventor is the one who realizes that there is something more to know, that new knowledge is always accessible and waiting for him, that tomorrow will add to what he has today. He was once a boy, playing with his tools clumsily and with no knowledge of mechanics, but after a time some inner whispering told him that he was to achieve something. He kept on

because that which bade him keep on was above and beyond his mind, until he came to be aware that his mentality was but an aid to him in the working out of his problems and that there is an inside something that uses it, discovering truth and acquiring knowledge, and that this is the real man who may be inspired by illuminating ideas out of the universal mind or may have brought them with him as memories out of ancient lives.

He looks always for truth beyond his opinions and goes out seeking into the broad spheres of thought. He frees his mind and advances, hoping and trusting. He visualizes his aims and believes there are whole regions in his nature which he has not yet discovered and, relying on that undeveloped side of himself, claims from it by trust the knowledge he seeks, and does not claim in vain.

So too the real artist, the lover of truth and beauty, is lifted in his moments of creation above all brain-mind limitations and carried on to a plane that transcends our normal thought-life, and feels there, throbbing and thrilling through his being, the poetry and inspiration of the great silence — that divine light that is within and a part of us all and forever awaiting our recognition. Such a one, artist or inventor, when he is in quest of that which should do good to the world, sounding the deep resources of his nature, touches the fringe of worlds more wonderful, and strangely mysterious powers. Whereas another man, with equal latent ability, approaching the same problems with doubt and hesitation, or again with presumptuous self-sufficiency, would be very sure not to succeed. In proportion as a man worships the outer, he misses the inner truth.

### **Reincarnation: The Doctrine of Sublime Hope**

Many who have abandoned belief in a personal God and the other vanities and subtleties of sectarian metaphysics, and are

thinking seriously — in the depression the unrest of the age is causing in them — of life and its many problems, have found in the teaching of reincarnation that which makes clear the meaning of it all. For here is explanation of the differences of human fortune, so that they cease to seem unjust and intolerable; and here man is revealed in the splendor of his native godhood, a traveler through eternity, moving from life to life, gaining by experience after experience that knowledge which will make of him at last the ideal, the perfect man.

We are of the family of the eternal; we are the highest expressions that we know of, of universal Deity. Are we to think that the experience to which we have a right can be gained in the few score fleeting years of a single lifetime, before these bodies of ours cease to be useful and drop away following the laws of physical life and return to the storehouse of nature? The material things have their place, but the essential and everlasting things are in the eternal self. They are the attributes and faculties of the soul, and these are what we are here to develop, working in harmony with the mighty and compassionate heart of nature.

Could a soul filled with the melody and splendid influx of music fulfill itself even in the longest period that could elapse between its body's birth and death? A man who has no musical heredity or inclination that he knows of may find himself sometime startled into listening, and stirred; and listening longer, and stirred more deeply; and still pausing and listening, overwhelmed by it at last so that silent and wonderful currents of vibration and feeling are started within him. Perhaps he is a mechanic in a shop or caught in the grind of commercial life with neither time nor energy to spare for music — it does not matter: that divine thing has touched him, and it may be that lying within his nature are the potentialities of a great musician. Must they not come out in time and be expressed? A promise of eternal progress is stamped upon

all human hearts; everything in nature proclaims it. Why should we not have the same trust in our essential divinity that the flowers have in the beneficence of the sun?

To what purpose are the ideals we cherish unspoken; the secret, noble, and unfulfilled aspirations; the questions we put to life, and to which our present life makes no answer? To what end are the agonies and despairs, the unrest and intense longing to be so much more than we can ever attain to being now, before death takes us? Were they born in a day — these thoughts of ours that stir us sometimes almost to the point of revelation? Were they fashioned of the experience we have gathered in the few years since our bodies were born?

Their word to us is always that we are greater than we seem, that there are no limits to the power of the soul, that though our understanding of this beautiful universe will go on increasing forever and ever we shall never attain a dead finality of understanding, that we have all eternity in which to work out the magnificence of the law and that there is no break in the everlasting continuity, that one may falter today and fail but tomorrow brings another chance, that we live many lives, again and again the same in essence though different in aspect — we immortal beings, natives of eternity made subject here to mortality and time.

Few, whether religious or not, go out satisfied into the great unknown and into that sleep which is not sleep in the sense of inertia, *but a sleep in activity* and a divine activity in sleep. No matter how noble a man's life may have been, is it possible to think of it as having reached that sublimity of perfection in one single lifetime that would find its true expression in an eternity of bliss? How much more reasonable to believe that we live again and again, traveling the path of the ages with opportunity after

opportunity always recurring, than to imagine ourselves the poor creatures of a single life, created at our birth out of nothing and at death to be relegated to an eternal heaven or an unending hell, in neither of which progress is possible nor opportunities are to be found, nor any goal lies ahead nor hope exists for inspiration and incentive.

Could a soul that was really noble accept peace for itself and find happiness in heaven whilst here on earth humanity is still aching and in chains and sorrow? The soul holds within itself the attributes of Deity: it is all made up of compassion, justice, abnegation. What delight then, what self-expression, could it find in such selfish bliss? Were a man come into the fullness of his soul — to be wholly that divine thing — he could not endure the thought. His will would be set on returning to earth, to share in human suffering and point the way for the unfortunate to that self-knowledge which brings peace. He would work forever and ever for the glory of the divine, for the glory of the god innate in man, aware that because of the divinity within us we have the power to shape all human destiny towards perfection. I tell you, the god within us awaits!

To the blind beggar by the roadside, what a song in his heart knowledge of reincarnation would be. Then first he would understand that a bright future and high achievements might be awaiting him; his fate would no longer appear something mysterious and terrible for which he could never be compensated — no longer some punishment afflicted upon him by an omnipotent and vindictive power, but a ministration of the law that fashions from suffering godlike destinies for men, apportioned to him that he might build up his character for a more royal birth. He would understand that there was hope for him, that all his darkness would be made clear, that a day would come when his inner longings would be much more than mere

unattainable aspirations, that he might then and there be preparing noble fortunes for himself. The gods await!

Life is not cruel. There is no injustice in it. In the light of reincarnation, the sufferings we considered unjust lose the sting of their supposed injustice and become easy to endure. We come to look on them as blessings because means of liberation and our chief incentives to growth. Experience and pain are our teachers. We are reminded constantly by the difficulties we have to overcome of the majestic mercy of the law.

Life exists only for service: we live in order that we may serve. Hold to that idea in your hour of trouble and you will accept your difficulties graciously, as a gift graciously given. You will not think of them as pangs and burdens to be endured, but as beautiful fires to purify and set free. Not that one should be humble in the ordinary sense; we should hold our heads high — there is altogether too much of the other thing. We are quite too submissive to our own weaknesses. If you have strived with your whole soul and with a trust impossible to break, and still the thought is forced upon you that your position has not changed nor your stumbling block been removed; if you find yourself compelled to say, "Though I have lifted myself up toward my ideals and approached the divine within me daily, I am not set free," take courage yet again; it is the time to do so. The thing you have struggled against in vain may become a blessing. It may be the very saving power in your life, holding you back in the place where alone you could learn the lesson you most need to learn.

Thus, though our minds have been under serious shadows, adversity should but leave us with the solution of our problems, teaching us the secret of readjusting our lives because it is the aspirations of our own souls that kindle the fires in which we are tried, and we may find a glory in suffering, disappointment, and

heartache and understand the sublime comfort of the change called death.

If the errors of the past did not produce their results that we might learn from them the lessons they are to teach — if life were without struggle, work, and effort — we should be things on the face of the earth and not souls as we are. Only by means of these can we draw near to truth and gain a sense of the largeness of life, of eternity, of the augustness of the laws that hold us in their keeping. Only so can we find the way to live the real life which is altogether cheerful, optimistic, radiant with generous affection; the life that sees no terminus in the grave nor any limit to its vistas in birth or death.

Thus reincarnation gives us room and time to grow, as nature provides soil and season for the flowers — to grow and to learn what life and the world can teach us and to acquire use of the godlike qualities of our inner selves and the light hidden within the soul of man which alone can illumine the path we must tread and enable us to solve the stern and awful problems, the pathetic problems, life so unceasingly sets before us, and to know its unspeakable beauties as well.

We advance from age to age and from heights to greater heights forever. Understanding this, the old become young again in spirit and the young look out on the world with a new joy. The days are long and the path is wide: go forward, then, with farseeing hope and trust, towards the great ultimate. The gods await!

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