

Paradox and Practicality

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PARADOX AND PRACTICALITY

"Man is an embodied paradox, a bundle of contradictions." So wrote an English aphorist named Colton 150 years ago. This fact was eloquently, movingly and simply illustrated in the letter the apostle Paul sent to the Christians in Rome: "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do." Here is an epitome of the struggle of the inward man to control the personality. The embodied paradox can come to know itself only by integrating the various opposite yet complementary aspects of his nature—a process effected in mystical experience.

Properly to describe such experience is not possible, though mystics of all times, races and religions have been impelled to attempt this impossibility. Words are the tools of the finite world, and even here they are often utterly inadequate. It is quite beyond their capacity to deal with the infinite sphere of the spirit. The mystics must always echo: "Oh could I only say what I have seen!" (1) Eastern sages have tried to cope with the problem negatively: not this, not that. They refused to make positive statements that at best were bound to be limited or misleading and at worst one-sided or false. Western philosophers have sometimes had recourse to conflicting propositions, which were at any rate half true, but this did not solve the question.

It has been said that if one makes a positive affirmation regarding the inner worlds, or reality, or however else one describes the spiritual realms, one must also state the opposite, a seeming contradiction. A. P. Sinnett was told by the Mahatma K. H. in 1882: "I can easily understand we are accused of **contradictions** and **inconsistencies**—aye, even to writing one thing today and denying it tomorrow." (2) Hence H. P. Blavatsky said: "Paradox would seem to be the natural language of occultism." (3)

The contradictions, or even apparent absurdity, of the paradox must ever remain a puzzle at its own level of words, of mental concepts. The paradox is resolved from the experiential and intuitive plane. Words are valuable to enable one to learn a little about the deeper aspects of life; but only spiritual

experience gives one actual knowledge of them as against merely knowing about them. One of the letters to A. O. Hume states it thus: "The recognition of the higher phases of man's being is not to be attained by mere acquirement of knowledge. Volumes of the most perfectly constructed information cannot reveal to man life in the higher regions. One has to get a knowledge of spiritual facts by personal experience and from actual observation." (4) The paradoxical statements are then seen as but the two sides of a coin, as it were; but this is apparent only when the intellect is transcended.

This fact needs keeping in mind when one is seeking to understand the exposition of any theosophical doctrine. In the study of an ordinary serious subject one has to consider the author's theme as a whole and not argue from remarks scattered here and there, some of which may seem at variance with others. The various points have to be related to the entire work if one is to get at the writer's thought. In occultism this balance of judgment is even more necessary. T. Subba Row wrote in the 1880's: "It is . . . an acknowledged canon of interpretation that when a large number of dispersed statements on a particular subject is found in any book, the author's views should be gathered from careful comparison of all such statements and a critical examination of contexts, and not from the literal meaning of particular words and phrases." (5) To elevate one or other saying, or set of sayings, into inviolable doctrine is to ensure misunderstanding and invite wrong interpretation. In one of her letters to Sinnett H.P.B. quoted the Mahatma K. H. concerning apparently conflicting views: "both are right and both wrong." (6)

These considerations should help us to avoid pitfalls when we examine ways by which Theosophy can be workable, how theosophical theory can be translated into Theosophy in action. In "The Key to Theosophy" it is stated that The Theosophical Society "is a philanthropic and scientific body for the propagation of the idea of brotherhood on **practical** instead of **theoretical** lines." (7) H.P.B. also quotes one of her teachers: "Theosophy must not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical ethics epitomized in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy must be made practical. It has to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated with its spirit—the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity and love." (8) Again, H.P.B. wrote: " . . . **action**, enforced action, instead of mere intention and talk." (9)

The phrases "practical instead of theoretical" and "objective expression" may be interpreted as an injunction to engage in "good works", to give time, money and effort for charitable objects, to "do" things for our fellows and fellow creatures. H.P.B. laid it down that "Every Theosophist . . . is bound to do his utmost to help on, by all the means in his power, every wise and well-considered social effort which has for its object the amelioration of the condition of the poor." The test suggested is: "Will the proposed action tend to promote that true brotherhood which it is the aim of Theosophy to bring about?" (10)

Is not this Theosophy in action, which could have been an appropriate motto for the Theosophical Order of Service? To put Theosophy into practice has surely been the inspiration, the basis and the justification of all the splendid work that organization has done over many decades. Yet it is not so simple. H.P.B. presents us with a razor-edge choice. First she echoes what has just been quoted: "Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind." Then, in the same article, she follows with this: "But, in our quality of Theosophists, we cannot engage in any one of these great works in particular. As individuals we may do so, but as Theosophists we have a larger, more important and much more difficult work to do . . . The function of Theosophists is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice and generosity . . . Theosophy teaches the animal man to be a human man; and when people have learned to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice and generosity will be done spontaneously by all." (11) H.P.B. also wrote: "The gradual assimilation by mankind of great spiritual truths will alone revolutionize the face of civilization."

Are deeds of charity, then, a waste of time and effort for Theosophists? H.P.B.'s own life strongly repudiates such an idea, as do also the lives of many other members. The paradox lies in the opposition of ourselves as individuals and as Theosophists, and each must solve it in his own way, according to his judgment and convictions and with commonsense. In doing so we may find it necessary to digest a further paragraph from H.P.B.: "The Society cares but little about the outward human management of the material world. The whole of its aspirations are directed towards the occult truths of the visible and invisible

worlds. Whether the physical man be under the rule of an empire or a republic concerns only the man of matter. His body may be enslaved; as to his soul, he has the right to give to his rulers the proud answer of Socrates to his judges. They have no sway over the **inner man**." (12)

Play of Opposites

Lest a bundle of contradictions should unduly bother us, let us remember that paradox is a corollary of all manifestation, which occurs by the appearance of pairs of opposites with the interplay between them. This is the fundamental trinity. Tension between two apparently contrary aspects of a unity is designed to keep them flexibly poised—a balance of centripetal and centrifugal forces, of attraction and repulsion, that keeps the stars on their courses and the atom in being.

At the "highest" or cosmic level the polarized forces merge and the conflicting powers are resolved by a return to the original state of oneness before manifestation—pralaya. At all other levels the merging takes place one step "up" from where the forces are acting. In man we have seen the antithesis of contemplation and action, the Mary and Martha temperaments. Both sides of any aspect of life are equally of its nature, rendering paradox inevitable, for each of them must be an expression of that from which both originate. There can scarcely be any human being whose constitution is completely one-sided; we all have some measure of any two counteracting ingredients, however much one of them may predominate. But a dominant factor causes excessively unstable equilibrium.

In all human affairs, as well as in the rest of nature, a balanced tension between inertia and energy, tradition and the progressive urge, provides reasonable stability. If the pull of the past is overstrong and clamps a dead hand on the present, there is stagnation. For vast aeons this would seem to have been the human condition, with an occasional shortlived outbreak of explosive forces seeking to effect reforms, the interval between these cyclic outbursts being very long. It is interesting to note what was said in one of the Mahatma letters: "As for human nature in general, it is the same now as it was a million years ago. Prejudice based upon selfishness; a general unwillingness to give up an established order of things for new modes of life and thought." Also: "The world's prejudices have to be conquered step by step, not at a rush." (13)

However, even in the century before that was written, the forward pull was getting stronger, and since then the reforming spirit has gained such strength as at times to throw the balance powerfully on to the progressive side, with much weakening of cautious restraint. The result in many instances was that revolution usurped the place of evolution.

Wherever there is a situation without give and take, imbalance brings trouble for man, both individually and collectively. The drag of inertia as affecting interior experience has been described by Dane Rudhyar: "A set of negative images based on past actions or refusals to act tries to block the descending power of the transformative spirit, or to deviate and pervert it so that it can be made to operate along the old grooves of some past institution or personal complex." (14) The contrary imbalance, when energy gets the bit between its teeth and runs away with everything, occurs when enthusiastic religious or ideological mania sweeps away all commonsense.

From Authority to Self-Reliance

The fairly recent spread of literacy and education has brought a slow but steady and now rapidly accelerating change of attitude in many lands. The long accepted custom of leaders and those willing to be led is giving place to a new mode, stemming from a fervent desire to think and act for oneself; a move from the long reign of authority imposed from above to a demand for self-direction. Men are no longer content to have their lives shaped by others but are requiring a voice in how the various aspects of their lives are run. There is insistent questioning of opinions and of systems.

Popular criticism of the organization of government, of society and of industry is concentrated at the physical level. Yet this is but the latest and outermost result of the perhaps too successful challenge to beliefs, customs, conventions and modes of life that has gone on with growing momentum for half a century. It really started a hundred years ago when H.P.B. focused the doubts of many thinking people and sharply challenged the religious and scientific orthodoxy of her day; but it did not gather strength for several decades. The democratic revolution that we are seeing today began and developed as ideas in the minds of men and women, without whose searching scepticism it could not have taken place. The desire to remodel systems would not have arisen unless faith in previously

accepted opinions had been discredited. It is the fruition of a century or more.

Theosophy anticipated this change, not merely by throwing down the gauntlet to world thought, but also in its attitude to its own doctrines, presented in one of its numerous antitheses. Thus, one of the Mahatmas is recorded as saying: "The doctrine we promulgate being the only true one," (15) and H.P.B. equated Theosophy with "everlasting truth." (16) That attitude would appear to be authoritative, and one could match it with other quotations. However, H.P.B. also declares: "... all theosophical books must be accepted on their merits, and not according to any claim which they may put forward." (17) Also: "No true Theosophist . . . ought to claim infallibility for anything he may say or write upon occult matters . . . For who of us can presume to have the **whole** truth at his fingers' ends, even upon one minor teaching of occultism?" Moreover, "the cumulative testimony of an endless series of seers . . . in various ages, under different climes, and throughout an untold series of incessant observations was found to agree"; but all the same it has to "receive constantly further corroboration." (18) The opposites are put forward, but the way out of the dilemma is indicated.

In the Mahatma letter quoted above it is also stated: "To be true, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem." It must therefore be practical at all levels of experience. How does Theosophy stand up to this criterion? Writing on Theosophy, H.P.B. said: "It does, if seriously studied, call forth, by stimulating one's reasoning powers and awakening the inner in the animal man, every hitherto dormant power for good in us, and also the perception of the true and real, as opposed to the false and unreal." Here the theoretical becomes the practical. The test must be: Has my study and all that I have learnt made me more considerate of my fellows, wiser, more tolerant and compassionate?

Practicality in Theosophy is thus concerned with much more than the physical plane. We must needs concern ourselves with the spiritual and psychic aspects of man, remembering the aim of "teaching the animal man to be a human man." But

Let no man think that sudden, in a minute,

All is accomplished and the work is done. (19)

It involves a revolution in attitude and outlook from the selfish and selfcentred to the altruistic and universally centred; a slow process of changing one's focus of consciousness.

The immemorial and well proven method of achieving this is meditation. Much has been written on meditation and its techniques, often presenting three stages—concentration, meditation and contemplation. This is useful as an analysis of procedure, but a good deal of what is taught as meditation comes under the heading of meditative exercises which, however efficient and effective, are only a means to the end of true meditation. The nature of this will presently be suggested.

A man seen wandering in a wood was reported to be behaving strangely, walking up and down and talking to himself. He was, in fact, a forestry expert examining trees and recording his careful observations on tape, together with comments. He was indeed talking to himself; for, later, the words of this fact-finding self would be played back to the creative planning self, who would devise a long-term conservation scheme. It was a highly efficient way of doing a job, though sure to be misunderstood and misinterpreted by anyone ignorant of what he was doing.

Many a person from childhood onwards talks to himself, perhaps to berate himself or herself as an idiot or a fool, or a stronger term in current phraseology, for having done some silly or unworthy act or for having forgotten to do what should have been done. One may suppose it is the higher self lecturing the lower for lacking wisdom and commonsense. Is not some mode of communication between the higher and the lower aspects of man, usually mental and perhaps unconscious, precisely what happens in many meditative exercises? Its simplest form may be epitomized in St. Paul's famous advice: "whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, think on these things." The Book of Proverbs says the same: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

So shrewd an observer as Shakespeare could not fail to make the point and express it in his incomparable language:

Assume a virtue if you have it not . . .

For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And master ev'n the devil and throw him out
With wondrous potency.

To assume something untrue may sound dishonest, a fraud. So it is when sincerity is lacking. Its effectiveness when a person is utterly sincere is charmingly illustrated in a short story by Max Beerbohm entitled "The Happy Hypocrite". A selfish worldly gambler and rake fell genuinely in love with a dancer, who rejected his offer of marriage, saying that she could never

marry anyone whose face was not saintly. Whereupon Lord George Hell had a special mask fitted to his face, showing a countenance spiritual, handsome and as "a mirror of true love." As a result he won his bride and they were happy in a modest home far from all his old London haunts. After a month of bliss, a light woman he had discarded found his cottage and tore off the mask. To his and her astonishment, his face had become even as the mask. His real repentance and earnest desire to become what he was pretending and trying to be had effected a complete reform, passing from the mental field into the deeper one of experience. In the story it was a speedy transformation. In real life it takes decades, but it does work. It is possible to "change the stamp of nature . . . with wondrous potency."

The Power of Thought

What a man thinks, that he becomes. Thinking—a meditative exercise—will change our level of consciousness so that we become indeed different persons from what we were. In thought we can lift ourselves up to become our ideal, just for a moment perhaps, and then for another moment. In time the moments become more frequent, and ultimately they will be continuous. Then we shall find that the ideas of the One Life pervading and sustaining all, the unity of mankind and the God within, will pass from mental concepts to become a deep realization that will suffuse us entirely. This experience will provide a constant backcloth, so to speak, to the whole stage of life and its many scenes, comprising all the activities we have to pursue in the world. It is that state of true charity which "is kind and seeketh not her own." Personal desires give place to active goodwill towards all. That condition, an experience beyond any meditative exercise, it is suggested is true meditation. Thus we shall find, as H.P.B. said: "The essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man." (20) It is the paradox of losing one's life to save it.

The power of thought, however, goes far beyond its application to a man or woman in changing character. Definite purposeful thinking helps to organize the mental field of the planet, where opportunity is wide open because only a tiny proportion of the human race can as yet work at that level. What passes for thinking with the vast majority of people is the passage through their brains of second-hand ideas and the reaction to persons and things and events dictated by psychological

memory. In every sphere of human endeavour creative thinking is done, and can only be done, by the few. William Cowper expressed this in the eighteenth century:

Knowledge dwells

In heads replete with thoughts of other men;

Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.

The accumulation of knowledge is not thinking. Much of the transference of original thought is done by books, lectures, discussions, now greatly helped by broadcasting. Then there is the less obvious influence of constructive—or for that matter destructive—thinking throughout the mental plane. A more general interest in telepathy and in the possibility of thought affecting physical matter is gradually broadening the popular horizon. Lyall Watson quotes from experiments by Douglas Dean showing “measurable physiological changes (of blood pressure and volume) . . . in the body of someone who is being thought about, even at a distance”, and he adds: “There is every reason to believe that there are direct physical accompaniments to certain mental processes.” (21) However, only the fringe of the subject has so far been touched.

“The Secret Doctrine” refers to “Kriyashakti—the mysterious **power of thought**” (22) as that by which phenomena are produced. This is a conscious use. There is also unconscious kriyashakti. For instance, H.P.B. recorded that on receiving a certain letter from Sinnett she caught his mood of displeasure when writing it. “I felt it in my bones as soon as I began reading it.” (23) It surely behoves us to guard our thought, and the emotion that energises it, in whatever we are doing.

Religious bodies in both east and west have through the centuries used the power of thought, often in monasteries, where steady quiet concentration was most possible. The contemplative orders in particular spent their time “working” in this way to affect the current ideas and mental processes of humanity in general. No one could ever gauge the effect of such efforts—the good that resulted or the evil that was warded off in troublous times. Similarly, there are religious organizations today that arrange for thought to be concentrated for weeks beforehand on an area where some special work is planned.

Thought knows no barriers of time and space; it goes to where it is directed immediately and to any distance. There are persons who have had the experience of talking with someone far off, seemingly out of the body yet in full consciousness, and of returning without a second’s delay when called on to do

or say something in the physical world. Such men and women begin to understand the value of, say, a blessing given or sent to the ends of the earth, or of thoughts of peace and harmony to those in dire need of them. Only occasionally does anyone have confirmation of the efficacy of such acts, but the inter-relationship of all men undoubtedly assures this. As N. Sri Ram wrote: "Since humanity is one, in some manner our own thoughts, aspirations, efforts, must tell in the shaping of all men's thoughts and actions." (24) Theoretically Theosophists know that thought is a potent power. To carry the idea into practice all we need to do is to use that power, "remembering (as a letter to Sinnett says) thoughts are things—have tenacity, coherence and life—that they are real entities." (25)

To think internationally instead of nationally is to build into ourselves the qualities that make for universal citizenship, which will affect our outlook and all that we say and do. Moreover, by reason of what we thereby become, we unconsciously influence our circle of acquaintance, any group to which we belong and in some measure our nation. Thinking comes first. By imagination we draw from Universal Mind ideas to be translated into blueprints for the future. Steady resolute thinking sets the pattern for what will happen in the next generation—or century. But it must be done with the same constant and persevering self-discipline as that used to shift our "sense of individuality" from the selfish personal level to that of the impersonal and universal. For neither is done quickly. There is no "instant" recipe in occultism any more than there is in nature.

Some of our difficulties arise because we are in a hurry. We want to see results. But who would have thought that after a first fifty years of tumultuous history The Theosophical Society would celebrate its centenary in the certainty that much of its doctrine had penetrated the mental atmosphere and greatly altered it from what it was in H.P.B.'s day? Yet so it is. True, these ideas are still mostly intellectual concepts not as yet related to living. But nothing happens until it is first thought. An extraordinary amount of theosophical teaching has seeped into the minds of writers in many fields, and this step is no mean achievement in a mere hundred years. The next step is that men shall not only think, for example, that there should be universal brotherhood, but that the notion of it should so stir them that they feel passionately that it must be. The driving force thus generated will then quickly find practical application

at the physical level, in the ordinary life of men. If this should take a further century, that is a negligible period in the story of mankind. It is relevant here to recall how one of the Mahatmas referred to "the last few thousand years" and put time in perspective. "But what is such a petty stretch of time in comparison with even one million of the several millions of years embraced in man's occupancy of earth in a single round?" (26)

There is always much disturbance and upheaval at every epoch, when a new age is being ushered in. It thus augurs well for the last quarter of this century that the whole world is in turmoil. Such a condition was likened by the Mahatma K. H. to an outbreak of fever in the human body which "is nature's evidence that she is trying to expel the seeds of disease." The organic body of mankind is similarly self-regulating. The physical body hurries its healing armies to an injured part, to repair damage, to cure the hurt, to expel poisonous substances. So with the corporate body. Its self-correction is slower acting, but it steadily and surely rids itself of the troubles that beset it—a painful matter, but the prelude, the preliminary, to the actual healing process; and, as the same Mahatma letter says, this is far better than the "old paralytic calm." (27)

An even wider example of self-regulation is seen in the law of adjustment called karma. Theologians are still sadly puzzled by the relationship of what they call predestination to the notion of freewill. The problem is simply and satisfactorily solved by lifting it out of the confines of one life into the region of re-incarnation, out of the realm of sterile philosophical speculation to that of universal law. Herein lies both the explanation of past and present and also a firm basis of hope for mankind's future, to a destiny woven by humanity itself.

Man Depends on Everyman

It necessarily follows that the paradox of individual man is reflected in corporate man. The various groups of mankind have eventually to come into harmonious relationship to complete the sum of human characteristics and make the pattern of total humanity. These groups are being forced closer together physically by inventions that shrink space and compress time and make all interdependent. There is tremendous pressure towards one world. Yet, frustrating these unitive tendencies, psychological man puts his emotion and his energy into narrow

nationalism, selfish interests and ruthless competition, infecting smaller and smaller units—all making for disharmony and separateness, which "The Voice of the Silence" calls the great dire heresy. There are, however, a few counterbalancing factors. Music, the arts, science and some of the less spectacular activities of the United Nations are universal, transcending boundaries and leading the way that all must someday follow. The disruptive movement is at present dominant and effectively hinders the shaping of a unified mankind.

Paradoxically, this may be a good thing. For just as the swing from the material to the spiritual pole takes place gradually in the individual, so must it be with the organism of mankind. Neither people nor peoples should be hurried beyond their capacity. In the Mahatma Letters it is said: "We cannot consent to overflow the world at the risk of drowning them with a doctrine that has to be cautiously given out, and bit by bit, like a too powerful tonic which can kill as well as cure." (28)

A considerable factor in the present situation is that peoples are being hurried beyond their capacity in a kind of psychological rat race that produces what may be called soul ulcers. In the more "advanced" nations the amazingly swift march of scientific and technological methods during the past half-century has brought about conditions the proper use of which requires willing co-operation and a strong community spirit, which mankind is not yet able to give. Invention has raced ahead of inner development. Such co-operation as there is between nations and between groups within nations is the reluctant minimum that circumstances force on them. As for the so-called underdeveloped peoples, many of these have been catapulted out of earlier centuries into this perplexing twentieth century, rushed from a simple life right into the atomic age, with which no one can yet adequately cope.

Concomitant with all that, time and space, which formerly kept races and nations at a fairly healthy distance from each other, have contracted so suddenly as to thrust peoples on top of one another. Picture a large family brought up in a big house in spacious grounds where exuberant and noisy pursuits disturbed no one. Suddenly a drastic change of circumstances forces them to move into a flat or a small terraced house with no garden to speak of. Life becomes difficult because there has been no time to adjust their ideas and ways and they unwittingly annoy their many unaccustomed neighbours. Never before had they needed to consider people living in such close

proximity. That illustrates what has happened to many of the races on earth. No wonder they get on each other's nerves. They come to hate their neighbours' ways, and that soon means hating them also. Different and often incompatible usages and beliefs have been forced into close contact, thus making for strife. Change has been too rapid for them. They have had no time to learn even the need, let alone the art, of living and working together in mutual tolerance, respecting others' points of view. Too much too quickly has sadly disturbed the equilibrium of mankind.

Teilhard de Chardin has shown that in the evolutionary process there come critical states of the earth when new phases open up, seemingly suddenly and in widely separated parts simultaneously. There was the coming of what science calls life, then vegetation, animals, man. He argues on the theosophical line that evolution is directed and guided by design and purpose. The need for human beings to be integrated in groups, thus making civilization possible, is seen as the culminating biological process. (29)

This need has special relevance to the current world situation. As no plant can grow to full maturity and beauty without suitable soil, moisture and temperature, nor any animal flourish out of its natural environment, so is it with human beings, for whom the comparable requisite is integration in a community. But progressively over the better part of two centuries men and women have been, and still are being, wrenched out of their well established setting without being fitted into any other social structure. The industrial revolution and its long aftermath tore people up by the roots, and vast numbers of them are still rootless units. The old villages and small towns were real communities where everyone was a person who mattered, even if only a little. In the great cities people are commonly of no account to their neighbours, whom they may not even know, or to anyone else. By and large the huge populations of modern conurbations all over the world suffer psychological distortion. They do not belong—anywhere. True, there are trade unions and other organizations that bring men together in groups of a kind, but they can hardly become communities of persons holding definite places as human beings co-operating in an organic society.

People who are taken out of their necessary places in a community may be compared to cells of one's body that are removed but kept alive. A cell can exist out of its proper

environment for a considerable period, but eventually it becomes "totally anonymous and then dies." (30) But there can also be a danger. If a cell that has been separated is later restored to the body from which it came, it may meanwhile have changed enough to repudiate its old home and "shrug off the species organizer (the power that holds the body together while it lives) and run riot in abnormally rapid growth." (31) A cancer is produced. The simile helps one to understand many human aberrations, cancers in the corporate body. Maybe the democratic revolution noted earlier will help to correct this particular imbalance. A balanced tension between management and workers is being painfully achieved.

There is, however, a further difficulty: an imbalance of intellect and feelings. Throughout the range of man's activities there should be a harmonious interplay between heart and head. It is disastrously common for both individual persons and groups of people to misunderstand each other because one is predominantly mental and the other overwhelmingly emotional. Such extremes leave scarcely a point of contact to make adjustment, compromise, a middle way possible. One lacks sympathy, the other has no reasoning power, one is coldly logical, the other hotly impulsive—an ill-assorted intolerant pair. Even among cultured and educated persons of a common culture, such as that of Europe, it is not easy for those of a Latin temperament to get along with those of an Anglo-Saxon stock; nor, for instance, for the English and the Irish to understand each other. We need not wonder at the continual differences in the Common Market. We should, rather, marvel at the degree of co-operation there actually is.

Then again, the antithesis of industrial and agricultural nations has long been evident. The former tend to emphasize the mental aspect at the cost of human relations, the latter to be swayed by strong feelings with little rational thinking to guide or moderate them.

Even more disastrous is the lack of balance between heart and head brought about where highly emotional groups are rigidly conditioned by varying beliefs and customs. An outstanding historical example is the conflict between Christians and Muslims in the crusades. That hostility has persisted through the centuries, as was seen recently in the Lebanon. Alas, there are still many such intractable problems in the world. Without the long view that Theosophy gives, one might well despair of any hopeful future for the human race.

Man, the highest expression and product of nature, has in his person been the means by which mother earth has developed the emotional aspect of being and he is now laboriously engaged in unfolding the quality of mind. The two, heart and head, constitute the psychic character of the globe. But collective humanity has badly deranged the planet's psyche. By reason of his intelligence man is "the one free agent in nature." (32) He has used that freedom to make himself also the one discordant factor. The result is that one part of the planet projects its own unrecognized and hated shadow side on to another part.

The disoriented psyches of a great portion of the human race will go on producing problems so long as the personality functions without some spiritual direction. There is lack of proper equilibrium between the various parts of his nature. The overpowering pull of the material side has thrown his whole being out of balance. Man has probably never been more out of tune with nature than he is now. "The Secret Doctrine" says: "We stand bewildered before the mystery of our own making and the riddles of life that **we will not** solve . . . If one breaks the laws of harmony . . . one must be prepared to fall into the chaos oneself has produced." (33) The malady of our global psyche has to be cured, and by man himself.

Here we come back to Everyman. For, as Jung said: "If the individual is not truly regenerated in spirit, society cannot be either, for society is the sum total of individuals in need of redemption." So, if we would have peace on earth, we must live at peace with our neighbours, and we cannot do that unless we are at peace within ourselves. If we would have a unified world, we ourselves as individuals have first to be healed and become whole.

A Way of Life

Writing to Sinnett in 1882 Subba Row said that the student of occultism has to learn "the means of shifting gradually his sense of individuality from his corruptible material body to the incorruptible eternal **Non-Being** represented by his seventh principle." And these significant words are added: "Please consider this as the real aim of occult science." (34) One is reminded again of St. Paul: "This corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality."

"Theosophy must be made practical." In "The Perennial Philosophy" Aldous Huxley affirms: "In no circumstances . . . can the . . . mind's assent to theological propositions take the place of what Law calls 'The birth of the God within.' For theory is not practice and words are not the things for which they stand." (35) H.P.B. put it thus: "The paradox is one not in words only, but in action, in the very conduct of life . . . It is only too easy to become lost in the intellectual contemplation of the path and to forget that the road can only be known by treading it." (36)

Theosophy is thus no mere body of doctrine, but a way of life, a most practical philosophy. How can anyone be genuinely convinced of the Oneness of Life and the unity of mankind without that knowledge causing a revolution in living, the adoption of a new and spiritual set of values? Development comes from within outwards, the exterior reflecting the interior. Outer expression follows the line of the inner idea, the nature of the phenomenon being determined by that of the noumenon. Latent perfection is slowly being brought into manifestation by the unfolding of inherent beauty. As "The Secret Doctrine" says: "The universe is worked and **guided from within outwards.**" (37)

"Help nature and work with her", says "The Voice of the Silence". In other words, work in consonance with the laws of the universe. The original objects of The Theosophical Society at its founding were stated to be "To discover and disseminate a knowledge of the laws that govern the universe." And it was made plain that these included specially the laws of the psychic and spiritual realms. Since wholeness is the keynote of nature, it follows that this inherent unity is ever striving to express itself. The entire course of evolution drives towards that end, so that, in the words of C. Jinarajadasa, the Is-to-be becomes the Is. To help nature towards this certain goal sums up the practical task for the Theosophist.

We have seen that a spirit of co-operation is essential for a world civilization. The harmonious working together of men and women in groups in an atmosphere of trust and respect is a prerequisite for wider global collaboration. Genuine and lasting co-operation, however, is not really possible until the latent divinity in man is awakened and the immortal inner centre, common to all, begins to control and co-ordinate the thoughts, words and deeds of the personality. This leads to the state of integration that Jung calls Individuation, "a consciousness beyond the too narrow limits set by a tyrannical intellect."

Making Theosophy practical, getting it into action, thus involves extraordinarily wide issues concerning the mysterious depths of our inmost being. We come again to Everyman, each man and woman. Krishnamurti stated it long ago: "The problem of the world is the problem of the individual." Jung put it this way: "Ultimately everything depends on the quality of the individual." (38)

The remedy for the psychological ills of any human being, and hence of the aggregate of all members of the human race, is simple in essence though complicated in detail because every phase of life is concerned. Everywhere, on all sides, we are confronted with paradoxes, antitheses, relationship of opposites, some of them precarious and delicate. We have seriously disturbed many nicely adjusted balances, and now we have the task of restoring harmonious equilibrium. This can be done through the whole range, from material to spiritual, by constantly pursuing the moderate mean that Buddhists call the middle way, which makes for flexible give-and-take adjustment between whatever pairs of opposites are concerned. The ability to apply this remedy, however, depends directly on the measure to which each of us has succeeded in changing the focus of consciousness or sense of individuality from the temporal towards the eternal.

Theosophy is practical because when its principles are put into action they can guide humanity to a solution of both personal and international problems. It provides a basis for living that will integrate us individually, integrate us in groups and further integrate those groups in the whole of mankind. It is none other than the ancient way of wholeness or holiness in line with the built-in trend of evolution; and it incidentally gives inward peace and tranquillity regardless of outer conditions and circumstances.

Two thoughts of our late President, N. Sri Ram, which sum up the attitude of all past leaders, may fittingly conclude this thesis. One relates to us as individuals, the other to man as a corporate entity. "Every member has a certain responsibility to show in his own person, by his life, his attitude, his actions, what Theosophy can mean to an individual when he accepts it as something to live by." And: "The world is moving inexorably, though almost invisibly, towards that unity in which alone lies the solution of its present problems."

PARADOX AND PRACTICALITY

REFERENCES

Key to Abbreviations

B.C.W.	The Collected Writings of H. P. Blavatsky.
Key	The Key to Theosophy by H. P. Blavatsky.
M.L.	The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett.
S.D.	The Secret Doctrine by H. P. Blavatsky.
T.P.H.	Theosophical Publishing House.

1. F. W. H. Myers, **St. Paul**.
2. **M.L.** p.138 3rd ed; p.136 1st ed; T.P.H.
3. **B.C.W.** VIII, p.125, T.P.H.
4. **M.L.** p.64, T.P.H.
5. **Esoteric Writings** p.328. Bombay 1910.
6. **The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett** CXVIII Unwin 1925.
7. **Key** p.19, T.P.H.
8. **Lucifer I**, Jan. 1888, p.344.
9. **Key** p.230.
10. **Key** p.235.
11. **B.C.W.** IX, pp.246—47.
12. **B.C.W.** II, p.105.
13. **M.L.** pp.3—4.
14. **Occult Preparation for a New Age** p.230, T.P.H.
15. **Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom**, First Series, C. Jinarajadasa, No. 1. T.P.H.
16. **Key** p.304.
17. **Key** p.300.
18. **Key** pp.86—87.
19. F. W. H. Myers, **St. Paul**.
20. **B.C.W.** IX, p.245.
21. **The Romeo Error** p.70, Hodder & Stoughton.
22. **S.D.** II, p.173, 1st ed; III, p.180 6-vol. ed.
23. **The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett** CXIX, Unwins.
24. **Thoughts for Aspirants**, First Series, p.64. T.P.H.
25. **M.L.** p.49.
26. **M.L.** p.83, 3rd ed; p.84 1st ed.
27. **M.L.** p.391, 3rd ed; p.397 1st ed.
28. **M.L.** p.242, 3rd ed; p.245 1st ed.
29. **The Phenomenon of Man**, Collins.
30. **The Romeo Error** pp.191—92.
31. **The Romeo Error** p.47.
32. **M.L.** p.57.
33. **S.D.** I, pp.643—44, 1st ed; pp.367—68, 6-vol. ed.
34. **M.L.** pp.451—52, 3rd ed; pp.458—59, 1st ed.
35. **op. cit.** p.40.
36. **B.C.W.** VIII, p.125.
37. **S.D.** I, p.274, 1st ed; I, p.317 6-vol. ed.
38. **The Undiscovered Self** p.55, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958.

