

*Does your mind elate
with self-adoration and
self-aggrandizement?*



*Abstract and train of thoughts*¹

Selfishness, envy, revenge, and malice are mankind's deadliest curses.

Ahamkara and I-am-ness, Ego and Egoism, Individualism and Capitalism, I-ness and Me-ness, Luxury and Lust, Mind and Mentality, Persona and Personality, Self and Self-interest, they are all one and the same: utter selfishness, the chief cause of sin and suffering in our world. 9

Selfishness is love misdirected to, and jealously kept for one's little self at the expense of his Spiritual Self and of all other selves, who are transient rays of One Universal Self. 9

Selfishness and ambition are mankind's deadliest curses. 9

Great intellect and too much knowledge is a two-edged weapon in life, and instruments for evil, as well as for good. When combined with Selfishness, they will make of the whole of Humanity a footstool for the elevation of him who possesses them, and a means for the attainment of his objects; while, applied to altruistic and humanitarian purposes, they may become the means of salvation of the many. 10

Pride and Presumption, the two chief prompters of Selfishness and Egotism, are the causes that emptied heaven of one third of its divine dwellers (mystically) and of another third, of the stars (astronomically). The first statement is an allegory intimately connected with humanity; the second, a fact. 11

Our age is criminal in its frightful selfishness, in its scepticism which grimaces at the very idea of anything beyond the material, and in its idiotic indifference to all that does not pertain to the personal self — more than any of the past ages of ignorant barbarism and intellectual darkness. 11

The paths are many but Wisdom is One. Artistic souls envision it, those who suffer dream of it, the pure in heart know it. Only light and empty heads, egotistical and vain drones, confused by their own buzzing, will remain ignorant of the supreme ideal. They will continue existing until life becomes a grievous burden to them. 12

Does your mind elate with insolence and pride?

Pride and conceit are the two malignant cancers devouring the heart of "civilized" nations. Selfishness is the sword of Damocles dangling by evanescent personality over the golden thread that links it with its Spiritual Centre and Life Eternal. 12

One never ceases to be astonished by the egoism, vanity, and "self-sufficiency" of the majority. There are some for whom their little personality constitutes the whole universe. The vices and illusions of lower minds are typical of egotistical mediocrities. 14

Overfed by the sweet delicacies of ambition and personal life, man accumulates gravitas. Kipling says that he is gathering "too much ego in his cosmos." His "little personality constitutes the whole universe," says Blavatsky. 14

¹ Frontispiece by James Dean.

**DOES YOUR MIND ELATE WITH SELF-ADORATION?
ABSTRACT AND TRAIN OF THOUGHTS**

The higher the Cosmic Evolution — which, in obedience to the Ideation of the Universal Mind, brings into existence all states of being in the manifested Solar System — the more it tends towards Unity, which is the ultimate possibility of Nature. 15

Every veil of illusion that creates a sense of personal isolation, a feeling of separateness from All, must be torn asunder; and those who, through vanity and selfishness, go against the Divine Plan, cannot but incur the punishment of total annihilation. 15

Life on earth is the result and consequence of that unseen, yet ever present autocrat and despot, called Selfishness and Egotism. The strongest will becomes impotent before the voice and authority of this self-appointed commander. 16

Selfish is the life of a hermit, useless to all, and as useless to himself.

Mahayana Buddhism not only condemns self-torture and selfish retreat in the jungle, simply for one's own salvation, it pleads renunciation of Nirvana for the sake of the fellow man. 17

The monstrous doctrine of remaining indifferent to the woes and miseries of mankind and to forsake those who cry for help, is outrageously selfish and cruel. It is neither Buddhistic, nor Christian, nor Theosophical, but the nightmare of a doctrine of the worst schools of Pessimism. 18

“Self-culture” is for the solitary Hatha Yogis who shun the society of their fellow men. Pampering the animal self is triply distilled selfishness. 18

The Hindu Yogi, who isolates himself in an impenetrable forest, and the Christian hermit who retires to the desert, are both accomplished egoists. The one seeks refuge in Nirvana, the other to save his soul from hell. 19

The light and spirit of Divinity are the wings of the soul. 19

Mount Athos is a monastic hideaway of the coarsest kind of Selfishness. 19

Evil prevails due to selfishness breeding separateness and strife.

Philosophical pantheism is based upon the correct understanding of the mysteries of *being*. Modern pessimism is yet another system of evil added by unhealthy fancy to an ever-growing sum of social evils, and a systematic slander of sentient life. Neither good nor evil would exist were it not for the light they throw upon each other. 20

The bundle of Egotism disappears after death, as the costume of the part he played disappears from the actor's body after he leaves the theatre at the end of the play and goes to bed. 21

Fie on that virtue which prudence alone directs !

The slightest tinge of Selfishness precludes the employment of Spiritual Forces. For, unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it. 22

The powers and forces of animal nature can equally be used by the selfish and revengeful, as by the unselfish and the all-forgiving. But the powers and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the pure in heart — and this is Divine Magic. 22

Selfishness is a human building, whose windows and doors are wide open for every kind of iniquity to enter into man's soul. It is Selfishness that corrupts and degrades his soul by prompting him to abuse his knowledge and power. 22

The greatest crime that was ever perpetrated upon mankind was committed on that day when the first priest invented the first prayer with a selfish object in view.

Prayer is an ennobling action when it is an intense feeling, an ardent desire rushing forth from our very heart for the good of other people, and when entirely detached from any selfish personal object; the craving for “the wilds beyond the heavens” is natural and holy in man, but on the condition of sharing that bliss with others. 24

The heart of the purely selfish man, who cares not if all others rot so he can have pleasure in their pain, is softened for those near and dear to him — his family, relatives, and friends. 24

His affections may even extend to religious fanaticism and even patriotic fervour in his country’s wars and political schemes, in the hope of recognition and reward. 24

However sincere and ardent the faith of a theist, unless, while conforming his life to what he pleases to term “divine laws,” he gives precedence in his thoughts, first to the benefit that accrues from such a moral course of actions to his brother, and then only thinks of himself — he will remain a pious egotist. For belief in and fear of God will develop and grow in exact proportion to his Selfishness, his fear of punishment and bad results only for himself, without the least concern for his brother. 25

Fie on that virtue which prudence alone directs! 25

Theism and atheism grow and develop together our reasoning powers, and become either fortified or weakened by reflection or deduction of evidence. 26

The only God which Theosophists worship is Truth.

The only devil they recognize and which they fight with unabated fury is the Satan of Egotism and unbridled passions. 27

Alone our Western religion stands in its isolation, as a monument of the most gigantic human selfishness ever evolved by human brain, without one word in favour of, or for the protection of, the poor animal. 28

Neither Christianity nor the Christian layman is to be blamed for it. It is the pernicious system of theology, spanning over centuries of theocracy, and the ferocious, ever-increasing selfishness in the West. 28

Selfishness, envy, revenge, and malice are the hallmarks of sorcerers.

The Roman Catholic “fathers” and clergy, particularly when pursuing their selfish objectives collectively, they have to be ranked among the adepts of the Black Art. 29

In the crypts of the cyclopean Stonehenge in England, and its twin-brother Carnac of Brittany, curious scenes are taking place whenever there is a new convert in view. 29

Stupefying is the power of blind faith in, and veneration of, ecclesiastical teachings.

The conscience of the Roman Catholic priest is most likely at peace. He works personally for no selfish purpose, but with the object of “saving a soul” from “eternal damnation.” In his view, if Magic there be in it, it is holy, meritorious, and divine Magic. 30

Whenever those priest-hypnotists want to control an individual, selected by them for conversion, they retire to an underground place, consecrated by them for such purposes and there, forming a circle, throw their combined will-power in the direction of that individual. This is the kind of ceremonial Magic and sorcery practiced at Stonehenge and elsewhere. 30

Before the lethal breath of Selfishness and Indifference, every uncomfortable fact is transformed into meaningless fiction, and every branch of the once verdant Tree of Truth has become dried up and stripped of its primeval spiritual significance. 32

The modern Symbologist is exceedingly clever only at detecting phallic worship and sexual emblems, even where none were ever meant. But for the true student of Occult

Lore, White or Divine Magic could no more exist in Nature without its counterpart Black Magic, than day without night, whether these be of twelve hours or of six months' duration. 32

Magic is still in full sway amidst mankind, however blind the latter to its silent presence and pernicious influence, however ignorant society may be of its beneficent and maleficent effects. 33

Most of those magicians are sorcerers by reason of their inherent selfishness, their revengeful natures, their envy, and malice. 33

Strong-hearted men and women, moved by a fervent aspiration towards an ideal they know to be true, have conquered the fake self and cruel master that kept them shackled to endless cycles of birth, misery, and death. 34

Personal selfishness, that greed for self and self only, the begetter of most of the evils, has vanished; and every lower instinct, melting like soiled icicles under the beneficent ray of the Spiritual Sun, has disappeared making room for higher and holier aspirations. 34

Man accumulates knowledge, invents religions and philosophies, but he himself remains still the same.

In his ceaseless chase after wealth and honours and the will-o'-the-wisps of novelty, enjoyment, and ambition, man is ever moved by one chief motor — Vain Selfishness. 34

Telegraphs and telephones, railways and airways, radios and TVs, wireless and satellite communications, more and more with every hour, unite us all into one “happy” family, but only to furnish the selfish and the wily with every means of stealing a better march on the less selfish and improvident. 35

We live in an era of the most triumphant display of human genius. But what good has all this great civilization and progress done to the millions in the world's slums, and to the armies of the “great unwashed”? 35

Selfishness is the chief prompter of our age.

Sir Edwin's “Light of the World” has only succeeded in raising the pride of Christian nations to its acme, in developing their self-adulation, and fostering hard-heartedness under the name of all-binding law. The “personality” of both nation and individual has thrown deep roots into the soil of selfish motives; and of all the flowers of modern culture, those that blossom the most luxuriously, are the flowers of Polite Falsehood, Vanity, and Self-exaltation. 36

Selfishness is the boisterous rebel against Nature's decrees.

The student, at the very outset, learns that the alpha and the omega of life is selflessness, and knows that only in the sanctuary of merit and self-forgetfulness can the true meaning of life reveal itself to his eager heart. 38

By sinking his consciousness deep into his heart he can reach that holy place, only when alone in silence and darkness.

When the need for silence has grown great enough, he will turn to seek it even in the midst of the struggle with self, and he will find it. 40

Living for self alone is full of pain and sorrow; living for others is full of divine bliss and joy for ever, free from bonds tied by mortal hands. 40

There is no danger to him who is true and sincere, and especially unselfish.

For he is thus prepared to meet any temptation. The pure at heart, who study with a view of perfecting themselves, need not have any fear; but rather those who make of the Sacred Science a sinful pretext for worldly motives, who should tremble. 41

Though centuries lapse and decades drop out of the lap of time, great reforms take place, empires rise, fall, and rise again like a seesaw, and even whole races disappear before the “triumphant march of civilization” — in his terrific selfishness, the man that was is the man that is. 42

In Eastern philosophy number eight symbolizes equality of units, order and symmetry in heaven, transformed into inequality and confusion on earth, by Selfishness, the great rebel against Nature’s decrees. 42

While perfect as a cosmic number, number eight is also the symbol of the lower self, the animal nature of man, thus presaging ill for the unselfish portion of humanity. 43

Even when a ray of Truth lights up, no matter how dimly, the consciousness of a sensualist, one of a marble heart and selfish mind, impervious to fairness and compassion, Truth is befouled and unfit for use. 43

Do we not find among members of the Theosophical Society envy and hatred for their colleagues, suspicion and slanderous talk?

Who, of you who read this, is prepared to say that not one out of the above faults concerns you? 44

The Founders of the Theosophical Society oppose selfishness of any kind, and insist upon fraternal feelings among the Fellows, mutual toleration and charity for each other’s shortcomings, and mutual help in their pristine aspirations and devotion to the Spirit of Truth. 45

Conscience, God’s vicegerent in the soul, speaks no longer in man when the whispers of the still small voice within are stifled by the ever-increasing din and roar of selfishness. 45

Space and time should be given to the self-appointed censors of morality to cleanse themselves of the ferocious selfishness, narrow-mindedness, and conceit which have made their playing at “the higher life” an almost comical travesty. 45

It is that fierce and unashamed personal selfishness, the chief motor in the “struggle for life,” that is the sole cause of human starvation, and it’s vastly more powerful extension — national egoism and vanity — which stirs up wealthy nations and individuals to bury enormous capitals in the unproductive erection of gorgeous churches and temples, and to support a swarm of social drones called Cardinals and Bishops, who parasitize their subordinates and their flocks. 46

Kama-Manas is the Green-Red animal monster in us.

When Kama-Manas (Desire Mind), the potential of the worldly man, is deluded into a notion of independent existence, it becomes Ego-ism, the selfish self. 46

The loftiest aspirations for the welfare of his brothers and sisters will become tainted with selfishness if, in the mind of the philanthropist, there lurks the shadow of a desire for self-benefit, or a tendency to do injustice, even where these exist unconsciously to himself. 47

It is far nobler to be one of those who love their fellow men without distinction of race, creed, caste, or colour, than to be merely a good patriot, or still less, a partisan. To mete one measure for all, is far holier and more divine than to help one’s country in its political ambition of aggrandizement, strife, and bloody wars in the name Greediness and Selfishness. 48

Selfishness is the first-born of Ignorance, and the fruit of the teaching which asserts that for every newly-born infant a new soul, separate and distinct from the Universal Soul, is “created.” 49

Selfishness is the impassable wall between personal self and Universal Truth; and the prolific mother of all human vices — Lie being born out of the necessity for dissembling, and Hypocrisy out of the desire to mask Lie. 49

Compassion felt but not acted upon is not altruism, it is bare hypocrisy.

Spiritual perfection and knowledge can only be reached on the spiritual plane — in that state in which all sense of separateness, all selfishness, all feeling of personal interest and desire, has been merged in the wider consciousness of the humanity at large. 50

No blind submission to the commands of another can be demanded, or would not be of any use.

Each individual must learn for himself, through trial and suffering, to discriminate what is beneficial to humanity; and in proportion, as he begins transmuting his materiality to spirituality — lead to gold — his mind will open to receive the guidance of his Immortal Self within. and best friend of the mortal self. 50

True Knowledge consists in getting at the root of all phenomena, and thus arriving at a correct understanding of the primal cause, the “rootless root,” which is not an effect in its turn. 51

Such Knowledge can be obtained only by overcoming the fallacy of individuality, which is the root cause of Selfishness — that feeling which seeks after the aggrandizement of one’s own egotistic personality to the exclusion and detriment of everyone else. 51

As long as Selfishness limits one’s spiritual perceptions and inner faculties, Absolute Knowledge is impossible.

Impersonality is the ultimate aim of cosmic evolution. We have to work along with Nature, and not place ourselves in opposition to her inherent impulse, which must ultimately assert itself. To oppose it, must necessitate suffering, since a weaker force, in its egotism, tries to array itself against the mighty Universal Law. 52

Whenever Truth is veiled for the many, it is unveiled for the few.

Men had not created evil yet in those hoary days of bliss and purity, for they were more Godlike than human. When Selfishness was born out of desires and passions hitherto unknown, and superhuman knowledge and power were abused, it became necessary to limit the number of those who knew. Thus arose Initiation. 53

The need of veiling Truth to protect it from desecration becoming more apparent with every generation, the thin veil used at first had to be gradually thickened according to the spread of I-ness and Me-ness, Luxury and Lust — and this led to the Mysteries. 53

The Power of Knowledge is for those only who, having freed themselves from every prejudice, and conquered conceit and selfishness, are ready to accept every and any truth, once it is demonstrated to them. 54

Our age is pre-eminently materialistic and pietistic. Our literature, our modern thought, and the so-called progress, run on these two parallel lines, so incongruously dissimilar, and yet both so popular and so very orthodox, each in its own way. He who presumes to draw a third line, as a hyphen of reconciliation between the two, has to be fully prepared for the worst. 54

Compassion felt but not acted upon is not altruism, it is mere hypocrisy. Real self-development on esoteric lines requires action. The only way of sacrificing oneself “to the eternal” is by attuning to the collective spirit of life, embodied in and represented in its highest divine aspect by humanity alone. 55

Helping only those who are like-minded is not altruism, it is prejudice and partiality. 56

We are our own worst enemy.

**DOES YOUR MIND ELATE WITH SELF-ADORATION?
ABSTRACT AND TRAIN OF THOUGHTS**

I am my friends and my enemies, I feel them all. I am the poor, the wicked, and the ignorant. Those moments of gloom are the moments when I am influenced by those ignorant ones, who are myself, says William Q. Judge. 56

Unless the higher Ego (Spiritual Self) gravitates towards its Sun, the lower ego or material self will have the upper hand in every case. For it is this false ego, with its fierce selfishness and animal desire to live a senseless life on earth, which is the real hell, not the fictitious place indoctrinated by the Churches to their flocks. 56

Vice and wickedness are an abnormal, unnatural manifestation, at this period of our human evolution. The fact that mankind was never more selfish and vicious than it is now — civilized nations having succeeded in making of the first an ethical characteristic, and of the second an art — is proof of the of the sorry state we are all in today. 57

The Immortal Titan and True Philanthropist is moved by Compassion-Sacrifice; the mortal man, by Selfishness and Self-adoration in every instance. 58

If man by suppressing, if not destroying, his selfishness and personality, only succeeds in knowing himself as he truly is, he will soon stand beyond all pain and misery, and beyond all the wear and tear of change, which is the chief originator of pain. Such a man will be physically of matter, he will move surrounded by matter, and yet he will live beyond and outside it. His body will be subject to change, but he himself will be entirely above it, and will experience everlasting life even while in temporary bodies of a short span. 59

All this may he achieved by the development of devotion to and unconditional love of Humanity, the Great Orphan, following the suppression of personality or *selfishness*, which is the cause of all sin, and consequently of all human sorrow. 59

Happiness cannot exist as long as Egotism reigns supreme, and intellectual progress refuses to accept a subordinate position to ethical progress. And as long as Egotism will not give way to the Altruism, happiness will remain a Utopia. 60

Listen to the voice of the Master.

Your motive, being selfish, can only generate a double effect, good and bad, and will either nullify your good action, or turn it to another man's profit. There is no happiness for one who is ever thinking of his little self and forgetting all other selves. 61

Appendix about the author of “The Elixir of Life”

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Suggested reading for students.

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Selfishness is love misdirected to, and jealously kept for one's little self at the expense of his Spiritual Self and of all other selves, who are transient rays of One Universal Self.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (IS THE DESIRE TO "LIVE" SELFISH?) VI p. 242.

According to an established authority, selfishness is that

. . . exclusive regard to one's own interest or happiness; that supreme self-love or self-preference which leads a person to direct his purposes to the advancement of his own interest, power, or happiness, without regarding those of others.¹

In short, an absolutely selfish individual is one who cares for himself and none else, or, in other words, one who is so strongly imbued with a sense of importance of his own personality that to him it is the acme of all his thoughts, desires and aspirations and beyond that all is a perfect blank. Now, can an occultist be then said to be "selfish" when he desires to live in the sense in which that word is used by the writer of the article on "The Elixir of Life"?²

Selfishness and ambition are mankind's deadliest curses.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (THE CHOSEN "VESSELS OF ELECTION") IV pp. 419-20.

Selfishness and Ambition have been ever since the first dawn of history the greatest curses of Humanity. Plenty were the avatāras since the first man looked up into empty space for help, instead of trying his own intellect, and relying upon his own omnipotent spirit. Has any one of those "prophets" ever benefited mankind, assuaged its social wrongs and miseries, alleviated its mental and physical woes, or lightened in any way for it the heavy burden of life? No! On the contrary, each of them has dug for those who believed in him one more deep chasm to separate his own followers from their brothers, the apostles of some other rival prophet; each chasm weakening still more mankind, breaking it up as a strong unit into isolated weak units, dividing

¹ [Quoting Sir James Mackintosh, FRS, FRSE, 1765–1832, Scottish jurist, Whig politician, Whig historian, medical doctor, barrister, journalist, judge, administrator, and philosopher.]

² [See Appendix about the author of this article, pp. 62-64. — ED. PHIL.]

it into inimical ever-fighting factions. And thus it went on until humanity is now absolutely honeycombed with such chasms — regular pitfalls for the weak in intellect, full of sectarian gall and bitterness, prolific of hatred, every group ever ready to pounce upon its neighbours to either exterminate or drag them down into its own pitfall. Who will fill up those accursed pits? How many are there of absolutely *unsectarian*, unselfish reformers, who having neither personal ambition, nor any other aim in view but the practical good of mankind, are ready to sacrifice themselves for the great and holy task? At one end, the bloody-handed anarchists, nihilists, the so-called socialists, and, at the other, religious sectarian bigots, intolerant enthusiasts and dogmatists, each and every one of those an enemy to any man but his own co-workers.¹ Verily, it is easy to undergo any sacrifice and physical torture of limited duration to secure to oneself an eternity of joy and bliss. It is still easier, especially for an immortal God, to *die* to save mankind. Many were the so-called Saviours of Humanity, and still more numerous the pretenders.

But where is he who would *damn himself for ever* to save mankind at large? Where is that being who, in order to make his fellow creatures happy and free *on earth*, would consent to *live and suffer* hour after hour, day after day, aeon upon aeon and never die, never get release from his nameless sufferings, until the great day of the Mahā-pralaya? Let such a man appear; and then when he does and proves it, we shall worship him as our Saviour, the God of gods, the only TRUE AND LIVING GOD.

Great intellect and too much knowledge is a two-edged weapon in life, and instruments for evil, as well as for good. When combined with Selfishness, they will make of the whole of Humanity a footstool for the elevation of him who possesses them, and a means for the attainment of his objects; while, applied to altruistic and humanitarian purposes, they may become the means of salvation of the many.

From *The Secret Doctrine*, II p. 163. [FROM THE SEMI-DIVINE DOWN TO THE FIRST HUMAN RACES. Stanza III, § 24. THE HIGHER CREATORS REJECT IN THEIR PRIDE THE FORMS EVOLVED BY THE “SONS OF YOGA.”

Since, in the exoteric accounts, the *Asuras* are the first beings created from the “body of night,” while the *Pitris* issue from that of *Twilight*; the “gods” being placed by Parāśara (*Vishnu-Purāna*) between the two, and shown to evolve from the “body of the day,” it is easy to discover a determined purpose to veil the order of creation. Man is the *Arvāksrota* coming from the “Body of the Dawn”; and elsewhere, man is again referred to, when the creator of the world, Brahmā, is shown “creating fierce beings, denominated goblins, Bhūtas (malignant fiends), and eaters of flesh,” or as the text has it, “fiends frightful from being monkey-coloured and carnivorous.”² Whereas the Rakshasas are generally translated by “Evil Spirits” and the “enemies of the gods,” which identifies them with the *Asuras*. In the *Rāmāyana*, when Hanuman is reconnoitring the enemy in Lankā, he finds there Rākshasas, some hideous, “while some were beautiful to look upon,” and, in *Vishnu-Purāna*, there is a direct reference to their becoming the Saviours of “Humanity,” or of Brahmā.

¹ [Consult “Social ethics of nineteenth century Russia,” in our Down to Earth Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² *Vishnu-Purāna*, Bk. I, ch. v; Wilson, Vol. I, p. 83, *fn.* by F. Hall.

The allegory is very ingenious. Great intellect and too much knowledge are a two-edged weapon in life, and instruments for evil as well as for good. When combined with Selfishness, they will make of the whole of Humanity a footstool for the elevation of him who possesses them, and a means for the attainment of his objects; while, applied to altruistic humanitarian purposes, they may become the means of the salvation of many. At all events, the absence of self-consciousness and intellect will make of man an idiot, a brute in human form. Brahmā is *Mahat* — the universal Mind — hence the too-selfish among the Rakshasas showing the desire to become possessed of it all — to “devour” Mahat. The allegory is transparent.

Pride and Presumption, the two chief prompters of Selfishness and Egotism, are the causes that emptied heaven of one third of its divine dwellers (mystically) and of another third, of the stars (astronomically). The first statement is an allegory intimately connected with humanity; the second, a fact.

From *The Secret Doctrine*, II p. 237. [ON THE HISTORY OF THE FOURTH RACE, Stanza X, §§ (38) THE BIRTH OF THE FOURTH, ATLANTEAN RACE. (39) THE SUB-RACES OF THE FOURTH HUMANITY BEGIN TO DIVIDE AND INTERBLEND; THEY FORM THE FIRST MIXED RACES OF VARIOUS COLOURS. (40) THE SUPERIORITY OF THE ATLANTEAN OVER OTHER RACES. (41) THEY FALL INTO SIN AND BEGET CHILDREN AND MONSTERS. (42) THE FIRST GERMS OF ANTHROPOMORPHISM AND SEXUAL RELIGION. THEY LOSE THEIR “THIRD EYE.”

“The Gods became no-Gods, the Sura — A-sura,” says the text; *i.e.*, gods became fiends — SATAN, when read literally. But Satan will now be shown, in the teaching of the Secret Doctrine, allegorized as Good, and Sacrifice, a God of Wisdom, under different names.

The Kabbalah teaches that Pride and Presumption — the two chief prompters of Selfishness and Egotism — are the causes that emptied heaven of *one third* of its divine denizens — mystically, and of *one third* of the stars — astronomically; in other words, the two statements are — the first an allegory, and the second a fact. The former, nevertheless, as shown, is intimately connected with humanity.

Our age is criminal in its frightful selfishness, in its scepticism which grimaces at the very idea of anything beyond the material, and in its idiotic indifference to all that does not pertain to the personal self — more than any of the past ages of ignorant barbarism and intellectual darkness.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE NEW CYCLE) XI pp. 134-35.

But you, friends and readers, you who aspire to something more than the life of the squirrel everlastingly turning the same wheel; you who are not content with the seething of the caldron whose turmoil results in nothing; you who do not mistake the deaf echoes, as old as the world, for the divine voice of truth; prepare yourselves for a future of which but few in your midst have dared to dream, unless they have already entered upon the path. For you have chosen a path that, although thorny at the start, soon widens out and leads you to the divine truth. You are free to doubt while still at the beginning of the way, you are free to decline to accept on hearsay what is taught respecting the source and the cause of that truth, but you are always able to hear what its voice is telling you, and you can always study the effects of the creative

force coming from the depths of the unknown. The arid soil upon which the present generation of men is moving, at the close of this age of spiritual dearth and of purely material surfeit, has need of a divine omen above its horizon, a rainbow, as symbol of hope. For of all the past centuries our nineteenth has been the most criminal. It is criminal in its frightful selfishness, in its scepticism which grimaces at the very idea of anything beyond the material; in its idiotic indifference to all that does not pertain to the personal self, more than any of the previous centuries of ignorant barbarism and intellectual darkness.

The paths are many but Wisdom is One. Artistic souls envision it, those who suffer dream of it, the pure in heart know it. Only light and empty heads, egotistical and vain drones, confused by their own buzzing, will remain ignorant of the supreme ideal. They will continue existing until life becomes a grievous burden to them.

Our century must be saved from itself before its last hour strikes. For all those who see the sterility and folly of an existence blinded by materialism and ferociously indifferent to the fate of their neighbour, this is the moment to act: now is the time for them to devote all their energies, all their courage and all their efforts to a great intellectual reform. This reform can only be accomplished by Theosophy, and, let us add, by Occultism or the wisdom of the Orient. The paths that lead to it are many; but the wisdom is one. Artistic souls envision it, those who suffer dream of it, the pure in heart know it. Those who work for others cannot remain blind to its reality, though they may not always recognize it by its name. Only light and empty minds, egotistical and vain drones, confused by their own buzzing, will remain ignorant of the supreme ideal. They will continue to exist until life becomes a grievous burden to them.

Does your mind elate with insolence and pride?

Pride and conceit are the two malignant cancers devouring the heart of “civilized” nations. Selfishness is the sword of Damocles dangling by evanescent personality over the golden thread that links it with its Spiritual Centre and Life Eternal.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (OUR CYCLE AND THE NEXT) XI pp. 196-97.

Thus, if we have to become in the future cycle *that which we already have been*, let this be as in the days of Aśoka, not as it is now. But we are reproached with forgetting “*Christian heroism*.” Where will you find, we are asked, a parallel to the heroism of the early martyrs and that displayed in our day? We are sorry to contradict this boast like many others. If casual instances of heroism in our century are undeniable, who, on the other hand, dreads death more, as a general rule, than the Christian? The idolater, the Hindu and the Buddhist, in short every Asiatic or African, dies with an indifference and serenity unknown to our Western man. As for “*Christian heroism*,” whether we mean mediaeval or modern heroes or heroines, a St. Louis, or a General Gordon, a Joan of Arc, or a Nightingale, there is no need of the adjective to emphasize the substantive. The Christian martyrs were preceded by the idolatrous and even godless Spartans of many virtues, the brave sisters of the Red Cross by the matrons of Rome and Greece. To this day, the daily self-tortures submitted to by the

Indian Yogi and the Mussulman Fakir, tortures often lasting through years, throw entirely into the shadow the unavoidable heroism of the Christian martyr, ancient or modern. He who would learn the full meaning of the word "heroism" must read the *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, by Colonel Tod¹ . . .

"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's"² is a golden rule, but like so many others from the same source, Christians are the first to break it.

Pride and conceit are the two hideous cancers devouring the heart of *civilized* nations, and selfishness is the sword handled by evanescent *personality* to sever the golden thread that links it to immortal INDIVIDUALITY. Old Juvenal must have been a prophet. It is *our century* that he addresses when saying:

We own thy merits; but we blame beside
Thy mind elate with insolence and pride!³

Pride is the first enemy to itself. Unwilling to hear anyone praised in its presence, it falls foul of every rival and does not always come out victorious.

"I am *the* ONE, and God's elect," says the proud nation.

"I am *the* invincible and the foremost; tremble all ye around me!" Behold, there comes a day when we see it crouching in the dust, bleeding and mangled.

"I am the ONE," croaks, the private crow in peacock's feathers.

"I am *the* ONE — painter, artist, writer, or what not — *par excellence* . . . On whomsoever I shed my light, he is singled out by the nations; on whomsoever I turn my back, he is doomed to contempt and oblivion."

¹ [Lieutenant-Colonel James Tod. *Annals and antiquities of Rajast'han: or the central and western Rajpoot states of India*. London: Smith, Elder, and Cornhill, 1829-1832; 2-vols., many editions.

James Tod, 1782-1835, was an officer of the British East India Company and an Oriental scholar. He combined his official role and his amateur interests to create a series of works about the history and geography of India, and in particular the area then known as Rajputana that corresponds to the present day state of Rajasthan, and which Tod referred to as Rajast'han.]

² [Matthew xxii, 21]

³ [Cum multis aliis, quae nunc perscribere longum est. — A line from the "*Propria, quae maribus*," etc., of the Eton Latin Grammar. "With many other matters, which it would just now be tedious to state." A summary, which is generally placed at the end of a beadroll of indifferent *items*, and in an ironical sense.]

One never ceases to be astonished by the egoism, vanity,¹ and “self-sufficiency” of the majority. There are some for whom their little personality constitutes the whole universe. The vices and illusions of lower minds are typical of egotistical mediocrities.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN – II) XI p. 252.

After all, critics who judge only by appearance are not altogether wrong. There is Theosophy and Theosophy: the true Theosophy of the *Theosophist*, and the Theosophy of a Fellow of the Society of that name. What does the world know of true Theosophy? How can it distinguish between that of a Plotinus, and that of the false brothers? And of the latter the Society possesses more than its share. The egoism, vanity and self-sufficiency of the majority of mortals is incredible. There are some for whom their little *personality* constitutes the whole universe, beyond which there is no salvation. Suggest to one of these that the alpha and omega of wisdom are not limited by the circumference of his or her brain, that his judgment is not quite equal to that of Solomon, and straightaway he accuses you of *anti*-Theosophy. You have been guilty of blasphemy against the Spirit, which will not be pardoned in this century, nor in the next. These people say, “I am Theosophy,” as Louis XIV said, “I am the State.” They speak of fraternity and of altruism and only care in reality for that which cares for no one else — themselves, in other words their little “me.” Their egoism makes them fancy that it is they alone who represent the temple of Theosophy, and that in proclaiming themselves to the world, they are proclaiming Theosophy. Alas! The doors and windows of that “temple” are no better than so many channels through which enter, but very seldom depart, the vices and illusions characteristic of egotistical mediocrities.

Overfed by the sweet delicacies of ambition and personal life, man accumulates gravitas. Kipling says that he is gathering “too much ego in his cosmos.”² His “little personality constitutes the whole universe,”³ says Blavatsky.

¹ [Cf. Vanity, according to the ordinary use of the word, is something reprehensible. Yet Vanity. examination shows it to be on the side of Attraction and so of virtue. Popular usage recognises one form at least as “innocent or childlike and amiable vanity.” Like Curiosity it seems to be a double desire, the desire of the desire for union, the desire of Love, the desire to love and be loved, to like and be liked, to praise and be praised, to please and be pleased. The physical consequence is self-adornment; otherwise, too, the laying out of oneself to please, in endless ways. That it has come to acquire an evil association is due to two causes. Even in the above good sense, Vanity would be an object of contempt to jivas in whose constitution Unlovingness, Hardness, Reserve, and “separateness” generally, were strong. Again, the word is used in a different sense altogether, as the nominal derivative of the adjective “vain”; then it means Self-Complacency, Self-Satisfaction, and becomes only a modification of Pride, which is a very different Emotion altogether.

Perhaps the reason why the two so different senses have come to be combined in one and the same word is that attention has exaggeratedly confined to this aspect of the true Emotion, *viz.*, the consciousness of the ability to please (and so far, of a certain power, a superiority), which is always present in Vanity together with the desire to please, though the consciousness may be of an ability varying from the lowest to the highest grades. This consciousness of *ability* is present in Self-Complacency also; but there it is not an ability to *please* others at all, there being no desire to please; and this makes all the difference. Vanity plus consciousness of something which takes away from the feeling of ability is Shame.

— Bhagavan Das, *The Science of the Emotions*. Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1900 (1st ed.). A searchable PDF of the 2nd ed. of 1908 can be found in our Constitution of Man Series. The above excerpt is from the 3rd ed. of 1924, pp. 220-21. — ED. PHIL.]

² Cf. Rudyard Kipling: *Life's Handicap*, “Bertran and Bimi”

³ Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN, II) XI p. 252

The higher the Cosmic Evolution — which, in obedience to the Ideation of the Universal Mind, brings into existence all states of being in the manifested Solar System — the more it tends towards Unity, which is the ultimate possibility of Nature.

Every veil of illusion that creates a sense of personal isolation, a feeling of separateness from All, must be torn asunder; and those who, through vanity and selfishness, go against the Divine Plan, cannot but incur the punishment of total annihilation.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (IS THE DESIRE TO “LIVE” SELFISH?) VI pp. 242-44.

In short, an absolutely selfish individual is one who cares for himself and none else, or, in other words, one who is so strongly imbued with a sense of importance of his own personality that to him it is the acme of all his thoughts, desires and aspirations and beyond that all is a perfect blank. Now, can an occultist be then said to be “selfish” when he desires *to live* in the sense in which that word is used by the writer of the article on “The Elixir of Life”?¹ It has been said over and over again that the ultimate end of every aspirant after occult knowledge is *Nirvana* or *Mukti*, when the individual, freed from all *Māyāvic Upādhi*, becomes one with *Paramātma*, or the Son identifies himself with the Father in Christian phraseology. For that purpose, every veil of illusion which creates a sense of personal isolation, a feeling of separateness from THE ALL, must be torn asunder, or, in other words, the aspirant must gradually discard all sense of selfishness with which we are all more or less affected. A study of the Law of Cosmic Evolution teaches us that the higher the evolution, the more does it tend towards Unity. In fact, Unity is the ultimate possibility of Nature, and those who through vanity and selfishness go against her purposes, cannot but incur the punishment of total annihilation. The Occultist thus recognises that unselfishness and a feeling of universal philanthropy are the inherent law of our being, and all he does is to attempt to destroy the chains of selfishness forged upon us all by *Māyā*. The struggle then between Good and Evil, God and Satan, *Suras and Asuras, Devas and Daityas*, which is mentioned in the sacred books of all the nations and races, symbolizes the battle between unselfish and the selfish impulses, which takes place in a man, who tries to follow the higher purposes of Nature, until the lower animal tendencies, created by selfishness, are completely conquered, and the enemy thoroughly routed and annihilated.

¹ [See Appendix about the author of this article, pp. 62-64. — ED. PHIL.]

Life on earth¹ is the result and consequence of that unseen, yet ever present autocrat and despot, called Selfishness and Egotism. The strongest will becomes impotent before the voice and authority of this self-appointed commander.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER) VIII p. 139.

On Civilized Life. — Crowded, noisy and full of vital power, is modern Society to the eye of matter; but there is no more still and silent, empty and dreary desert than that same Society to the spiritual eye of the Seer. Its right hand freely and lavishly bestows ephemeral but costly pleasures, while the left grasps greedily the leavings and often grudges the necessities of show. All our social life is the result and consequence of that unseen, yet ever present autocrat and despot, called *Selfishness* and *Egotism*. The strongest will becomes impotent before the voice and authority of *Self*.

Selfish is the life of a hermit, useless to all, and as useless to himself.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WORLD-IMPROVEMENT OR WORLD-DELIVERANCE) XI pp. 346-49. Annotations by H.P. Blavatsky, in her capacity of Editor to *Lucifer*, to a letter from Wilhelm Hübbers-Schleiden. The full text of this article can be found under the title "Buddhism in action is unconditional compassion, wise and merciful," in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.

Now what did our Lord, the Buddha, do and how did He live? He did not in any way try to *improve* the *world*; he did not strive to realise socialistic problems, to solve the labour question or to better the *worldly* affairs of the poor, nor the rich either; he did not meddle with science, he did not teach cosmology and such like;² quite on the contrary; he lived in the most *unworldly* manner, he begged for his food and taught his disciples to do the same; he left, and taught his disciples to leave, all worldly life and affairs, to give up their families and to remain homeless, like he did and like he lived himself.³

¹ [Cf. "Truly is life on earth like a day passed in a deep valley surrounded on all sides by high mountains and with a cloudy, stormy sky above our heads. The tall hills conceal from us every horizon, and the dark clouds hide the sun. It is only at the close of the stormy day, that the sunshine, breaking through the clefts of the rocks affords us its glorious light to enable us to catch occasional glimpses of things around, behind and before us." *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FACTS AND IDEATION) VI p. 349]

² *Mālunkya Sutta*, in Spence Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 375. *Samyutta Nikāya* at the end of the work (Vol. iii of "Phayre MS."; also *Cullavagga*, IX, 1, 4). [H.P. Blavatsky]

³ Quite right again. But to live "like he lived himself" one has to remain *as an ascetic* among the multitudes, or the *world*, for 45 years. This argument therefore, goes directly against our correspondent's main idea. That against which we protested in the criticized article was not the *ascetic life*, i.e., the life of one entirely divorced, morally and mentally, from the world, the ever-changing *māyā*, with its false deceptive pleasures, but the life of a *hermit*, useless to all and as useless to himself, in the long run; at any rate *entirely selfish*. We believe we rightly understand our learned critic in saying that the point of his letter lies in the appeal to the teaching and practice of the Lord Gautama Buddha in support of withdrawal and isolation from the world, as contrasted with an opposite course of conduct. And here is where his mistake lies, and he opens himself to a severer and more just criticism than that he would inflict on us.

The Lord Gautama was never a *hermit*, save during the first six years of his ascetic life, the time it took him to enter fully "on the Path." In the "Supplementary account of the three religions" (*San-Kiea-Yi-su*) it is stated that in the *seventh* year of his exercises of abstinence and solitary meditation, Buddha thought, "I had better eat, lest the heretics should say that Nirvāna is attained in famishing the body." Then he ate, sat for his transformation for six more days and on the seventh day of the second month obtained his first *Samadhi*. Then, having "attained the perfect view of the highest truth," he arose and went to Benares where he delivered his first discourses. From that time forward for nearly half a century, he *remained in the world*, teaching the world salvation. His first disciples were nearly all Upāsakas (lay brothers), the neophytes being permitted to continue in their positions in social life and not even required to join the monastic community. And those who did, were generally sent by the Master to travel and proselytize, instructing in the doctrine of the four miseries all those with whom they met. [H.P. Blavatsky]

Against this cannot be brought forward, that these are only the teachings of the Hinayana system and that perhaps the Mahāyāna of the Northern Buddhists is the only right one; for this latter lays even more stress than the former on the *self-improvement* and continued *retirement* from the world of the bhikshu, *until* he has reached the perfection of a Buddha. True, the Mahāyāna system says that not *every* Arahāt has already attained highest perfection; it distinguishes Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Bodhisattvas, of whom the latter only are considered the true spiritual sons of the Buddha, who are to be Buddhas themselves in their final future life and who have already realised the highest state of ecstasy, the Bodhi state, which is next to Nirvana.

Mahayana Buddhism not only condemns self-torture and selfish retreat in the jungle, simply for one's own salvation, it pleads renunciation of Nirvana for the sake of the fellow man.

Until a bhikshu or arhat has sufficiently progressed in perfection and wisdom, “playing at”¹ Buddha and fixing himself up as an example, or as a teacher to the world, is likely not only to throw him entirely off his path, but also to cause annoyance to those who *are* truly qualified for such work and who *are* fit to serve as ideal examples for others. None of us is a Buddha, and I do not know which of us might be a Bodhisattva; not everyone *can* be one, and not everyone was by the Buddha himself expected to *become* one, as is clearly and repeatedly expressed in the *Saddharma Pundarika*, the principal Mahāyāna work.² Nevertheless, [348] admitting for argu-

¹ [imitating]

² Our correspondent is too well read in Buddhist *Sutras* not to be aware of the existence of the esoteric system taught *precisely* in the *Yogāchāra* or the contemplative Mahāyāna schools. And in that system the hermit or yogi life, except for a few years of preliminary teaching, *is strongly objected to* and called SELFISHNESS. Witness Buddha in those superb pages of *Light of Asia* (Book the Fifth) when arguing with and reprimanding the self-torturing Yogis, whom, “sadly eyeing,” the Lord asks:

... Wherefore add ye ills to life
Which is so evil?

When told in answer that they stake brief agonies to gain the larger joys of Nirvana, what does He say? This:

Yet if they last
A myriad years . . . they fade at length,
Those joys . . . Speak! Do your Gods endure
For ever, brothers?
“Nay,” the Yogis said,
“Only great Brahm endures; the Gods but live.”

Now if our correspondent understood as he should, these lines rendered in blank verse, yet word for word as in the *Sutras*, he would have a better idea of the esoteric teaching than he now has; and, having understood it, he would not oppose what we said; for not only was self-torture, selfish solitude, and life in the jungle simply for one's own salvation condemned in the *Mahāyāna* (in the real esoteric system, not the mutilated translations he reads) but even *renunciation of Nirvana for the sake of mankind* is preached therein. One of its fundamental laws is, that ordinary morality is insufficient to deliver one from rebirth; one has to practice the six Pāramitās or cardinal virtues for it: 1. Charity. 2. Chastity. 3. Patience. 4. Industry. 5. Meditation. 6. Ingenuousness (or openness of heart, sincerity). [From *The Voice of the Silence*, frag. III, vs. 200-14, pp. 36-48. Full text in our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series. — ED. PHIL.]

And how can a *hermit* practice charity or industry if he runs away from man? Bodhisattvas, who, having fulfilled all the conditions of Buddhahood, have the right to forthwith enter Nirvana, prefer instead, out of unlimited pity for the suffering ignorant world, to renounce this state of bliss and become *Nirmānakāyas*. They don the *Sambhogakāya* (the invisible body) in order to serve mankind, *i.e.*, to *live a sentient life after death* and suffer immensely at the sight of human miseries (most of which, being Karmic, they are not at liberty to relieve) for the sake of having a chance of inspiring a few with the desire of learning the truth and thus saving themselves. (By the by, all that Schlagintweit and others have written about the Nirmānakāya body is erroneous.) Such is the true meaning of the Mahāyāna teaching. “I believe that not all the Buddhas enter Nirvana,” says, among other things, the disciple of the Mahāyāna school in his address to “the Buddhas (or Bodhisattvas) of confession” — referring to this secret teaching. [H.P. Blavatsky]

ment's sake, that we were somehow fit to serve as specimen sages for "the world" and to improve "humanity" — now what *can* and what *ought* we to do then?

The monstrous doctrine of remaining indifferent to the woes and miseries of mankind and to forsake those who cry for help, is outrageously selfish and cruel. It is neither Buddhistic, nor Christian, nor Theosophical, but the nightmare of a doctrine of the worst schools of Pessimism.

We certainly can have nothing to do with humanity in the sense of the "world," nothing with *worldly affairs* and *their* improvement. What else should we do, than to be «*profondément indifférents*» to them, to «*fuir et désert*er» them? Is not this "army" which we are deserting, just that "humanity" which the *Dhammapada* rightly terms "the fools"; [349] and is it not just that "worldly life" which our Lord taught us to quit? What else should we strive at then but to take "refuge against re-incarnation," refuge with the Buddha, his dharma and his sangha!¹

"Self-culture" is for the solitary Hatha Yogis who shun the society of their fellow men. Pampering the animal self is triply distilled selfishness.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, ["ORIGINAL PROGRAMME" MANUSCRIPT] VII p. 160-61.

"Theosophy teaches *self-culture* and not control," we are told.

Theosophy teaches *mutual-culture* before *self-culture* to *begin* with. Union is strength. It is by gathering many theosophists of the same way of thinking into one or more groups, and making them closely united by the same magnetic bond of fraternal unity and sympathy that the objects of *mutual* development and progress in Theosophical thought may be best achieved. "Self-culture" is for isolated *Hatha Yogis*, independent of any Society and having to avoid association with human beings; and this is a *triply distilled* SELFISHNESS. For real moral advancement — there "where two or three are gathered" in the name of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH — there that Spirit of Theosophy *will be in the midst of them*.

¹ The quotation with which our correspondent heads his letter *does not* bear the interpretation he puts upon it. No one acquainted with the spirit of the metaphors used in Buddhist philosophy would read it as Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden does. The man advised to walk "like a king who has left his conquered country behind," implies that he who has conquered his passions and for whom worldly *māyā* exists no longer, need not lose his time in trying to convert those who will not believe in him, but had better leave them alone to their Karma; but it certainly does not mean that they are fools intellectually. Nor does it imply that the disciples should leave the world; "Our Lord" taught us as much as "the Lord Jesus" did, the "Lord Krishna" and other "Lords" all "Sons of God" — to quit the "worldly" life, not *men*, least of all suffering, ignorant Humanity. But surely neither, the Lord Gautama Buddha less than any one of the above enumerated, would have taught us the monstrous and selfish doctrine of remaining «*profondément indifférents*» to the woes and miseries of mankind, or to *desert* those who cry daily and hourly for help to us, more favoured than they. This is an outrageously selfish and cruel system of life, by whomsoever adopted! It is neither Buddhistic, nor Christian, nor theosophical, but the nightmare of a doctrine of the worst schools of Pessimism, such as would be probably discountenanced by Schopenhauer and von Hartmann themselves!

Our critic sees in the "army" of Humanity — those "fools" that the *Dhammapada* alludes to. We are sorry to find him calling himself *names*, as we suppose he still belongs to Humanity, whether he likes it or not. And if he tells us in the exuberance of his modesty that he is quite prepared to fall under the flattering category, then we answer that no true Buddhist ought, agreeably to the Dhammapadic injunctions, to accept "companionship" with him. This does not promise him a very brilliant future with "the Buddha, his dharma and his sangha." To call the whole of Humanity "fools" is a risky thing, anyhow; to treat as such that portion of mankind which groans and suffers under the burden of its national and individual Karma, and refuse it, under this pretext, help and sympathy — is positively revolting. He who does not say with the Master: "Mercy alone opens the gate to save the whole race of mankind" is unworthy of that Master. [H.P. Blavatsky]

The Hindu Yogi, who isolates himself in an impenetrable forest, and the Christian hermit who retires to the desert, are both accomplished egoists. The one seeks refuge in Nirvana, the other to save his soul from hell.

The light and spirit of Divinity are the wings of the soul.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN) XI p. 254.

The light and spirit of the Divinity are the wings of the soul. They raise it to communion with the gods, above this earth, with which the spirit of man is too ready to soil itself . . . To become like the gods, is to become holy, just and wise. That is the end for which man was created, and that ought to be his aim in the acquisition of knowledge. — PLATO¹

This is true Theosophy, inner Theosophy, that of the soul. But, followed with a selfish aim, Theosophy changes its nature and becomes *demonosophy*. That is why Oriental Wisdom teaches us that the Hindu *Yogi* who isolates himself in an impenetrable forest, like the Christian hermit who, as was common in former times, retires to the desert, are both of them but accomplished egoists. The one acts with the sole idea of finding in the One essence of Nirvāna refuge against reincarnation; the other acts with the unique idea of saving his soul — both of them think only of themselves. Their motive is altogether personal; for, even supposing they attain their end, are they not like cowardly soldiers, who desert the regiment when it goes into action, in order to protect themselves from the bullets? In isolating themselves as they do, neither the *Yogi* nor the “saint” helps anyone but himself; on the contrary, both show themselves profoundly indifferent to the fate of mankind whom they fly from and desert.

Mount Athos is a monastic hideaway of the coarsest kind of Selfishness.

Mount Athos² contains, perhaps, a few sincere fanatics; nevertheless even these have unwittingly gotten off the only track that could lead them to the truth — the path of Calvary, on which each one voluntarily bears the cross of humanity, and for humanity. In reality it is a nest of the coarsest kind of selfishness; and it is to such places that Adams' remark on monasteries applies:

There are solitary creatures who seem to have fled from the rest of mankind for the sole pleasure of communing with the Devil *tête-à-tête*.

¹ *Phædrus*, 246 d-e.; *Theætetus*, 176 b.

² [A celebrated monastic community situated on the peninsula of the same name, which is the most eastern of the three promontories which extend, like the prongs of a trident, southwards from the coast of Macedonia into the Ægean Sea. It is also called *Hagion Oros*. The peak rises like a pyramid, with a steep summit of white marble, to a height of 6,350 feet. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

Evil prevails due to selfishness breeding separateness and strife.

Philosophical pantheism is based upon the correct understanding of the mysteries of *being*. Modern pessimism is yet another system of evil added by unhealthy fancy to an ever-growing sum of social evils, and a systematic slander of sentient life. Neither good nor evil would exist were it not for the light they throw upon each other.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE ORIGIN OF EVIL) VIII pp. 115-17.

Philosophical pantheism is very different from modern pessimism. The first is based upon the correct understanding of the mysteries of being; the latter is in reality only one more system of evil added by unhealthy fancy to the already large sum of real social evils. In sober truth it is no philosophy, but simply a systematic slander of life and being; the bilious utterances of a dyspeptic or an incurable hypochondriac. No parallel can ever be attempted between the two systems of thought.

Thus, philosophical pantheism is very different from modern pessimism. The first is based upon the correct understanding of the mysteries of being; the latter is in reality only one more system of evil added by unhealthy fancy to the already large sum of real social evils. In sober truth it is no philosophy, but simply a systematic slander of life and being; the bilious utterances of a dyspeptic or an incurable hypochondriac. No parallel can ever be attempted between the two systems of thought.

and consequence of the heterogeneity of the manifested universe. Still they are but an illusion produced by the law of contrasts, which, as described, is a fundamental law in nature. Neither good nor evil would exist were it not for the light they mutually throw on each other. *Being*, under whatever form, having been observed from the World's creation to offer these contrasts, and evil predominating in the universe owing to *Ego*-ship or selfishness, the rich Oriental metaphor has pointed to existence as expiating the mistake of nature; and the human soul (psyche), was henceforth regarded as the scapegoat and victim of *unconscious* OVER-SOUL. But it is not to Pessimism, but to Wisdom that it gave birth. Ignorance alone is the willing martyr, but knowledge is the master of natural Pessimism. Gradually, and by the process of heredity or *atavism*, the latter became innate in man. It is always present in us, howsoever latent and silent its voice in the beginning. Amid the early joys of existence, when we are still full of the vital energies of youth, we are yet apt, each of us, at the first pang of sorrow, after a failure, or at the sudden appearance of a black cloud, to accuse *life* of it; to feel *life* a burden, and often to curse our being. This shows pessimism in our blood, but at the same time the presence of the fruits of ignorance. As mankind multiplies, and with it suffering — which is the natural result of an increasing number of units that generate it — sorrow and pain are intensified. We live in an atmosphere of gloom and despair, but this is because our eyes are downcast and riveted to the earth, with all its physical and grossly material manifestations. If, instead of that, man proceeding on his life-journey looked — not heavenward, which is but a figure of speech — but *within himself* and centred his point of observation on the *inner* man, he would soon escape from the coils of the great serpent of illusion. From

the cradle to the grave, his life would then become supportable and worth living, even in its worst phases.

Pessimism — that chronic suspicion of lurking evil everywhere — is thus of a two-fold nature, and brings fruits of two kinds. It is a natural characteristic in physical man, and becomes a curse only to the ignorant. It is a boon to the spiritual; inasmuch as it makes the latter turn into the right path, and brings him to the discovery of another as fundamental a truth; namely, that all in this world is only *preparatory* because transitory. It is like a chink in the dark prison walls of earth-life, through which breaks in a ray of light from the eternal home, which, illuminating the *inner* senses, whispers to the prisoner in his shell of clay of the origin and the dual mystery of our being. At the same time, it is a tacit proof of the presence in man of that *which knows, without being told, viz.:* — that there is another and a better life, once that the curse of earth-lives is lived through.

The bundle of Egotism disappears after death, as the costume of the part he played disappears from the actor's body after he leaves the theatre at the end of the play and goes to bed.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (THEORIES ABOUT REINCARNATION AND SPIRITS) VII p. 186.

All that bundle of *Egotism*, that apparent and evanescent “I,” disappears after death, as the costume of the part he played disappears from the actor's body, after he leaves the theatre and goes to bed. That actor re-becomes at once the same “John Smith” or Gray, he was from his birth and is no longer the Othello or Hamlet that he had represented for a few hours. Nothing remains now of that “bundle” to go to the next incarnation, except *the seed for future Karma* that *Manas* may have united to its immortal group, to form with it — the disembodied *Higher Self* in “Devachan.” As to the four lower principles, that which becomes of them is found in most classics, from which we mean to quote at length for our defence. The doctrine of the *périsprit*, the “false personality,” or the remains of the deceased under their astral form — fading out to disappear in time, is terribly distasteful to the spiritualists, who insist upon confusing the temporary with the immortal EGO.



Fie on that virtue which prudence alone directs!

The slightest tinge of Selfishness precludes the employment of Spiritual Forces. For, unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it.

The powers and forces of animal nature can equally be used by the selfish and revengeful, as by the unselfish and the all-forgiving. But the powers and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the pure in heart — and this is Divine Magic.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (PRACTICAL OCCULTISM) IX pp. 156-57.

Occultism is not magic. It is *comparatively* easy to learn the trick of spells and the methods of using the subtler, but still material, forces of physical nature; the powers of the animal soul in man are soon awakened; the forces which his love, his hate, his passion, can call into operation, are readily developed. But this is Black Magic — *Sorcery*. For it is the motive, *and the motive alone*, which makes any exercise of power become black, malignant, or white, beneficent Magic. It is impossible to employ *spiritual* forces if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. For, unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it. The powers and forces of animal nature can equally be used by the selfish and revengeful, as by the unselfish and the all-forgiving; the powers and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the perfectly pure in heart — and this is DIVINE MAGIC.

Selfishness is a human building, whose windows and doors are wide open for every kind of iniquity to enter into man's soul. It is Selfishness that corrupts and degrades his soul by prompting him to abuse his knowledge and power.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (THE SECRECY OF INITIATES) XIV pp. 40-42.

Nothing whatever most certainly, if those mysteries had been given from the first. And so it was with regard to the first, semi-divine, pure and spiritual Races of Humanity. They had the “truths of God,” and lived up to them, and their ideals. They preserved them, so long as there was hardly any evil, and hence scarcely a possible abuse of that knowledge and those truths. But evolution and the gradual fall into materiality is also one of the “truths” and also one of the laws of “God.” And as mankind progressed, and became with every generation more of the earth, earthly, the individuality of each temporary Ego began to assert itself. It is personal selfishness that develops and urges man on to abuse of his knowledge and power. And selfishness is a human building, whose windows and doors are ever wide open for every

kind of iniquity to enter into man's soul. Few were the men during the early adolescence of mankind, and fewer still are they now, who feel disposed to put into practice Pope's forcible declaration that he would tear out his own heart, if it had no better disposition than to love only himself, and laugh at all his neighbours. Hence the necessity of gradually taking away from man the divine knowledge and power, which became with every new human cycle more dangerous as a double-edged weapon, whose evil side was ever threatening one's neighbour, and whose power for good was lavished freely only upon self. Those few "elect" whose inner natures had remained unaffected by their outward physical growth, thus became in time the sole guardians of the mysteries revealed, passing the knowledge to those most fit to receive it, and keeping it inaccessible to others. Reject this explanation from the Secret Teachings, and the very name of Religion will become synonymous with deception and fraud.

Yet the masses could not be allowed to remain without some sort of moral restraint. Man is ever craving for a "beyond" and cannot live without an ideal of some kind, as a beacon and a consolation. At the same time, no average man, even in our age of universal education, could be entrusted with truths too metaphysical, too subtle for his mind to comprehend, without the danger of an imminent reaction setting in, and faith in Gods and Saints making room for an unscientific blank Atheism. No real philanthropist, hence no Occultist, would dream for a moment of a mankind without one tittle of Religion. Even the modern day Religion in Europe, confined to Sundays, is better than none. But if, as Bunyan¹ put it, "Religion is the best armour that a man can have," it certainly is the "worst cloak"; and it is that "cloak" and false pretence which the Occultists and the Theosophists fight against. The true ideal Deity, the one living God in Nature, can never suffer in man's worship if that outward cloak, woven by man's fancy, and thrown upon the Deity by the crafty hand of the priest greedy of power and domination, is drawn aside. The hour has struck with the commencement of this century to dethrone the "highest God" of every nation in favour of One Universal Deity, the God of Immutable Law, not charity; the God of Just Retribution, not mercy, which is merely an incentive to evil-doing and to a repetition of it.

¹ [See Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia*, #4011]

The greatest crime that was ever perpetrated upon mankind was committed on that day when the first priest invented the first prayer with a selfish object in view.¹

Prayer is an ennobling action when it is an intense feeling, an ardent desire rushing forth from our very heart for the good of other people, and when entirely detached from any selfish personal object; the craving for “the wilds beyond the heavens” is natural and holy in man, but on the condition of sharing that bliss with others.

The greatest crime that was ever perpetrated upon mankind was committed on that day when the first priest invented the first prayer with a selfish object in view. A God who may be propitiated by iniquitous prayers to “bless the arms” of the worshipper, and send defeat and death to thousands of his enemies — his brethren; a Deity that can be supposed not to turn a deaf ear to chants of laudation mixed with entreaties for a “fair propitious wind” for self, and as naturally disastrous to the selves of other navigators who come from an opposite direction — it is this idea of God that has fostered selfishness in man, and deprived him of his self-reliance. Prayer is an ennobling action when it is an intense feeling, an ardent desire rushing forth from our very heart, for the good of other people, and when entirely detached from any selfish personal object; the craving for a beyond is natural and holy in man, but on the condition of sharing that bliss with others.

The heart of the purely selfish man, who cares not if all others rot so he can have pleasure in their pain, is softened for those near and dear to him — his family, relatives, and friends.

His affections may even extend to religious fanaticism and even patriotic fervour in his country’s wars and political schemes, in the hope of recognition and reward.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE) XI p. 149.

From daily life we may take examples which clearly show forth the evolution of this god-like quality. We see the purely selfish man, who cares not if all rot so he [can] have pleasure; the same man married, and an area of generosity developed, but bounded by wife and children; in other cases, the area increased by the extension of sympathy to friends and relations; and still further increased in the case of the fanatic or bigot, religious or patriotic, who fights for sect or country, as the she-animal for her cubs, whether the cause be good or bad. And here we may mention the instruments of national passions and cunning, necessary evils; for the race being in its youth, and very animal-like, not yet recognizing the right of self-sacrifice in the interrelations of its constituent sub-races, requires the individual who serves his country in her wars and political schemes to reduce his moral standard to the race-level.

¹ [Consult “True prayer and vain prayer,” in our Confusing Words Series, “Prayer is mental utterance in secret,” in our Down to Earth Series, “The prayer of the true philosopher is his adoration,” in our Living the Life Series, and “Alexander Pope’s Universal Prayer” and “Chaitanya’s devotional prayer,” in our Mystic Verse and Insights Series. — ED. PHIL.]

These are types of the evolution of the animal man's affections, either in his individual development or modified by the development of the race. In most cases such types represent the mere expansion of selfishness or, at any rate, may be traced to selfish causes, or the hope of reward. Ascending, however, in the scale of manhood, we come to those who shadow forth the latent God in man in thoughts, words, and deeds of divine self-sacrifice; the prerogative of their God-head first manifesting in acts of real charity, in pity of their suffering fellow-kind, or from an intuitional feeling of duty, the first heralding of accession to divine responsibility, and the realization of the unity of all souls. "I am my brother's keeper," is the cry of repentant Cain, and the divine summons of return to the lost Paradise. With this cry the struggle for animal existence begins to yield to the struggle for divine existence. By extending our love to all men, aye, to animals as well, we joy and sorrow with them, and expand our souls towards the One that ever both sorrows and joys with all, in an eternal bliss in which the pleasure of joy and the pain of sorrow are not.

However sincere and ardent the faith of a theist, unless, while conforming his life to what he pleases to term "divine laws," he gives precedence in his thoughts, first to the benefit that accrues from such a moral course of actions to his brother, and then only thinks of himself — he will remain a pious egotist. For belief in and fear of God will develop and grow in exact proportion to his Selfishness, his fear of punishment and bad results only for himself, without the least concern for his brother.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A FEW THOUGHTS ON SOME WISE WORDS FROM A WISE MAN) IV pp. 497-98. The full text of this article can be found under the title "Godless Buddhism is philosophical agnosticism," in our Living the Life Series.]

We admit and recognize fully that it is the duty of every honest man to try to bring round by "argument and gentle persuasion" every man who errs with respect to the "essentials" of Universal ethics, and the usually recognized standard of morality. But the latter is the common property of *all* religions, as of *all* the honest men, irrespective of their beliefs. The principles of the true moral code, tried by the standard of right and justice, are recognized as fully, and followed just as much by the honest atheist as by the honest theist, religion and piety having, as can be proved by statistics, very little to do with the repression of vice and crime. A broad line has to be drawn between the external practice of one's moral and social duties, and that of the real intrinsic virtue practised but for its own sake. Genuine morality does not rest with the profession of any particular creed or faith, least of all with belief in gods or a God; but it rather depends upon the degree of our own individual perceptions of its direct bearing upon human happiness in general, hence — upon our own personal weal. But even this is surely not all.

Fie on that virtue which prudence alone directs!

- "So long as man is taught and allowed to believe that he must be just, that the strong hand of law may not punish him, or his neighbour take his revenge";
- That he must be enduring because complaint is useless and weakness can only bring contempt;

- That he must be temperate, that *his* health may keep good and all his appetites retain their acuteness;
- And, he is told that, if he serves *his* right, his friends may serve him, if he defends his country, he defends himself, and that by serving his God he prepares for himself an eternal life of happiness hereafter

— so long, we say, as he acts on such principles, virtue is *no virtue*, but verily the culmination of SELFISHNESS.¹ However sincere and ardent the faith of a theist, unless, while conforming his life to what he pleases to term *divine* laws, he gives precedence in his thoughts, first to the benefit that accrues from such a moral course of actions *to his brother*, and then only thinks of himself — he will remain at best — a pious egotist; and we do claim that belief in, and fear of God in man, is chiefly based upon, develops and grows in exact proportion to his selfishness, his fear of punishment and bad results only for himself, without the least concern for his brother.

We see daily that the theist, although defining morality as the conformity of human actions to *divine* laws, is not a little more moral than the average atheist or infidel who regards a moral life simply the duty of every honest right-thinking man without giving a thought to any reward for it in after-life. The apparently discrepant fact that one who disbelieves in his survival after death should, nevertheless, frame in most cases his life in accordance with the highest rules of morality, is not as abnormal as it seems at first. The atheist, knowing of but one existence, is anxious to leave the memory of his life as unsullied as possible in the after-remembrances of his family and posterity, and *in honour even with those yet unborn*. In the words of the Greek Stoic:

. . . thought all our fellow men were swept away, and not a mortal *nor immortal* eye were left to approve or condemn, should we not here, within our breast, have a judge to dread, and a friend to conciliate?”²

Theism and atheism grow and develop together our reasoning powers, and become either fortified or weakened by reflection or deduction of evidence.

No more than theism is atheism congenite with man. Both grow and develop in him together with his reasoning powers, and become either fortified or weakened by reflection and deduction of evidence from facts. In short both are entirely due to the degree of his emotional nature, and man is no more responsible for being an atheist than he is for becoming a theist. Both terms are entirely misunderstood.

¹ [Cf. *A Few Days in Athens*, being the translation of a Greek Manuscript discovered in Herculaneum, by Frances Wright. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, 1822; pp. 70-71. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Quoting Cleanthes from *A Few Days in Athens*, *ibid.*, p. 71. Wright’s translation into English runs as follows: “Thought though all my fellow men were swept away, and not a mortal nor immortal eye were left to approve or condemn — should I not here — within this breast, have a judge to dread, and a friend to conciliate?” — ED. PHIL.]

The only God which Theosophists worship is Truth.

The only devil they recognize and which they fight with unabated fury is the Satan of Egotism and unbridled passions.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (MISCONCEPTIONS – L) VIII p. 80.

Theosophists see in the priest of any religion a useless if not a pernicious being. They preach against every dogmatic and infallible religion and recognize no other deity, which dispenses suffering and recompense, than *Karma*, an arbiter created by their own actions. The only God which they worship is TRUTH; the only devil which they recognize and which they fight against with unabated fury is the Satan of egotism and human passions.



Alone our Western religion stands in its isolation, as a monument of the most gigantic human selfishness ever evolved by human brain, without one word in favour of, or for the protection of, the poor animal.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WHY DO ANIMALS SUFFER?) IX pp. 287-88.

Every philosophical Eastern system, every religion and sect in antiquity — the Brāhmanical, Egyptian, Chinese and finally, the purest as the noblest of all the existing systems of ethics, Buddhism — inculcates kindness and protection to every living creature, from animal and bird down to the creeping thing and even the reptile. Alone, our Western religion stands in its isolation, as a monument of the most gigantic *human* selfishness ever evolved by human brain, without one word in favour of, or for the protection of the poor animal. Quite the reverse. For theology, underlining a sentence in the Jehovistic chapter of “Creation,” interprets it as a proof that animals, as all the rest, were created for man! *Ergo* — sport has become one of the *noblest* amusements of the upper ten.¹ Hence — poor innocent birds wounded, tortured and killed every autumn by the million, all over the Christian countries, for man’s recreation. Hence also, unkindness, often cold-blooded cruelty, during the youth of horse and bullock, brutal indifference to its fate when age has rendered it unfit for work, and ingratitude after years of hard labour for, and in the service of man. In whatever country the European steps in, there begins the slaughter of the animals and their useless decimation.

Neither Christianity nor the Christian layman is to be blamed for it. It is the pernicious system of theology, spanning over centuries of theocracy, and the ferocious, ever-increasing selfishness in the West.

“Has the prisoner ever killed *for his pleasure* animals?” inquired a Buddhist Judge at a border town in China, *infected* with pious European Churchmen and missionaries, of a man accused of having murdered his sister. And having been answered in the affirmative, as the prisoner had been a servant in the employ of a Russian colonel, “a mighty hunter before the Lord,” the Judge had no need of any other evidence and the murderer was found “guilty” — justly, as his subsequent confession proved.

Is Christianity or even the Christian layman to be blamed for it? Neither. It is the pernicious system of theology, long centuries of theocracy, and the ferocious, ever-increasing selfishness in the Western civilized countries. What *can* we do?²

¹ [Or “Upper ten thousand,” a phrase coined in 1852 by American poet Nathaniel Parker Willis to describe the upper circles of New York, and hence of other major cities. In 1875, both Adam Bissett Thom and Kelly’s Directory published books entitled *The Upper Ten Thousand*, which listed members of the aristocracy, the gentry, officers in the British Army and Navy, members of Parliament, Colonial administrators, and members of the Church of England. The usage of this term was a response to the broadening of the British ruling class which had been caused by the Industrial Revolution. — *Wikipedia*.]

² [Consult “Plutarch on whether water or land animals are the most crafty,” “Plutarch on why eating animals is repulsive,” “Western religion alone is to blame for the cruelty to animals,” and “Why do animals suffer?,” in our Down to Earth Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Selfishness, envy, revenge, and malice are the hallmarks of sorcerers.

The Roman Catholic “fathers” and clergy, particularly when pursuing their selfish objectives collectively, they have to be ranked among the adepts of the Black Art.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (PRELIMINARY SURVEY) XIV pp. 28-33.

There exists in the world another class of adepts, belonging to a brotherhood also, and mightier than any other of those known to the profane. Many among these are personally good and benevolent, even pure and holy occasionally, as individuals. Pursuing collectively, however, and as a body, a selfish, one-sided object, with relentless vigour and determination, they have to be ranked with the adepts of the Black Art. These are our modern Roman Catholic “fathers” and clergy. Most of the hieratic writings and symbols have been deciphered by them since the Middle Ages. A hundred times more learned in secret Symbology and the old Religions than our Orientalists will ever be, the personification of astuteness and cleverness, every such adept in the art holds the keys tightly in his firmly clenched hand, and will take care the secret shall not be easily divulged, if he can help it. There are more profoundly learned Kabbalists in Rome and throughout Europe and America, than is generally suspected. Thus are the professedly public “brotherhoods” of “black” adepts more powerful and dangerous for Protestant countries than any host of Eastern Occultists. People laugh at Magic! Men of Science, Physiologists and Biologists, deride the potency and even the belief in the existence of what is called in vulgar parlance “Sorcery” and “Black Magic.”

In the crypts of the cyclopean Stonehenge in England, and its twin-brother Carnac of Brittany, curious scenes are taking place whenever there is a new convert in view.

The archæologists have their Stonehenge in England with its thousands of secrets, and its twin-brother Carnac of Brittany, and yet there is not one of them who even suspects what has been going on in its crypts, and its mysterious nooks and corners, for the last century. More than that, they do not even know of the existence of such “magic halls” in their Stonehenge, where curious scenes are taking place, whenever there is a new convert in view. Hundreds of experiments have been, and are being made daily at the Salpêtrière,¹ and also by learned hypnotisers at their private houses. It is now proved that certain sensitives — both men and women — when commanded in trance, by the practitioner, who operates on them, to do a certain thing — from drinking a glass of water up to simulated murder — on recovering their normal state lose all remembrance of the order inspired — “suggested” it is now called by Science. Nevertheless, at the appointed hour and moment, the subject, though conscious and perfectly awake, is compelled by an irresistible power within himself to do that action which has been suggested to him by his mesmeriser; and that too, whatever it may be, and whatever the period fixed by him who controls the subject, that is to say, holds the latter under the power of his will, as a snake holds a bird under its fascination, and finally forces it to jump into its open jaws. Worse than this: for the

¹ [Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital, the celebrated University Hospital in the 13th arrondissement of Paris.]

bird is conscious of the peril; it resists, however helpless in its final efforts, while the hypnotized subject does not rebel, but seems to follow the suggestions and voice of its own free will and soul. Who of our European men of Science, who believe in such *scientific* experiments — and very few are they who still doubt them now-a-days, and who do not feel convinced of their actual reality — who of them, it is asked, is ready to admit this as being Black Magic? Yet it is the *genuine*, undeniable and actual *fascination* and *sorcery* of old. The Mūla-Kurumba of Nilgiri do not proceed otherwise in their *envoûtements*¹ when they seek to destroy an enemy, nor do the Dugpas of Sikkim and Bhūtān know of any more potential agent than their *will*. Only in them that will does not proceed by jumps and starts, but acts with certainty; it does not depend on the amount of receptivity or nervous impressibility of the “subject.” Having chosen his victim and placed himself *en rapport* with him, the Dugpa’s “fluid” is sure to find its way, for his will is immeasurably more strongly developed than the will of the European experimenter — the self-made, untutored, and *unconscious* Sorcerer for the sake of Science — who has no idea (or belief either) of the variety and potency of the world-old methods used to develop this power, by the *conscious* sorcerer, he “Black Magician” of the East and West.

Stupefying is the power of blind faith in, and veneration of, ecclesiastical teachings.

The conscience of the Roman Catholic priest is most likely at peace. He works personally for no selfish purpose, but with the object of “saving a soul” from “eternal damnation.” In his view, if Magic there be in it, it is holy, meritorious, and divine Magic.

And now the question is openly and squarely asked: Why should not the fanatical and zealous priest, thirsting to convert some selected rich and influential member of society, use the same means to accomplish his end as the French Physician and experimenter uses in his case with his subject? The conscience of the Roman Catholic priest is most likely at peace. He works *personally* for no selfish purpose, but with the object of “saving a soul” from “eternal damnation.” In his view, if Magic there be in it, it is holy, meritorious and divine Magic. Such is the power of blind faith.

Whenever those priest-hypnotists want to control an individual, selected by them for conversion, they retire to an underground place, consecrated by them for such purposes and there, forming a circle, throw their combined will-power in the direction of that individual. This is the kind of ceremonial Magic and sorcery practiced at Stonehenge and elsewhere.

Hence, when we are assured by trustworthy and respectable persons of high social standing, and unimpeachable character, that there are many well-organized societies among the Roman Catholic priests which, under the pretext and cover of Modern Spiritualism and mediumship, hold *séances* for the purposes of conversion by sug-

¹ [The magical practice of using an image or likeness of a person to influence his actions or destiny usually with malevolent intent.]

gestion, directly and at a distance — we answer: We know it. And when, moreover, we are told that whenever those priest-hypnotists are desirous of acquiring an influence over some individual or individuals, selected by them for conversion, they retire to an underground place, allotted and consecrated by them for such purposes (*viz.*, ceremonial Magic); and there, forming a circle, throw their combined will-power in the direction of that individual, and thus by repeating the process, gain a complete control over their victim — we again answer: Very likely. In fact we know the practice to be so, whether this kind of ceremonial Magic and *envoûtement* is practiced at Stonehenge or elsewhere. We know it, we say, through personal experience; and also because several of the writer's best and most loved friends have been unconsciously drawn into the Romish Church and under her "benign" protection by such means. And, therefore, we can only laugh in pity at the ignorance and stubbornness of those deluded men of Science and cultured experimentalists who, while believing in the power of Dr. Charcot and his disciples to "envoûte" their subjects, find nothing better than a scornful smile whenever Black Magic and its potency are mentioned before them. Éliphas Lévi, the Abbé-Kabbalist, died before Science and the Faculté de Médecine of France had accepted hypnotism and influence *par suggestion* among its scientific experiments, but this is what he said twenty-five years ago, in his *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, on "Les Envoûtements et les Sorts":

That which sorcerers and necromancers sought above all things in their evocations of the Spirit of Evil, was that magnetic potency which is the lawful property of the true Adept, and which they desired to obtain possession of for evil purposes . . . One of their chief aims was the power of spells or of deleterious influences . . . That power may be compared to real poisonings by a current of astral light. They exalt their will by means of ceremonies to the degree of rendering it venomous at a distance. . . . We have said in our "Dogma" what we thought of magic spells, and how this power was exceedingly real and dangerous. The true Magus throws a spell without ceremony and by his sole disapproval, upon those with whose conduct he is dissatisfied, and whom he thinks it necessary to punish;¹ he casts a spell, even by his pardon, over those who do him injury, and the enemies of Initiates never long enjoy impunity for their wrong-doing. We have ourselves seen proofs of this fatal law in numerous instances. The executioners of martyrs always perish miserably; and the Adepts are the martyrs of intelligence. Providence [Karma] seems to despise those who despise them, and puts to death those who would seek to prevent them from living. The legend of the Wandering Jew is the popular poetry of this arcanum. A people had sent a sage to crucifixion; that people had bidden him "Move on!" when he tried to rest for one moment. Well! that people will become subject, henceforth, to a similar condemnation; it will become entirely proscribed, and for long centuries it will be bidden "Move on! move on!" finding neither rest nor pity.²

¹ This is incorrectly expressed. The true Adept of the "Right Hand" never punishes anyone, not even his bitterest and most dangerous enemy; he simply leaves the latter to his Karma, and Karma never fails to do so, sooner or later.

² *op. cit.*, II 239, 241, 240 [Paris, G. Baillière, 1856 & 1861. H.P. Blavatsky's translation is from Chapter XVI of the early 2-vols. French editions. Later, in London, 1896, Arthur Edward Waite translated the 2-vols. under one

Before the lethal breath of Selfishness and Indifference, every uncomfortable fact is transformed into meaningless fiction, and every branch of the once verdant Tree of Truth has become dried up and stripped of its primeval spiritual significance.

The modern Symbologist is exceedingly clever only at detecting phallic worship and sexual emblems, even where none were ever meant. But for the true student of Occult Lore, White or Divine Magic could no more exist in Nature without its counterpart Black Magic, than day without night, whether these be of twelve hours or of six months' duration.

“Fables,” and “superstition,” will be the answer. Be it so. Before the lethal breath of selfishness and indifference every uncomfortable fact is transformed into meaningless fiction, and every branch of the once verdant Tree of Truth has become dried up and stripped of its primeval spiritual significance. Our modern Symbologist is superlatively clever only at detecting phallic worship and sexual emblems even where none were ever meant. But for the true student of Occult Lore, White or Divine Magic could no more exist in Nature without its counterpart Black Magic, than day without night, whether these be of twelve hours or of six months' duration. For him everything in that Nature has an occult — a bright and a night-side to it. Pyramids and Druid's oaks, dolmens and Bo-trees, plant and mineral — everything was full of deep significance and of sacred truths of wisdom, when the Arch-Druid performed his magic cures and incantations, and the Egyptian Hierophant evoked and guided Chemnu, the “lovely spectre,” the female Frankenstein-creation of old, raised for the torture and test of the soul-power of the candidate for initiation, simultaneously with the last agonizing cry of his terrestrial human nature. True, Magic has lost its name, and along with it its rights to recognition. But its practice is in daily use; and its progeny, “magnetic influence,” “power of oratory,” “irresistible fascination,” “whole audiences subdued and held as though under a spell,” are terms recognized and used by all, generally meaningless though they now are. Its effects, however, are more determined and definite among religious congregations such as the Shakers, the Negro Methodists, and Salvationists, who call it “the action of the Holy Spirit” and “grace.”

title: *Transcendental Magic, Its Doctrine and Ritual*. The above quotation may be found on p. 317 of Waite's edition, published in Chicago by The de Laurence Co. Inc., in 1946. For a complete bio-bibliographic sketch of Éliphas Lévi, (pseud. of Alphonse-Louis Constant) see *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. I, pp. 491-95. — *Dara Eklund*.]

Magic is still in full sway amidst mankind, however blind the latter to its silent presence and pernicious influence, however ignorant society may be of its beneficent and maleficent effects.

Most of those magicians are sorcerers by reason of their inherent selfishness, their revengeful natures, their envy, and malice.

The real truth is that Magic is still in full sway amidst mankind, however blind the latter to its silent presence and influence on its members, however ignorant society may be, and remain, to its daily and hourly beneficent and maleficent effects. The world is full of such unconscious magicians — in politics as well as in daily life, in the Church as in the strongholds of Free-Thought. Most of those magicians are “sorcerers” unhappily, not metaphorically but in sober reality, by reason of their inherent selfishness, their revengeful natures, their envy, and malice. The true student of Magic, well aware of the truth, looks on in pity, and, if he be wise, keeps silent. For every effort made by him to remove the universal cecity is only repaid with ingratitude, slander, and often curses, which, unable to reach him, will react on those who wish him evil. Lies and calumny — the latter a teething lie, adding actual bites to empty harmless falsehoods — become his lot, and thus the well-wisher is soon torn to pieces, as a reward for his benevolent desire to enlighten.

Enough has been given, it is believed, to show that the existence of a Secret Universal Doctrine, besides its practical methods of Magic, is no wild romance or fiction. The fact was known to the whole ancient world, and the knowledge of it has survived in the East, in India especially. And if there be such a Science, there must be naturally, somewhere, professors of it, or Adepts. In any case it matters little whether the Guardians of the Sacred Lore are regarded as living, actually existing men, or are viewed as myths. It is their Philosophy that will have to stand or fall upon its own merits, apart from, and independent of any Adepts. For in the words of the wise Gamaliel,¹ addressed by him to the Synedrion:

If this doctrine is false it will perish, and fall of itself; but if true, then — *it cannot be destroyed.*

¹ [Gamaliel the Elder (also spelled Gamliel); Hebrew: הוֹקֵן גַּמְלִיאֵל רַבֵּן Greek: Γαμαλιήλ ὁ Πρεσβύτερος; or Rabban Gamaliel I, a leading authority in the Sanhedrin in the early 1st century CE.]

Strong-hearted men and women, moved by a fervent aspiration towards an ideal they know to be true, have conquered the fake self and cruel master that kept them shackled to endless cycles of birth, misery, and death.

Personal selfishness, that greed for self and self only, the begetter of most of the evils, has vanished; and every lower instinct, melting like soiled icicles under the beneficent ray of the Spiritual Sun, has disappeared making room for higher and holier aspirations.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE DEVIL'S OWN THOUGHTS IN ORMUZD AND AHRIMAN) XIII pp. 130-33.

How often does one see strong-hearted men and determined women moved by a strong aspiration towards an ideal they know to be the true one, battling successfully, to all appearance, with Ahriman¹ and conquering him. Their external *Selves* have been the battle-ground of a most terrible, deadly strife between the two opposing Principles; but they have stood firmly — and won. The dark enemy seems conquered; it is crushed in fact, so far as the animal instincts are concerned. Personal selfishness, that greed for self, and self only, the begetter of most of the evils — has vanished; and every lower instinct, melting like soiled icicles under the beneficent ray of Ahura Mazda,² the radiant EGO-SUN, has disappeared, making room for better and holier aspirations. Yet, there lurks in them their old and but partially destroyed vanity, that spark of personal pride which is the last to die in man. Dormant it is, latent and invisible to all, including their own consciousness; but there it is still. Let it awake but for an instant, and the seemingly crushed-out personality comes back to life at the sound of its voice, arising from its grave like an unclean ghoul at the command of the midnight incantator. Five hours — nay, five minutes even — of life under its fatal sway, may destroy the work of years of self-control and training, and of laborious work in the service of Ahura Mazda, to open wide the door anew to Angra Mainyu. Such is the result of the silent and unspoken but ever-present *worship* of the only beautiful creation of the Spirit of Selfishness and Darkness.

Man accumulates knowledge, invents religions and philosophies, but he himself remains still the same.

In his ceaseless chase after wealth and honours and the will-o'-the-wisps of novelty, enjoyment, and ambition, man is ever moved by one chief motor — Vain Selfishness.

Look around you and judge of the deadly havoc made by this last and most cunning of Ahriman's productions notwithstanding its external beauty and harmlessness. Century after century, year after year, all is changing; everything is progressing in this world; one thing only changeth not — *human nature*. Man accumulates knowledge, invents religions and philosophies, but himself remains still the same. In his ceaseless chase after wealth and honours and the will-o'-the-wisps of novelty, enjoyment and ambition, he is ever moved by one chief motor — vain selfishness. In

¹ [Personification of lower human principles. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Personification of the spiritual essence of man. — ED. PHIL.]

these days of so-called progress and civilization, when the *light* of knowledge claims to have replaced almost everywhere the *darkness* of ignorance, how many more volunteers do we see added to the army of Ahura Mazda, the Principle of Good and Divine Light? Alas, the recruits of Angra Mainyu, the Mazdean Satan, outnumber these, daily more and more. They have overrun the world, these worshippers of Mel-ek Taus, and the more they are enlightened the easier they succumb. This is only natural. Like *Time*, both the boundless and the finite, *Light* is also twofold; the divine and the eternal, and *the artificial light*, which paradoxically but correctly defined, is the *darkness of Ahriman*. Behold on what objects the best energies of knowledge, the strongest human activity, and the inventive powers of man are wasted at the present hour: on the creation, amelioration and perfection of war-engines of destruction, on guns and smokeless powders, and weapons for the mutual murder and decimation of men. Great Christian nations seek to outvie each other in the discovery of better means for destroying human life, and for the subjecting by the strongest and the craftiest of the weakest and the simplest, for no better reason than to feed their peacock-vanity and self-adulation; and Christian men eagerly follow the good example. Whereon is spent the enormous wealth accumulated through private enterprise by the more enlightened through the ruin of the less intelligent? Is it to relieve human suffering in every form, that riches are so greedily pursued? Not at all. For now, just as 1,900 years ago, while the beggar Lazarus is glad to feed on the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table, no means are neglected by Dives to hedge himself off from the poor. The minority that gives and takes care that its left hand remains ignorant of what its right hand bestows, is quite insignificant when compared with the enormous majority who are lavish in their charity — only because they are eager to see their names heralded by the press to the world.

Telegraphs and telephones, railways and airways, radios and TVs, wireless and satellite communications, more and more with every hour, unite us all into one “happy” family, but only to furnish the selfish and the wily with every means of stealing a better march on the less selfish and improvident.

We live in an era of the most triumphant display of human genius. But what good has all this great civilization and progress done to the millions in the world's slums, and to the armies of the “great unwashed”?

Great is the power of Ahriman! Time rolls on, leaving with every day the ages of ignorance and superstition further behind, but bringing us in their stead only centuries of ever-increasing selfishness and pride. Mankind grows and multiplies, waxes in strength and (book-)wisdom; it claims to have penetrated into the deepest mysteries of physical nature; it builds railroads and honeycombs the globe with tunnels; it erects gigantic towers and bridges, minimizes distances, unites the oceans and divides whole continents. Cables and telephones, canals and railways more and more with every hour unite into one “happy” family, but only to furnish the selfish and the wily with every means of stealing a better march on the less selfish and improvident.

Truly the “upper ten”¹ of science and wealth have subjected to their sweet will and pleasure, the Air and the Earth, the Ocean and the Fire. This, our age, is one of progress, indeed, an era of the most triumphant display of human genius. But what good has all this great civilization and progress done to the millions in the European slums, to the armies of the “great unwashed”?² Have any of these displays of genius added one comfort more to the lives of the poor and the needy? Is it not true to say that distress and starvation are a hundred times greater now than they were in the days of the Druids or of Zoroaster? And is it to help the hungry multitudes that all this is invented, or again, only to sweep off the couch of the rich the last-forgotten rose-leaves that may uncomfortably tickle their well-fed bodies? Do electric wonders give one additional crust of bread to the starving? Do the towers and the bridges, and the forests of factories and manufactures, bring any mortal good to the sons of men, save giving an additional opportunity to the wealthy to vampirise or “sweat” their poorer brother? When, I ask again, at what time of the history of mankind, during its darkest days of ignorance, when was there known such ghastly starvation as we see now? When has the poor man wept and suffered, as he weeps and suffers in the present day — say, in London, where for every club-visitor who dines and wines himself daily, at a price that would feed twenty-five families for a whole day, one may count hundreds and thousands of starving wretches. Under the very windows of the fashionable City restaurants, radiant with warmth and electric lights, old trembling women and little children may be seen daily, shivering and fastening their hungry eyes on the food they smell each time the entrance door is opened. Then they “move on” — by order, to disappear in the dark gloom, to starve and shiver and finally to die in the frozen mud of some gutter. . . .

The “pagan” Parsīs know not, nor would their community tolerate, any beggars in its midst, least of all — STARVATION!

Selfishness is the chief prompter of our age.

Sir Edwin’s “Light of the World” has only succeeded in raising the pride of Christian nations to its acme, in developing their self-adulation, and fostering hard-heartedness under the name of all-binding law. The “personality” of both nation and individual has thrown deep roots into the soil of selfish motives; and of all the flowers of modern culture, those that blossom the most luxuriously, are the flowers of Polite Falsehood, Vanity, and Self-exaltation.

Selfishness is the chief prompter of our age; *Chacun pour soi, Dieu pour tout le monde*, its watchword. Where then is the truth, and what practical good has done

¹ [Or “Upper ten thousand,” a phrase coined in 1852 by American poet Nathaniel Parker Willis to describe the upper circles of New York, and hence of other major cities. In 1875, both Adam Bissett Thom and Kelly’s Directory published books entitled *The Upper Ten Thousand*, which listed members of the aristocracy, the gentry, officers in the British Army and Navy, members of Parliament, Colonial administrators, and members of the Church of England. The usage of this term was a response to the broadening of the British ruling class which had been caused by the Industrial Revolution. — *Wikipedia*.]

² [Disparaging term was coined by the Victorian novelist and playwright Edward Bulwer-Lytton. He used it in his 1830 novel “Paul Clifford.”]

that light brought to mankind by the “Light of the World,”¹ as claimed by every Christian? Of the “Lights of Asia” Europe speaks with scorn, nor would it recognize in Ahura Mazda a *divine* light. And yet even a *minor* light (if such) when practically applied for the good of suffering mankind, is a thousand times more beneficent than even infinite Light, when confined to the realm of abstract theories. In our days the latter Light has only succeeded in raising the pride of Christian nations to its acme, in developing their self-adulation, and fostering hard-heartedness under the name of all-binding law. The “personality” of both nation and individual has thrown deep roots into the soil of selfish motives; and of all the flowers of modern culture those that blossom the most luxuriously are the flowers of polite Falsehood, Vanity, and Self-exaltation.

Few are those who would confess or even deign to see, that beneath the brilliant surface of our civilization and culture lurks, refusing to be dislodged, all the inner filth of the evils created by Ahriman; and indeed, the truest symbol, the very picture of that civilization is the last creation of the Arch-fiend — the beautiful Peacock. Truly saith Theosophy unto you — it is *the Devil’s Own*.



¹ [By Sir Edwin Arnold. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1891. See what H.P. Blavatsky thought of the “Light of the World,” under the holding title “Arnold not an Initiate,” in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Selfishness is the boisterous rebel against Nature's decrees.

The student, at the very outset, learns that the alpha and the omega of life is selflessness, and knows that only in the sanctuary of merit and self-forgetfulness can the true meaning of life reveal itself to his eager heart.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE GREAT PARADOX) VIII pp. 126-28.

One startling paradox meets the student at the very outset, and confronts him in ever new and strange shapes at each turn of the road. Such an one, perchance, has sought the path desiring a guide, a rule of right for the conduct of his life. He learns that the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end of *life* is selflessness; and he feels the truth of the saying that only in the profound unconsciousness of self-forgetfulness can the truth and reality of being reveal itself to his eager heart.

The student learns that this is the one law of occultism, at once the science and the art of living, the guide to the goal he desires to attain. He is fired with enthusiasm and enters bravely on the mountain track. He then finds that his teachers do not encourage his ardent flights of sentiment; his all-forgetting yearning for the Infinite — on the outer plane of his actual life and consciousness. At least, if they do not actually damp his enthusiasm, they set him, as the first and indispensable task, *to conquer and control his body*. The student finds that far from being encouraged to live in the soaring thoughts of his brain, and to fancy he has reached that ether where is true freedom — to the forgetting of his body, and his external actions and personality — he is set down to tasks much nearer earth. All his attention and watchfulness are required on the outer plane; he must never forget himself, never lose hold over his body, his mind, his brain. He must even learn to control the expression of every feature, to check the action of each muscle, to be master of every slightest involuntary movement. The daily life around and within him is pointed out as the object of his study and observation. Instead of forgetting what are usually called the petty trifles, the little forgetfulness, the accidental slips of tongue or memory, he is forced to become each day more conscious of these lapses, till at last they seem to poison the air he breathes and stifle him, till he seems to lose sight and touch of the great world of freedom towards which he is struggling, till every hour of every day seems full of the bitter taste of self, and his heart grows sick with pain and the struggle of despair. And the darkness is rendered yet deeper by the voice within him, crying ceaselessly,

Forget thyself. Beware, lest thou becomest self-concentrated — and the giant weed of spiritual selfishness take firm root in thy heart; beware, beware, beware!

The voice stirs his heart to its depths, for he feels that the words are true. His daily and hourly battle is teaching him that self-centredness is the root of misery, the cause of pain, and his soul is full of longing to be free.

Thus the disciple is torn by doubt. He trusts his teachers, for he knows that through them speaks the same voice he hears in the silence of his own heart. But now they utter contradictory words; the one, the inner voice, bidding him forget himself utterly in the service of humanity; the other, the spoken word of those from whom he seeks guidance in his service, bidding him *first* to conquer his body, his outer self. And he knows better with every hour how badly he acquits himself in that battle with the Hydra, and he sees seven heads grow afresh in place of each one that he has lopped off.

At first he oscillates between the two, now obeying the one, now the other. But soon he learns that this is fruitless. For the sense of freedom and lightness, which comes at first when he leaves his outer self unwatched, that he may seek the inner air, soon loses its keenness, and some sudden shock reveals to him that he has slipped and fallen on the uphill path. Then, in desperation, he flings himself upon the treacherous snake of self, and strives to choke it into death; but its ever-moving coils elude his grasp, the insidious temptations of its glittering scales blind his vision, and again he becomes involved in the turmoil of the battle, which gains on him from day to day, and which at last seems to fill the whole world, and blot out all else beside from his consciousness. He is face to face with a crushing paradox, the solution of which must be lived before it can be really understood.

By sinking his consciousness deep into his heart he can reach that holy place, only when alone in silence and darkness.

When the need for silence has grown great enough, he will turn to seek it even in the midst of the struggle with self, and he will find it.

In his hours of silent meditation the student will find that there is one space of silence within him where he can find refuge from thoughts and desires, from the turmoil of the senses and the delusions of the mind. By sinking his consciousness deep into his heart he can reach this place — at first only when he is alone in silence and darkness. But when the need for the silence has grown great enough, he will turn to seek it even in the midst of the struggle with self, and he will find it. Only he must not let go of his outer self, or his body; he must learn to retire into this citadel when the battle grows fierce, but to do so without losing sight of the battle; without allowing himself to fancy that by so doing he has won the victory. That victory is won only when all is silence without as within the inner citadel. Fighting thus, from within that silence, the student will find that he has solved the first great paradox.

But paradox still follows him. When first he thus succeeds in thus retreating into himself, he seeks there only for refuge from the storm in his heart. And as he struggles to control the gusts of passion and desire, he realises more fully what mighty powers he has vowed himself to conquer. He still feels himself, apart from the silence, nearer akin to the forces of the storm. How can his puny strength cope with these tyrants of animal nature?

Living for self alone is full of pain and sorrow; living for others is full of divine bliss and joy for ever, free from bonds tied by mortal hands.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (A FEW MORE MISCONCEPTIONS CORRECTED) XIV p. 432.

Notwithstanding widespread misconceptions and errors — often most amusing to one who has a certain knowledge of the true doctrines — about Buddhism generally, and especially about Buddhism in Tibet, all the Orientalists agree that the Buddha's foremost aim was to lead human beings to salvation by teaching them to practice the greatest purity and virtue, and by detaching them from the service of this illusionary world, and the love of one's still more illusionary — because so evanescent and unreal — body and physical self. And what is the good of a virtuous life, full of privations and suffering, if the only result of it is to be annihilation at the end? If even the attainment of that supreme perfection which leads the Initiate to remember the whole series of his past lives, and to foresee that of the future ones, by the full development of that inner, divine eye in him, and to acquire the knowledge that unfolds the causes¹ of the ever-recurring cycles of existence, brings him finally to non-being, and nothing more — then the whole system is idiotic, and Epicureanism is far more phil-

¹ The twelve Nidānas, called in Tibetan Ten-brel Chug-nyi, which are based upon the "Four Truths."

osophical than *such* Buddhism. He who is unable to comprehend the subtle, and yet so potent, difference between existence in a material or physical state and a purely spiritual existence — Spirit or “Soul-life” — will never appreciate at their full value the grand teachings of the Buddha, even in their exoteric form. Individual or personal existence is the cause of pains and sorrows; collective and impersonal life-eternal is full of divine bliss and joy for ever, with neither causes nor effects to darken its light. And the hope for such a life-eternal is the keynote of the whole of Buddhism.

There is no danger to him who is true and sincere, and especially unselfish.

For he is thus prepared to meet any temptation. The pure at heart, who study with a view of perfecting themselves, need not have any fear; but rather those who make of the Sacred Science a sinful pretext for worldly motives, who should tremble.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (THE POST-CHRISTIAN SUCCESSORS TO THE MYSTERIES) XIV p. 309 & fn.

The Philaletheians had their division into neophytes (*chelas*) and Initiates, or Masters; and the eclectic system was characterised by three distinct features, which are purely Vedāntic; a Supreme Essence, One and Universal; the eternity and indivisibility of the human spirit; and Theurgy, which is Mantricism. So also, as we have seen, they had their secret or Esoteric teachings like any other mystic school. Nor were they allowed to reveal anything of their secret tenets, any more than were the Initiates of the Mysteries. Only the penalties incurred by the revealers of the secrets of the latter were far more terrible, and this prohibition has survived to this day, not only in India, but even among the Jewish Kabbalists in Asia.¹

One of the reasons for such secrecy may be the undoubtedly serious difficulties and hardships of chelaship, and the dangers attending Initiation. The modern candidate has, like his predecessor of old, to either conquer or die; when, which is still worse, he does not lose his reason. There is no danger to him who is true and sincere, and, especially, unselfish. For he is thus prepared beforehand to meet any temptation.

¹ The *Talmud* [*Mishnāh* ‘*Hagiga*, 14b] gives the story of the four Tanna'im, who are made, in allegorical terms, to enter into *the garden of delights*; i.e., to be initiated into the occult and final science.

According to the teaching of our holy masters the names of the four who entered the garden of delight, are: Ben Asai, Ben Zoma, Ahher, and Rabbi A'qibah. . . .

Ben Asai looked and — lost his sight.

Ben Zoma looked and — lost his reason.

Ahher made depredations in the plantation [mixed up the whole and failed]. But A'qibah, who had entered in peace, came out of it in peace, for the saint, whose name be blessed, has said, “This old man is worthy of serving us with glory.”

“The learned commentators of the *Talmud*, the Rabbis of the synagogue, explain that the *garden of delight*, in which those four personages are made to enter, is but that mysterious science, the most terrible of sciences for weak intellects, which it leads directly to insanity,” says A. Franck, in his *La Kabbale*. It is not the pure at heart and he who studies but with a view to perfecting himself and so more easily acquiring the promised immortality, who need have any fear; but rather he who makes of the science of sciences a sinful pretext for worldly motives, who should tremble. *The latter will never withstand the kabbalistic evocations of the supreme initiation.* — *Isis Unveiled*, II p. 119.

Though centuries lapse and decades drop out of the lap of time, great reforms take place, empires rise, fall, and rise again like a seesaw, and even whole races disappear before the “triumphant march of civilization” — in his terrific selfishness, the man that was is the man that is.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE FALL OF IDEALS) XII p. 34.

Alas, whether we turn East, West, North or South, it is but a contrast of externals; whether one observes life among Christians or Pagans, worldly or religious men, everywhere one finds oneself dealing with man, masked man — only MAN. Though centuries lapse and decades of ages drop out of the lap of time, great reforms take place, empires rise and fall and rise again, and even whole races disappear before the triumphant march of civilization, in his terrific selfishness the “man” that *was* is the “man” that *is* — judged by its representative element the public, and especially society. But have we the right to judge man by the utterly artificial standard of the latter? A century ago we would have answered in the negative. Today, owing to the rapid strides of mankind toward civilization generating selfishness and making it keep pace with it, we answer decidedly, yes. Today everyone, especially in England and America, is that public and that society, and exceptions but prove and reinforce the rule. The progress of mankind cannot be summed up by counting units especially on the basis of internal and not external growth. Therefore, we have the right to judge of that progress by the public standard of morality in the majority; leaving the minority to bewail the fall of its ideals. And what do we find? First of all Society — Church, State and Law — in conventional conspiracy, leagued against the public exposure of the results of the application of such a test. They wish the said minority to take Society and the rest *en bloc*, in its fine clothes, and not pry into the social rottenness beneath. By common consent, they pretend to worship an IDEAL, one at any rate, the Founder of their State Christianity; but they also combine to put down and martyrize any unit belonging to the minority who has the audacity, in this time of social abasement and corruption, to live up to it.

In Eastern philosophy number eight symbolizes equality of units, order and symmetry in heaven, transformed into inequality and confusion on earth, by Selfishness, the great rebel against Nature’s decrees.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (1890! ON THE NEW YEAR’S MORROW) XII pp. 67-68.

[All Cæsars and World-potentates] . . . dreaded the number 8, because it postulates the equality of all men. Out of eternal unity and the mysterious number seven, out of Heaven and the seven planets and the sphere of the fixed stars, in the philosophy of arithmetic, was born the ogdoad. It was the first cube of the even numbers, and hence held sacred.¹ In the Eastern philosophy number eight symbolizes equality of units, order and symmetry in heaven, transformed into inequality and confusion on earth, by selfishness, the great rebel against Nature’s decrees.

¹ As shown by Ragon, the Mason-Occultist, the gnostic ogdoad had eight stars representing the 8 Kabeiroi of Samothrace, the 8 *principles* of the Egyptians and Phoenicians, the 8 gods of Xenocrates, the 8 angles of the cubic stone. [*Maçonnerie occulte*, p. 435 *fn.*]

While perfect as a cosmic number, number eight is also the symbol of the lower self, the animal nature of man, thus presaging ill for the unselfish portion of humanity.

“The figure 8 or ∞ indicates the perpetual and regular motion of the Universe,” says Ragon. But if perfect as a cosmic number it is likewise the symbol of the lower Self, the animal nature of man. Thus, we augur ill for the unselfish portion of humanity from the present combination of the year-numbers. For the central figures 89 in the year 1890, are but a repetition of the two figures in the tail-end of 1889. And nine was a digit terribly dreaded by the ancients. With them it was a symbol of great changes, cosmic and social, and of versatility, in general; the sad emblem of the fragility of human things. Figure 9 represents the earth under the influence of an evil principle; the Kabbalists holding, moreover, that it also symbolizes the act of reproduction and generation. That is to say that the year 1890 is preparing to reproduce all the evils of its parent 1889, and to generate plenty of its own. Three times three is the great symbol of corporisation, or the materialisation of spirit according to Pythagoras — hence of gross matter.¹

Even when a ray of Truth lights up, no matter how dimly, the consciousness of a sensualist, one of a marble heart and selfish mind, impervious to fairness and compassion, Truth is befouled and unfit for use.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII pp. 596-97.

Writes the Master:

Observe that the first of the steps of gold which mount towards the Temple of Truth is — A CLEAN LIFE. This means a purity of body, and a still greater purity of mind, heart, and spirit.

And the latter are found more in the poor country-classes than among the cultured and the rich. That the Master’s eye is upon you, Theosophists, is evidenced by the following lines from the same pen:

How many of them [you] violate one or more of these conditions [of the right Path], and yet expect to be freely taught the highest Wisdom and Sciences, the Wisdom of the gods. As pure water poured into the scavenger’s bucket is befouled and unfit for use, so is divine Truth when poured into the consciousness of a sensualist, of one of selfish heart and a mind indifferent and inaccessible to justice and compassion. . . . There is a very, VERY ancient maxim, far older than the time of the Romans or the Greeks, more ancient than the Egyptians or Chaldeans. It is a maxim all of them [Theosophists] ought to remember and live accordingly. And it is that a sound and pure mind requires a sound and pure

¹ The reason for this is because according to the Pythagoreans each of the three elements that constitute our bodies is a *ternary*: water containing earth and fire; earth containing aqueous and igneous particles; and fire being tempered by aqueous globules and terrestrial corpuscles serving it as food. Hence the name given to matter, the “nonagous envelope.”

body.¹ *Bodily purity every adept takes precautions to keep. . . . Most of you [Theosophists] know this.*

And yet, knowing it, how few live up to this! I had rather not say whether the letter includes in this reproof Theosophists generally, or only Esotericists. It means a few, but this is for my own private information; meanwhile, these are the words addressed to all.

. . . But though they have been repeatedly told of this sine qua non rule on the Path of Theosophy and chelaship, how few of them have given attention to it. Behold, how many of them are sluggards in the morning and time-wasters at night; GLUTTONS, eating and drinking for the sensual pleasure they give; indolent in business; selfish as to the keeping of their neighbours' [brothers'] interests in view; borrowing from brother-Theosophists, making money out of the loan and failing to return it; lazy in study and waiting for others to think for and teach them; denying themselves nothing, EVEN OF LUXURIES, for the sake of helping poorer brothers; forgetting the Cause in general and its volunteer, hard workers, — and even debauchees, GUILTY OF SECRET IMMORALITY in more than one form. And yet all call themselves Theosophists; all talk with outsiders about "Theosophical ethics" and things, with a puffed up, vain conceit in their hearts.

Do we not find among members of the Theosophical Society envy and hatred for their colleagues, suspicion and slanderous talk?

Who, of you who read this, is prepared to say that not one out of the above faults concerns you?

Alas! if these words apply to the Theosophical Society in general, to the selfish coldness and supreme indifference of most members to the future of the cause they belong to but will not go out of their way to serve, do not most of the cases cited apply also to *some* Esotericists, if not to all? Do not we find among them envy and hatred for their colleagues, suspicion and slanderous talk? Who of you who read this, is prepared to say that not one out of the above enumerated faults concerns you?

¹ [Cf. Juvenal's "Mens sana in corpore sano," *Satire X*, line 356 — *Kings Quotation 3724*. Also cf. "Νους υγιής εν σωματι υγιει" of the Greeks, *i.e.*, "a healthy mind in a healthy body." The phrase has been taken from a longer sentence, "orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano," *i.e.*, "we should pray for a sound mind in a sound body," which is entirely different from the common misinterpretation that "a healthy body can produce or sustain a healthy mind." It is the other way around! — ED. PHIL.]

The Founders of the Theosophical Society oppose selfishness of any kind, and insist upon fraternal feelings among the Fellows, mutual toleration and charity for each other's shortcomings, and mutual help in their pristine aspirations and devotion to the Spirit of Truth.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, ["Original Programme" Manuscript] VII p. 147.

The Founders [of The Theosophical Society] had to exercise all their influence *to oppose selfishness of any kind*, by insisting upon sincere, fraternal feelings among the Members — at least outwardly; working for it to bring about a spirit of unity and harmony, the great diversity of creeds notwithstanding; expecting and demanding from the Fellows, a great mutual toleration and charity for each other's shortcomings; mutual help in the research of truths in every domain — moral or physical — and even, in daily life.

Conscience, God's vicegerent in the soul, speaks no longer in man when the whispers of the still small voice within are stifled by the ever-increasing din and roar of selfishness.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OUR CHRISTIAN XIXTH CENTURY ETHICS) X p. 81.

As civilization progresses, moral darkness pervades the alleged light of Christianity. The chosen symbol of our boasted civilization ought to be a huge boa constrictor. Like that monstrous ophidian, with its velvety black and brilliant golden-hued spots, and its graceful motions, civilization proceeds insidiously, but as surely, to crush in its deadly coils every high aspiration, every noble feeling, aye, even to the very discrimination of right and wrong.

Conscience, "God's vicegerent in the soul," speaks no longer in man; for the whispers of the still small voice within are stifled by the ever-increasing din and roar of Selfishness.

Space and time should be given to the self-appointed censors of morality to cleanse themselves of the ferocious selfishness, narrow-mindedness, and conceit which have made their playing at "the higher life" an almost comical travesty.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OUR THIRD VOLUME) X p. 94; [on the editorial impartiality of *Lucifer*.]

. . . the sweet spirit of theosophical charity demands that time should be given to these well-wishers but weak-doers to discover their ignorance and cleanse themselves of the ferocious selfishness, narrow-mindedness and conceit which have made their playing at "the higher life" an almost comical travesty. With time and experience, most of the Pharisaism of our worthy colleagues, the self-appointed censors of contemporary morals, will fade out, and they will acquire safer standards by which to judge outsiders and especially their own colleagues.

It is that fierce and unashamed personal selfishness, the chief motor in the “struggle for life,” that is the sole cause of human starvation, and it’s vastly more powerful extension — national egoism and vanity — which stirs up wealthy nations and individuals to bury enormous capitals in the unproductive erection of gorgeous churches and temples, and to support a swarm of social drones called Cardinals and Bishops, who parasitize their subordinates and their flocks.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (The Theosophical Society) X p. 75.

When men will begin to realise that it is precisely that ferocious personal selfishness, the chief motor in the “struggle for life,” that lies at the very bottom and is the one sole cause of human starvation; that it is that other — national egoism and vanity, which stirs up the States and rich individuals to bury enormous capitals in the unproductive erection of gorgeous churches and temples and the support of a swarm of social drones called Cardinals and Bishops, the true parasites on the bodies of their subordinates and their flocks — then they will try to remedy this universal evil by a healthy change of policy. And this salutary revolution can be *peacefully* accomplished only by the Theosophical Society and its teachings.

Kama-Manas is the Green-Red animal monster in us.¹

When Kama-Manas (Desire Mind), the potential of the worldly man, is deluded into a notion of independent existence, it becomes Ego-ism, the selfish self.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII pp. 630-31; [on Egoism].

In its purely metaphysical aspect, Manas, being again one remove (on the downward plane) from Buddhi, is still so immeasurably higher than the physical man, that it cannot enter into direct relation with the personality, except through its reflection, the lower mind. Manas is *Spiritual Self-Consciousness*, in itself, and Divine Consciousness when united with Buddhi, which is the true “producer” of that “production” (vikāra), or Self Consciousness, through Mahat. Buddhi-Manas, therefore, is entirely unfit to manifest during its periodical incarnations, except through the human mind, or lower Manas. Both are linked together and are inseparable, and can have as little to do with the lower Tanmātras² (rudimentary atoms) as the homogeneous with the heterogeneous. It is, therefore, the task of the lower Manas, or thinking personality, if it would blend itself with its God, the divine Ego, to dissipate and paralyze the Tanmātras, or properties of the material form. Therefore, Manas is shown double, as the Ego and Mind of Man. It is Kāma-Manas, or the lower Ego, which, deluded into a notion of independent existence, as the “producer” in its turn and the Sovereign of the five Tanmātras, becomes *Ego-ism*, the selfish Self, in which case it has to be considered as Mahābhūtic and finite, in the sense of its being con-

¹ [Consult “The True Colours of Man,” our fifth Major Work. — ED. PHIL.]

² Tanmātra means subtle and rudimentary form, the gross type of the finer elements. The five Tanmātras are really the characteristic properties or qualities of matter, as of all the elements; the real spirit of the word is “something” or “merely transcendental,” in the sense of properties or qualities.

nected with Ahamkāra, the personal “I-creating” faculty. Hence “Manas has to be regarded as eternal and non-eternal; eternal in its atomic nature (paramānu-rūpa), as eternal substance (dravya), finite (kārya-rūpa), when linked as a duad with Kāma (animal desire or human *egoistic* volition), a lower production, in short.” In this I do but repeat what I wrote in August, 1883, in answer to a critic in *The Theosophist*, in an article called “The Real and the Unreal.”¹ While, therefore, the INDIVIDUAL EGO, owing to its essence and nature, is immortal throughout eternity, with a form (rūpa) which prevails during the whole lifecycle of the Fourth Round, its *Sosie*, or resemblance, the personal Ego, has to win its immortality.

The loftiest aspirations for the welfare of his brothers and sisters will become tainted with selfishness if, in the mind of the philanthropist, there lurks the shadow of a desire for self-benefit, or a tendency to do injustice, even where these exist unconsciously to himself.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY) X pp. 77-78 & fn.

Listen to the authentic words written by one of [the Theosophical Mahatmas] in 1880 to the author of the *Occult World*:²

. . . To our minds, then, these motives, sincere and worthy of every serious consideration from *the worldly standpoint*, appear *selfish* . . . They are selfish, because you must be aware that the chief object of the Theosophical Society is *not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow men* . . . in our view the highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness, if, in the mind of the philanthropist, there lurks the shadow of a desire *for self-benefit, or a tendency to do injustice, even where these exist unconsciously to himself*. Yet you have ever discussed, but to put down, the idea of a Universal Brotherhood, questioned its usefulness, and advised to remodel the Theosophical Society on the principle of a college for the special study of occultism. . . .³

¹ *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, August, 1883: “The Real and the Unreal,” p. 268 footnote. [Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. V, p. 80 fn. The full text of this article can be found under the holding title “Devachan, dream realm where pure souls are rewarded,” in our Constitution of Man Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Alfred Percy Sinnett, *The Occult World*, London: Trübner & Co., 1883; 3rd ed.]

³ A.P. Sinnett, *The Occult World*, p. 72; [p. 104, American edition].

[*Note by Boris de Zirkoff*: This passage may be found on pp. 6-7 in *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, transcribed from the original letter of Master K.H., now in the British Museum. As there are slight differences, especially in the use of italics and punctuation, we transcribe below the text, direct from the microfilm of the original letter:

To our minds then, these motives, sincere and worthy of every serious consideration from the worldly standpoint, appear — *selfish*. (You have to pardon me what you might view as crudeness of language, if your desire really is, that which you profess — to learn truth and get instruction from us — who belong to quite a different world from the one you move in.) They are selfish because you must be aware that the chief object of the T.S. is not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow men: and the real value of this term “selfish,” which may jar upon your ear, has a peculiar significance with us which it cannot have with you therefore, and to begin with, you must not accept it otherwise, than in the former sense. Perhaps, you will better appreciate our meaning when told that in our view the highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness if, in the mind of the philanthropist there lurks the shadow of desire for self benefit or a tendency to do injustice, even when these exist unconsciously to himself. Yet, you have ever discussed but to put down the idea of a universal Brotherhood, questioned its usefulness, and advised to remodel the T.S. on the principle of a college for the special study of occultism. This, my respected and esteemed friend and Brother — will never do! →

It is far nobler to be one of those who love their fellow men without distinction of race, creed, caste, or colour, than to be merely a good patriot, or still less, a partisan. To mete one measure for all, is far holier and more divine than to help one's country in its political ambition of aggrandizement, strife, and bloody wars in the name Greediness and Selfishness.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (IS DENUNCIATION A DUTY?) X pp. 199-200.

A true theosophist must be a cosmopolitan in his heart. He must embrace mankind, the whole of humanity in his philanthropic feelings. It is higher and far nobler to be one of those who love their fellow men, without distinction of race, creed, caste or colour, than to be merely a good patriot, or still less, a partisan. To mete one measure for all, is holier and more divine than to help one's country in its private ambition of aggrandizement, strife or bloody wars in the name of GREEDINESS and SELFISHNESS. "Severe denunciation is a duty to truth." It is; on condition, however, that one should denounce and fight against the *root* of evil and not expend one's fury by knocking down the irresponsible blossoms of its plant. The wise horticulturist uproots the parasitic herbs, and will hardly lose time in using his garden shears to cut off the heads of the poisonous weeds. If a theosophist happens to be a public officer, a judge or magistrate, a barrister or even a preacher, it is then, of course his duty to his country, his conscience and those who put their trust in him, to "denounce severely" every case of "treachery, falsehood and rascality" *even* in private life; but — *nota bene* — only if he is appealed to and called to exercise his legal authority, not otherwise. This is neither "speaking evil" nor "condemning," but truly working for humanity; seeking to preserve society, which is a portion of it, from being imposed upon, and protecting the property of the citizens entrusted to their care as public officers, from being recklessly taken away. But even then the theosophist may assert himself in the magistrate, and show his mercy by repeating after Shakespeare's severe judge: "I show it most of all when I show justice."

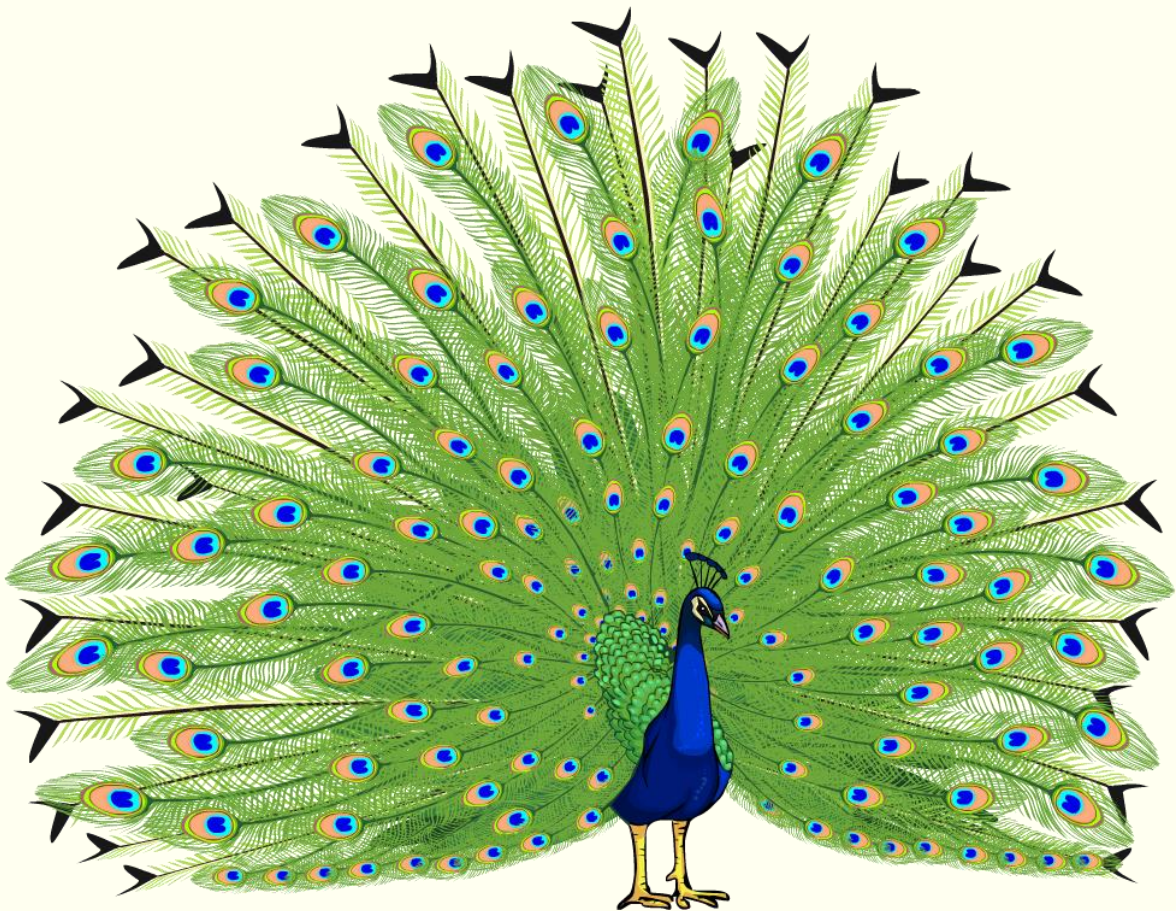
Note by ED. PHIL. — Students to consult "Mahā Chohan's View on the TS," in our Masters Speak Series.]

Selfishness is the first-born of Ignorance, and the fruit of the teaching which asserts that for every newly-born infant a new soul, separate and distinct from the Universal Soul, is “created.”

Selfishness is the impassable wall between personal self and Universal Truth; and the prolific mother of all human vices — Lie being born out of the necessity for dissembling, and Hypocrisy out of the desire to mask Lie.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (“WHAT IS TRUTH?”) IX p. 36.

SELFISHNESS, the first-born of Ignorance, and the fruit of the teaching which asserts that for every newly-born infant a new soul, *separate and distinct* from the Universal Soul, is “created” — this Selfishness is the impassable wall between the *personal* Self and Truth. It is the prolific mother of all human vices, *Lie* being born out of the necessity for dissembling, and *Hypocrisy* out of the desire to mask *Lie*. It is the fungus growing and strengthening with age in every human heart in which it has devoured all better feelings. Selfishness kills every noble impulse in our natures, and is the one deity, fearing no faithlessness or desertion from its votaries. Hence, we see it reign supreme in the world and in so-called fashionable society. As a result, we live, and move, and have our being in this god of darkness under his trinitarian aspect of Sham, Humbug, and Falsehood, called RESPECTABILITY.



Compassion felt but not acted upon is not altruism, it is bare hypocrisy.

Spiritual perfection and knowledge can only be reached on the spiritual plane — in that state in which all sense of separateness, all selfishness, all feeling of personal interest and desire, has been merged in the wider consciousness of the humanity at large.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (THEOSOPHICAL QUERIES) XI pp. 104-6.

Now it is a fundamental doctrine of Theosophy that the “separateness” which we feel between ourselves and the world of living beings around us is an illusion, not a reality. In very deed and truth, all men are one, not in a feeling of sentimental gush and hysterical enthusiasm, but in sober earnest. As all Eastern philosophy teaches, there is but ONE SELF in all the infinite Universe, and what we men call “self” is but the illusionary reflection of the ONE SELF in the heaving waters of earth. True Occultism is the destruction of the false idea of Self, and therefore true spiritual perfection and knowledge are nothing else but the complete identification of our finite “selves” with the Great All. It follows, therefore, that no spiritual progress at all is possible except by and through the bulk of Humanity. It is only when the whole of Humanity has attained happiness that the individual can hope to become permanently happy — for the individual is an inseparable part of the Whole.

Hence there is no contradiction whatever between the altruistic maxims of Theosophy and its injunction to kill out all desire for material things, to strive after spiritual perfection. For spiritual perfection and spiritual knowledge can only be reached on the spiritual plane; in other words, only in that state in which all sense of separateness, all selfishness, all feeling of personal interest and desire, has been merged in the wider consciousness of the unity of Mankind.

No blind submission to the commands of another can be demanded, or would not be of any use.

Each individual must learn for himself, through trial and suffering, to discriminate what is beneficial to humanity; and in proportion, as he begins transmuting his materiality to spirituality — lead to gold — his mind will open to receive the guidance of his Immortal Self within. and best friend of the mortal self.

This shows also that no blind submission to the commands of another can be demanded, or would [not] be of any use. Each individual must learn for himself, through trial and suffering, to discriminate what is beneficial to Humanity; and in proportion as he develops spiritually, *i.e.*, conquers all selfishness, his mind will

open to receive the guidance of the Divine Monad within him, his Higher Self, for which there is neither Past nor Future, but only an eternal Now.

Again, were there no “poor,” far from the “benefits of civilization being lost,” a state of the highest culture and civilization would be attained, of which we cannot now form the faintest conception. Similarly, from a conviction of the impermanence of material happiness would result a striving after that joy which is eternal, and in which all men can share. Throughout the whole letter of our esteemed correspondent there runs the tacit assumption that happiness in material, physical life is all-important; which is untrue. So far from being the most important, happiness in this life of matter is of as little importance in relation to the bliss of true spiritual life as are the few years of each human cycle on earth in proportion to the millions and millions of years which each human being spends in the subjective spheres, during the course of every great cycle of the activity of our globe.

With regard to faculties and talents, the answer is simple. They should be developed and cultivated for the service of Humanity, of which we are all parts, and to which we owe our full and ungrudging service.

True Knowledge consists in getting at the root of all phenomena, and thus arriving at a correct understanding of the primal cause, the “rootless root,” which is not an effect in its turn.¹

Such Knowledge can be obtained only by overcoming the fallacy of individuality, which is the root cause of Selfishness — that feeling which seeks after the aggrandizement of one’s own egotistic personality to the exclusion and detriment of everyone else.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CAN THE MAHATMAS BE SELFISH?) VI pp. 264-65.

The basis of knowledge exists everywhere, since the phenomenal world furnishes or rather abounds with facts, the causes of which have to be discovered. We can see only the *effects* in the *phenomenal* world, for each cause in that world is itself the *effect* of some other cause, and so on; and therefore, true knowledge consists in getting at the root of all phenomena, and thus arriving at a correct understanding of the *primal* cause, the “rootless root,” which is not an effect in its turn. To perceive anything correctly, one can use only those senses or instruments which correspond to the nature of that object. Hence, to comprehend the noumenal, a noumenal sense is a prerequisite; while the transient phenomena can be perceived by senses corresponding to the nature of those phenomena. Occult Philosophy teaches us that the seventh principle is the only eternal Reality, while the rest, belonging as they do to the “world of forms” which are non-permanent, are illusive in the sense that they are transient.² To these is limited the phenomenal world which can be taken cognisance of by the senses corresponding to the nature of those six principles. It will thus be clear that it is only the *seventh* sense,³ which pertains to the *noumenal* world, that can compre-

¹ [That’s why is referred to as “rootless.” — ED. PHIL.]

² [Consult “Constitution of Man – Overview,” in our Constitution of Man Series. — ED. PHIL.]

³ [Consult “Sixth Sense is Reason over Instinct,” in our Constitution of Man Series,, and “Proposition 1 - Chaos to sense, latent deity to reason,” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

hend the Abstract Reality underlying all phenomena. As this seventh principle is all-pervading, it exists potentially in all of us; and he, who would arrive at true knowledge, has to develop that sense in him, or rather he must remove those veils which obscure its manifestation. All sense of *personality* is limited only to these lower six principles, for the former relates only to the “world of forms.”

As long as Selfishness limits one’s spiritual perceptions and inner faculties, Absolute Knowledge is impossible.

Impersonality is the ultimate aim of cosmic evolution. We have to work along with Nature, and not place ourselves in opposition to her inherent impulse, which must ultimately assert itself. To oppose it, must necessitate suffering, since a weaker force, in its egotism, tries to array itself against the mighty Universal Law.

Consequently, *true* “knowledge” can be obtained only by tearing away all the curtains of *Māyā* raised by a sense of *personality* before the *impersonal* *Ātma*. It is only in that *personality* that is centred selfishness, or rather the latter creates the former and *vice versa*, since they mutually act and react upon each other. For, selfishness is that feeling which seeks after the aggrandizement of one’s own egotistic personality to the exclusion of others. If, therefore, selfishness limits one to narrow personalities, absolute knowledge is impossible so long as selfishness is not got rid of. So long, however, as we are in this world of phenomena, we cannot be *entirely* rid of a sense of personality, however exalted that feeling may be in the sense that no feeling of *personal* aggrandizement or ambition remains. We are, by our constitution and state of evolution, placed in the “World of Relativity,” but as we find that *impersonality* and non-duality is the ultimate end of cosmic evolution, we have to endeavour to work along with Nature, and not place ourselves in opposition to its inherent impulse which must ultimately assert itself. To oppose it, must necessitate suffering, since a weaker force, in its egotism, tries to array itself against the *universal* law. All that the occultist does, is to *hasten* this process, by allowing his Will to act in unison with the Cosmic Will or the Demiurgic Mind, which can be done by successfully checking the vain attempt of *personality* to assert itself in opposition to the former. And since the MAHATMA is but an advanced occultist, who has so far controlled his lower “self” as to hold it more or less in complete subjection to the Cosmic impulse, it is in the nature of things impossible for him to act in any other but an unselfish manner. No sooner does he allow the “personal Self” to assert itself, than he ceases to be a MAHATMA. Those, therefore, who being still entangled in the web of the delusive sense of personality charge the MAHATMAS with “selfishness” in withholding “knowledge” — do not consider what they are talking about. The Law of Cosmic evolution is ever operating to achieve its purpose of ultimate unity and to carry the phenomenal into the *noumenal* plane, and the MAHATMAS, being *en rapport* with it, are assisting that purpose. They therefore know best what knowledge is best for mankind at a particular stage of its evolution, and none else is competent to judge of that matter, since they alone have got to the *basic knowledge* which can determine the right course and exercise proper discrimination.

Whenever Truth is veiled for the many, it is unveiled for the few.

Men had not created evil yet in those hoary days of bliss and purity, for they were more Godlike than human. When Selfishness was born out of desires and passions hitherto unknown, and superhuman knowledge and power were abused, it became necessary to limit the number of those who knew. Thus arose Initiation.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (THE ORIGIN OF THE MYSTERIES) XIV pp. 248-50.

There were no Mysteries in the beginning, we are taught. Knowledge (Vidyā) was common property, and it reigned universally throughout the Golden Age (Satya-Yuga). As says the Commentary:

Men had not created evil yet in those days of bliss and purity, for they were of God-like more than of human nature.

But when mankind, rapidly increasing in numbers, increased also in variety of idiosyncrasies of body and mind, then incarnated Spirit showed its weakness. Natural exaggerations, and along with these superstitions, arose in the less cultured and healthy minds. Selfishness was born out of desires and passions hitherto unknown, and but too often knowledge and power were abused, until finally it became necessary to limit the number of those *who knew*. Thus arose Initiation.

The need of veiling Truth to protect it from desecration becoming more apparent with every generation, the thin veil used at first had to be gradually thickened according to the spread of I-ness and Me-ness, Luxury and Lust — and this led to the Mysteries.

Every separate nation now arranged for itself a religious system, according to its enlightenment and spiritual wants. Worship of mere form being discarded by the wise men, these confined true knowledge to the very few. The need of veiling truth to protect it from desecration becoming more apparent with every generation, a thin veil was used at first, which had to be gradually thickened according to the spread of personality and selfishness, and this led to the Mysteries. They came to be established in every country and among every people, while to avoid strife and misunderstanding exoteric beliefs were allowed to grow up in the minds of the profane masses. Inoffensive and innocent in their incipient stage — like a historical event arranged in the form of a fairy tale, adapted for and comprehensible to the child's mind — in those distant ages such beliefs could be allowed to grow and make the popular faith without any danger to the more philosophical and abstruse truths taught in the sanctuaries. Logical and scientific observation of the phenomena in Nature, which alone leads man to the knowledge of eternal truths — provided he approaches the threshold of observation unbiased by preconception and sees with his spiritual eye before he looks at things from their physical aspect — does not lie within the province of the masses. The marvels of the One Spirit of Truth, the ever-concealed and inaccessible Deity, can be unravelled and assimilated only through Its manifestations by the secondary "Gods," Its acting powers. While the One and Universal Cause has to remain forever *in abscondito*, Its manifold action may be traced through the effects

in Nature. The latter alone being comprehensible and manifest to average mankind, the Powers causing those effects were allowed to grow in the imagination of the populace.

The Power of Knowledge is for those only who, having freed themselves from every prejudice, and conquered conceit and selfishness, are ready to accept every and any truth, once it is demonstrated to them.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (INTRODUCTORY)¹ XIV pp. 1-2.

“POWER belongs to him who knows”; this is a very old axiom. Knowledge — the first step to which is the power of comprehending the truth, of discerning the real from the false — is for those only who, having freed themselves from every prejudice and conquered their human conceit and selfishness, are ready to accept every and any truth, once it is demonstrated to them. Of such there are very few. The majority judge of a work according to the respective prejudices of its critics, who are guided in their turn by the popularity or unpopularity of the author, rather than by its own faults or merits. Outside the Theosophical circle, therefore, the present volume² is certain to receive at the hands of the general public a still colder welcome than its two predecessors have met with. In our day no statement can hope for a fair trial, or even hearing, unless its arguments run on the line of legitimate and accepted enquiry, remaining strictly within the boundaries of official Science or orthodox Theology.

Our age is pre-eminently materialistic and pietistic. Our literature, our modern thought, and the so-called progress, run on these two parallel lines, so incongruously dissimilar, and yet both so popular and so very orthodox, each in its own way. He who presumes to draw a third line, as a hyphen of reconciliation between the two, has to be fully prepared for the worst.

Our age is a paradoxical anomaly. It is pre-eminently materialistic and as pre-eminently pietistic. Our literature, our modern thought and progress, so called, both run on these two parallel lines, so incongruously dissimilar and yet both so popular and so very orthodox, each in its own way. He who presumes to draw a third line, as a hyphen of reconciliation between the two, has to be fully prepared for the worst.

He will have his work mangled by reviewers, mocked by the sycophants of Science and Church, misquoted by his opponents, and rejected even by the pious lending libraries. The absurd misconceptions, in so-called cultured circles of society, of the ancient Wisdom-Religion (Bodhism)³ after the admirably clear and scientifically-

¹ [It is impossible to ascertain whether the division of the text into Sections and the titles of the individual Sections are H.P. Blavatsky's, or whether they have been added by the Editor. We have preserved them intact. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

² [It is possible that H.P. Blavatsky had in mind an additional volume of *The Secret Doctrine* which was never actually found among her papers. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

³ [For the difference between *Buddhism* and Budhism or Bodhism, refer to “Budhism is Inner Wisdom,” in our *Confusing Words Series*. — ED. PHIL.]

presented explanations in *Esoteric Buddhism*, are a good proof in point. They might have served as a caution even to those Theosophists who, hardened in an almost life-long struggle in the service of their Cause, are neither timid with their pen, nor in the least appalled by dogmatic assumption and scientific authority. Yet, do what Theosophical writers may, neither materialism nor doctrinal pietism will ever give their Philosophy a fair hearing. Their doctrines will be systematically rejected, and their theories denied a place even in the ranks of those scientific ephemera, the ever-shifting “working hypotheses” of our day. To the advocate of the “animalistic” theory, our cosmogenetical and anthropogenetical teachings are “fairy tales” at best. For to those who would shirk any moral responsibility, it seems certainly more convenient to accept descent from a common simian ancestor and see a brother in a dumb, tail-less baboon, than to acknowledge the fatherhood of Pitris, the “Sons of God,” and to have to recognise as a brother a starveling from the slums.

Compassion felt but not acted upon is not altruism, it is mere hypocrisy. Real self-development on esoteric lines requires action. The only way of sacrificing oneself “to the eternal” is by attuning to the collective spirit of life, embodied in and represented in its highest divine aspect by humanity alone.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR FELLOW-MEN?) XI p. 469.

To feel “compassion” without an adequate practical result ensuing from it is not to show oneself an “Altruist” but the reverse. Real self-development on the esoteric lines is *action*.

Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes *an action in a deadly sin*.¹

An Occultist does not feel “himself tied to the Karma of all his fellow-men,” no more than one man feels his legs motionless because of the paralysis of another man’s legs. But this does not prevent the fact that the legs of both are evolved from, and contain the same ultimate essence of the ONE LIFE. Therefore, there can be no *egotistical* feeling in his labours for the less favoured brother. Esoterically, there is no other *way, means or method* of sacrificing oneself “to the eternal” than by working and sacrificing oneself for the collective spirit of Life, embodied in, and (for us) represented in its highest divine aspect by Humanity alone.²

¹ Vide “The Two Paths” in *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 31.

² [Consult “Compassion: the Spirit of Truth,” our first Major Work. — ED. PHIL.]

Helping only those who are like-minded is not altruism, it is prejudice and partiality.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR FELLOW-MEN?) XI pp. 465-66.

There is no essential difference between a “mystic” and a “Theosophist-Esotericist” or Eastern Occultist. . . . One, who while “yearning to be delivered from all selfishness” directs at the same time all his energies only to that portion of humanity which is of his own way of thinking, shows himself not only very *selfish* but guilty of prejudice and partiality.

We are our own worst enemy.¹

I am my friends and my enemies, I feel them all. I am the poor, the wicked, and the ignorant. Those moments of gloom are the moments when I am influenced by those ignorant ones, who are myself, says William Q. Judge.²

Unless the higher Ego (Spiritual Self) gravitates towards its Sun, the lower ego or material self will have the upper hand in every case. For it is this false ego, with its fierce selfishness and animal desire to live a senseless life on earth, which is the real hell, not the fictitious place indoctrinated by the Churches to their flocks.³

From *The Secret Doctrine*, II pp. 109-10. [ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE SECOND RACE: Stanza V, § 18. THE FIRST (Race) WERE THE SONS OF YOGA. THEIR SONS, THE CHILDREN OF THE YELLOW FATHER AND THE WHITE MOTHER.

That which propels towards, and forces evolution, *i.e.*, compels the growth and development of Man towards perfection, is

- The MONAD, or that which acts in it unconsciously through a force inherent in itself;
- And the lower astral body or the *personal* SELF.

The former, whether imprisoned in a vegetable or an animal body, is endowed with, is indeed itself, that force. Owing to its identity with the ALL-FORCE, which, as said, is inherent in the Monad, it is all-potent on the *Arūpa*, or formless plane. On our plane, its essence being too pure, it remains all-potential, but individually becomes inactive: *e.g.*, the rays of the Sun, which contribute to the growth of vegetation, do not select this or that plant to shine upon. Uproot the plant and transfer it to a piece of soil where the sunbeam cannot reach it, and the latter will not follow it. So with the At-

¹ [Cf. “He should raise the self by the Self; let him not suffer the Self to be lowered; for Self is the friend of self, and, in like manner, self is its own enemy.” *Bhagavad-Gīta* 6 vs. 5. The full text of W.Q. Judge’s recension, verified for instant cross-reference to other editions, can be found in our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Look up “Real life thrills in the seven brains of the heart,” in our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series. — ED. PHIL.]

³ [Note to Students:

The Earth, or earth-life rather, is the only Avīchi (Hell) that exists for the men of our humanity on this globe. Avīchi is a state, not a locality — a counterpart of Devachan. Such a state follows the “Soul” wherever it goes, whether into Kāma-Loka, as a semi-conscious “spook” or into a human body, when re-born to suffer Avīchi. Our philosophy recognizes no other Hell.

— *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII p. 637 *fn.*]

man: unless the higher Self or EGO gravitates towards its Sun — the Monad — the lower *Ego*, or *personal* Self, will have the upper hand in every case.¹ For it is this Ego, with its fierce Selfishness and animal desire to live a Senseless life (*Tanhā*), which is “the maker of the tabernacle,” as Buddha calls it in *Dhammapada*.² Hence the expression:

“The Spirits of the Earth clothed the shadows and expanded them.”³

To these “Spirits” belong temporarily the human astral selves; and it is they who give, or build, the physical tabernacle of man, for the Monad and its conscious principle, *Manas*, to dwell in. But the “Solar” *Lhas*, Spirits, warm them, the shadows. This is physically and literally true; metaphysically, or on the psychic and spiritual plane, it is equally true that the Atman alone *warms* the inner man; *i.e.*, it enlightens it with the ray of divine life and alone is able to impart to the inner man, or the reincarnating Ego, its immortality. Thus, as we shall find, for the first three and a half Root-Races, up to the middle or turning point, it is the astral shadows of the “progenitors,” the lunar *Pitris*, which are the formative powers in the Races, and which build and gradually force the evolution of the physical form towards perfection — this, at the cost of a proportionate loss of spirituality. Then, from the turning point, it is the Higher Ego, or incarnating principle, the *nous* or *Mind*, which reigns over the animal Ego, and rules it whenever it is not carried down by the latter.

Vice and wickedness are an abnormal, unnatural manifestation, at this period of our human evolution. The fact that mankind was never more selfish and vicious than it is now — civilized nations having succeeded in making of the first an ethical characteristic, and of the second an art — is proof of the of the sorry state we are all in today.

In short, Spirituality is on its ascending arc, and the animal or physical impedes it from steadily progressing on the path of its evolution only when the selfishness of the *personality* has so strongly infected the real *inner* man with its lethal *virus*, that the upward attraction has lost all its power on the thinking reasonable man. In sober truth, vice and wickedness are an *abnormal, unnatural* manifestation, at this period of our human evolution — at least they ought to be so. The fact that mankind was never more selfish and vicious than it is now, civilized nations having succeeded in making of the first an ethical characteristic, of the second an art, is an additional proof of the exceptional nature of the phenomenon.

¹ [Consult “Higher Manas and Lower Manas” and “Higher Self and Higher Ego,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² 153-154

³ [Cf. Secret Doctrine, II p. 110]

The Immortal Titan and True Philanthropist is moved by Compassion-Sacrifice; the mortal man, by Selfishness and Self-adoration in every instance.

From *The Secret Doctrine*, II pp. 421-22.

Spiritual evolution being incapable of keeping pace with the physical, once its homogeneity was broken by the admixture, the gift¹ thus became the chief cause, if not the sole origin of *Evil*.² The allegory which shows KRONOS³ cursing Zeus for dethroning him (in the primitive “golden” age of Saturn, when all men were demi-gods), and for creating a physical race of men weak and helpless in comparison; and then as delivering to his (Zeus’) revenge the culprit, who despoiled the gods of their prerogative of creation and who thereby raised man to their level, intellectually and spiritually — is highly philosophical. In the case of Prometheus, Zeus represents the Host of the primeval progenitors, of the PITAR, the “Fathers” who created man senseless and without any mind; while the divine Titan stands for the Spiritual creators, the *devas* who “fell” into generation. The former are spiritually lower, but physically stronger, than the “Prometheans”: therefore, the latter are shown conquered. “The lower Host, whose work the Titan spoiled and thus defeated the plans of Zeus,” was on this earth in its own sphere and plane of action; whereas, the superior Host was an exile from Heaven, who had got entangled in the meshes of matter. They (the inferior “Host”) were masters of all the Cosmic and lower titanic forces; the higher Titan possessed only the intellectual and spiritual fire. This drama of the struggle of Prometheus with the Olympic tyrant and despot, sensual Zeus, one sees enacted daily within our actual mankind: the lower passions chain the higher aspirations to the rock of matter, to generate in many a case the vulture of sorrow, pain, and repentance. In every such case one sees once more —

A god . . . in fetters, anguish fraught;
The foe of Zeus, in hatred held by all. . . .

A god, bereft even of that supreme consolation of Prometheus, who suffered in self-sacrifice:

For that to men he bare too fond a mind. . . .

as the divine Titan is moved by altruism, but the mortal man by Selfishness and Egoism in every instance.

¹ [i.e., of endowing the first man with the Promethean gift of Nous, the Divine Light of Mind, for Nous is the benefactor of the human soul. Consult “Proposition 3 - Prometheus, Indian Titan and Hierophant,” in our Secret Doctrine’s Third Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² The philosophical view of Indian metaphysics places the Root of Evil in the differentiation of the Homogeneous into the Heterogeneous, of the unit into plurality. [Consult “The Origin of Good and Evil” and “The Original Sin is a Jewish Invention,” in our Black versus White Magic Series. — ED. PHIL.]

³ [Note 13 by Boris de Zirkoff on the difference between Kronos and Chronos, in reference to *The Secret Doctrine* II, p. 269 *fn.* “We must bear in mind that *Kronos*, equated with Saturn(us), father of Jupiter (= Zeus), is totally distinct from *Chronos* (Time), but certain Greeks and Romans, notorious as they are for false etymology, confused the two. Chronos = *Χρόνος* = Khronos was raised by some to a personified or quasi-personified rank as deity, like *Αἰών* = Aiōn = Time. However, X (ch or kh) is distinct from K, and the h in *ch* or *kh* was important, but dialects vary sometimes in that particular. Macrobius in his *Saturnalia*, I, 8.9, confuses *Saturnus* with *tempus*.” — *Secret Doctrine* II, p. 802]

The modern Prometheus has now become *Epi-metheus*, “he who sees only after the event”; because the universal philanthropy of the former has long ago degenerated into selfishness and self-adoration. Man will re-become the *free* Titan of old, but not before cyclic evolution has re-established the broken harmony between the two natures — the terrestrial and the divine; after which he becomes impermeable to the lower titanic forces, invulnerable in his personality, and immortal in his individuality, which cannot happen before every animal element is eliminated from his nature. When man understands that “*Deus non fecit mortem.*”¹ but that man has created it himself, he will re-become the Prometheus before his Fall.

If man by suppressing, if not destroying, his selfishness and personality, only succeeds in knowing himself as he truly is, he will soon stand beyond all pain and misery, and beyond all the wear and tear of change, which is the chief originator of pain. Such a man will be physically of matter, he will move surrounded by matter, and yet he will live beyond and outside it. His body will be subject to change, but he himself will be entirely above it, and will experience everlasting life even while in temporary bodies of a short span.

All this may be achieved by the development of devotion to and unconditional love of Humanity, the Great Orphan, following the suppression of personality or selfishness, which is the cause of all sin, and consequently of all human sorrow.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. I) XII pp. 537-38.

True knowledge is of Spirit and in Spirit alone, and cannot be acquired in any other way except through the reign of the higher mind, the only plane from which we can penetrate the depths of the all-pervading Absoluteness. He who carries out only those laws established by human minds, who lives that life which is prescribed by the code of mortals and their fallible legislation, chooses as his guiding star a beacon which shines on the ocean of *Māyā*, or temporary delusions, and lasts for but one incarnation. These laws are necessary for the life and welfare of physical man alone. He has chosen a pilot who directs him through the shoals of one existence, a master who parts with him, however, on the threshold of death. How much happier that man who, while strictly performing on the temporary objective plane the duties of daily life, carrying out each and every law of his country, and rendering, in short, to Cæsar what is Cæsar’s, leads in reality a spiritual and permanent existence, a life with no breaks of continuity, no gaps, no interludes, not even those periods which are the halting places of the long pilgrimage of purely spiritual life. All the phenomena of the lower human mind disappear like the curtain of a proscenium, allowing him to live in the region beyond it, the plane of the noumenal, the one reality. If man

¹ *Wisdom of Solomon* i, 17 [Latin for “God made not death,” Cf. “Seek not death in the error of your life: and pull not upon yourselves destruction with the works of your hands. For *God made not death*: neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living. For he created all things, that they might have their being: and the generations of the world were healthful; and there is no poison of destruction in them, nor the kingdom of death upon the earth. . . . But ungodly men with their works and words called it to them: for when they thought to have it their friend, they consumed to nought, and made a covenant with it, because they are worthy to take part with it.” *ibid.* i, 12-16 — ED. PHIL.]

by suppressing, if not destroying, his selfishness and personality, only succeeds in knowing himself as he is behind the veil of physical Māyā, he will soon stand beyond all pain, all misery, and beyond all the wear and tear of change, which is the chief originator of pain. Such a man will be physically of matter, he will move surrounded by matter, and yet he will live beyond and outside it. His body will be subject to change, but he himself will be entirely without it, and will experience everlasting life even while in temporary bodies of short duration. All this may be achieved by the development of unselfish universal love of Humanity, and the suppression of personality, or *selfishness*, which is the cause of all sin, and consequently of all human sorrow.

Happiness cannot exist as long as Egotism reigns supreme, and intellectual progress refuses to accept a subordinate position to ethical progress. And as long as Egotism will not give way to the Altruism, happiness will remain a Utopia.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (MISCONCEPTIONS – I) VIII p. 77.

Happiness cannot exist where Truth is absent. Erected upon the shifting sands of human fiction and hypotheses, happiness is merely a house of cards tumbling down at the first whiff; it cannot exist in reality as long as egotism reigns supreme in civilized societies. As long as intellectual progress will refuse to accept a subordinate position to ethical progress, and egotism will not give way to the Altruism preached by Gautama and the true historical Jesus (the Jesus of the pagan sanctuary, not the Christ of the Churches), happiness for all the members of humanity will remain a Utopia. Whereas the Theosophists are the only ones at present to preach this sublime altruism (even if two-thirds of The Theosophical Society should have failed in this duty), and some of them alone, in the midst of a defiant and sneering mob sacrifice themselves body and soul, honour and possessions, ready to live misunderstood and derided, if only they can succeed in sowing the good seed of a harvest which will not be theirs to reap, those who are interested in the destiny of the miserable people should at least abstain from vilifying them.

Listen to the voice of the Master.

Your motive, being selfish, can only generate a double effect, good and bad, and will either nullify your good action, or turn it to another man's profit. There is no happiness for one who is ever thinking of his little self and forgetting all other selves.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, [SECOND LETTER OF H.P. BLAVATSKY TO THE AMERICAN CONVENTION] XI pp. 168-69.

And now a last and parting word. My words may and will pass and be forgotten, but certain sentences from letters written by the Masters will never pass, because they are the embodiment of the highest practical Theosophy. I must translate them for you:

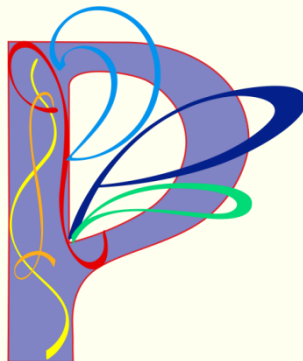
. . . Let not the fruit of good Karma be your motive; for your Karma, good or bad, being one and the common property of all mankind, nothing good or bad can happen to you that is not shared by many others. Hence your motive, being selfish, can only generate a double effect, good and bad, and will either nullify your good action, or turn it to another man's profit. . . . There is no happiness for one who is ever thinking of Self and forgetting all other Selves.

*The Universe groans under the weight of such action (Karma), and none other than self-sacrificial Karma relieves it . . . How many of you have helped humanity to carry its smallest burden, that you should all regard yourselves as Theosophists. Oh, men of the West, who would play at being the Saviours of mankind before they even spare the life of a mosquito whose sting threatens them, would you be partakers of Divine Wisdom or true Theosophists? Then do as the gods when incarnated do. Feel yourselves the vehicles of the whole humanity, mankind as part of yourselves, and act accordingly . . .*¹

These are golden words; may you assimilate them! This is the hope of one who signs herself most sincerely the devoted sister *and servant* of every true follower of the Masters of Theosophy.

Yours fraternally,

H.P. BLAVATSKY



¹ [The source of this passage is unknown, and may have been a letter or message received by H.P. Blavatsky herself. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

Appendix about the author of "The Elixir of Life"

Notes by Philaletheians UK.

"The Elixir of Life" was first published in the March and April 1882 Numbers of Vol. III of *The Theosophist*, and republished three years later in *Five years of Theosophy: mystical, philosophical, theosophical, historical and scientific essays selected from "The Theosophist,"* 575pp. London: Reeves and Turner, 1885; pp. 1-32.¹

The following notes about the author of this astounding article are from the pen of Boris de Zirkoff, Compiler of *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*. They appeared as a footnote to an article by Madame Blavatsky entitled "Is the Desire to "Live" Selfish?," first published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, No. 10 (58), July 1884, pp. 242-243, and subsequently republished in his *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. VI pp. 241-48.

Notes by Boris de Zirkoff.

This remarkable article was written by Mirza Murad Ali Beg. This was an *alias* for Godolphin Mitford, a scion of the old Hampshire family of the Mitfords. His father had served with the East India Company. He was born at Madras and was a very eccentric and peculiar character. He had dabbled in black magic with a selfish motive in view, and had thereby provoked the action of certain elemental entities which played havoc with his consciousness. He was a Mohammedan at the time he came to H.P. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott at their residence in Bombay, on January 20th, 1881. His life had been full of wild adventures. Col. Henry S. Olcott writes of him as follows:

. . . when we met him, [he] was in the military employ of the Maharajah of Bhaunagar as "Chief Cavalry Officer" — practically a sinecure. His had been a wild, adventurous life, more full of misery than the opposite. He had dabbled in Black Magic, among other things, and told me that all the sufferings he had passed through within the preceding few years were directly traceable to the malign persecutions of certain evil powers which he had summoned to help him get into his power a virtuous lady whom he coveted . . . he himself fell under the power of the bad spirits whom he had not the moral strength to dominate after having accepted their compulsory service. Certainly he was a distressful person to be with. Nervous, excitable, fixed on nothing, the slave of his caprices, seeing the higher possibilities of man's nature, yet unable to reach them, he came to us as to a refuge, and shortly after took up his residence in our house

¹ The full text of "The Elixir of Life" can be found under the title "Meditation Proper is Spiritual Seership," in our Down to Earth Series. — ED. PHIL.

for a few weeks. A strange-looking creature for an Englishman he was. His dress was that of a Muslim throughout, save that he had his long light-brown hair tied up in a Grecian knot behind his head, like a woman. His complexion was fair and his eyes light blue. In my Diary I say that he looked more like an actor made up for a part than anything else. The writing of the *Elixir of Life* occurred sometime later, but I may as well tell the story while he is under my mind's eye.

From the time that he came to us he seemed to be engaged in a strong mental and moral conflict within himself. He complained of being dragged hither and thither, first by good, then by bad influences. He had a fine mind, and had done a good deal of reading; he wanted to join our Society, but, as I had no confidence in his moral stamina, I refused him. H.P. Blavatsky, however, offering to become responsible for him, I relented and let her take him in. He repaid her nicely, some months later, by snatching a sword from a sepoy at Wadhwan station, and trying to kill her, crying out that she and her Mahatmas were all devils! In short, he went mad. But to return. While with us he wrote some articles which were printed in *The Theosophist*, and one evening after a talk with us, sat himself down to write on the power of the will to affect longevity. H.P. Blavatsky and I remained in the room, and when he began his writing she went and stood behind him, just as she had in New York when Harisse was making his sketch of one of the Masters, under her thought-transference. The article of Mirza Saheb attracted deserved attention on its appearance,¹ and has ever since ranked as one of the most suggestive and valuable pamphlets in our Theosophical literature. He was doing well, and there was a good chance for him to retrieve much of his lost spirituality if he would only stop with us; but after giving his promise to do so, he obeyed an irresistible impulse and rushed back to Wadhwan and to destruction. His mind did not recover its equilibrium; he turned Roman Catholic, then recanted back into Islam, and finally died, and was buried at Junagadh, where I have seen his humble tomb. His case has always seemed to me a dreadful instance of the danger one runs in dabbling with occult science while the animal passions are rampant.²

Regarding this extraordinary personage, two passages occur in H.P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*. They are as follows:

. . . an Englishman whose erratic genius killed him. The son of a Protestant clergyman, he became a Mahomedan, then a rabid atheist, and after meeting with a *master*, a Guru, he became a mystic; then a theosophist who doubted, despaired; threw up *white* for *black* magic, went insane and joined the Roman Church. Then again turning round, anathematized her, re-became an atheist, and died cursing humanity, knowledge, and God, in whom he had ceased to believe. Furnished with all the esoteric data to write his "War in Heaven," he made a semi-political article out of it, mixing Malthus with Satan, and Darwin with the astral light. Peace be to his — *Shell*. He is a warning to the chelas who fail.

¹ See *The Theosophist*, Vol. III, March & April 1882, pp. 140-42 & 168-71.

² *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, pp. 289-91

His forgotten tomb may now be seen in the Mussulman burial ground of the Junagadh, Kathiawar, in India.¹

He was a most extraordinary Mystic, of a great learning and remarkable intelligence. But he left the Right Path and forthwith fell under Karmic retribution.²

Nevertheless, H.P. Blavatsky recommends in several places his remarkable essay on the "War in Heaven"³ and quotes several passages from it in *The Secret Doctrine*.



¹ *Secret Doctrine*, II, pp. 244-45 fn.

² *ibid.*, II, p. 541 fn.

³ *The Theosophist*, Vol. III (1-3), October, November, December, 1881, pp. 24-25, 36-38, 67-70, respectively.

Suggested reading for students.



On Black versus White Magic.

- “A Strange Story by Bulwer-Lytton”
- “Adoration of male gods led to phallicism and black magic”
- “Akhund Abdul Ghaffur of Swat”
- “Ancient Magic in Modern Science”
- “Animated statues, trophies of the Black Art”
- “Auras of mediums and adepts”
- “Between Black and White Magic there is but a cobweb thread”
- “Black Magic is in full sway amidst mankind”
- “Black versus White Magic, the two Opposing Powers”
- “Blavatsky on the author of Phallicism”
- “Blavatsky on the malignant fever of unsound scepticism”
- “Buddhist Feminism in Ceylon”
- “Capital punishment is a relic of Jewish barbarity”
- “Christian Lectures on Buddhism”
- “Christianity has retarded the Woman’s progress”
- “Confessions of Cyprianus, the Penitent Sorcerer of Antioch”
- “Egyptian Magic, good and bad”
- “Evil is an illusion caused by the Circle of Necessity”
- “Evil is the infernal end of the polarity of spirit-matter”
- “Exact Science versus Archaic Philosophy”
- “Frightening crying children into silence”
- “How can a Black Magician be known”
- “Hugo's La Fin de Satan (1911)”
- “Hylo-Idealism is a fig leaf for Crass Materialism”
- “Insights to the high idealism and quaint wit of Eliphas Levi”
- “Insights to the Occult Arts”
- “Instead of Black and White Magic, read selfish and unselfish motive”

- “Magic is the Occult Knowledge of Natural Law”
- “Mediumship and Adeptship are poles apart”
- “No one has the right to control the mind of another”
- “Occultism and Kabbalah are only masks to hide the sacred truth from the profane”
- “On Astral Intoxication”
- “On malevolent bewitchments and venomous magic”
- “Ormuzd and Ahriman are ever opposing powers, yet inseparable and interdependent”
- “Papal dispensation for murder and mayhem”
- “Phallicism and Phallic Worship”
- “Presentiments of what lies in the bosom of future”
- “Psychological and conjuring tricks”
- “Reflections of an ardent apostle”
- “Religious conversion means absolute perversion”
- “Selfishness is the cause of all sin and suffering”
- “Selfishness is the hallmark of fakirs, hermits, and yogins”
- “Sin by cruel acquiescence in an unworthy fashion”
- “Soul-destroying sophistry is fake wisdom”
- “Spirit and Matter are dual aspects of One Cause”
- “Spiritual progress is not aided by watching the Astral Light”
- “Teraphim are the elemental spirits of ancient divination”
- “The Arabian Nights are echoes from of Lemuria and Atlantis”
- “The Astral Light reflects images of every thought and action”
- “The Ensouled Violin”
- “The Idyll of the White Lotus”
- “The Origin of Good and Evil”
- “The Original Sin is a Jewish Invention”
- “The Pernicious Sophistry of Hypocrisy”
- “The Pitfalls of Occult Arts and Metaphysical Healing”
- “The power of the magician is inversely related to his worldly interests”
- “The process of precipitating handwritten letters explained”
- “The Silent Brother”
- “The spiritual blindness of anthropomorphism”
- “The Theosophical Society’s position on hypnotism”

- “Theological anthropomorphism is the parent of materialism”
- “Theological malice is the root cause of Satanic Magic”
- “Trained imagination can produce occult phenomena”
- “True magic is the Gnosis of Pythagoras”
- “Warning to phenomena seekers”
- “When theological ethics speak no longer in man”
- “Why women should avoid the Church like a plague”
- “Yoga is a wolf in sheep’s clothing”



On self-adoration and greed.

- “Poverty breeds generosity, wealth greed and selfishness”
— *in our Down to Earth Series.*
- “What shall we do with our victory?”
— *in our Hellenic and Hellenistic Papers Series.*

On the brutal foot of materialism.

- “Without the revival of Aryan philosophy, the West will fall to even grosser materialism”
— *in our Blavatsky Speaks Series.*
- “Materialism, Spiritualism, Monism”
— *in our Confusing Words Series.*
- “Blavatsky on the materialism of today”
— *in our Down to Earthy Series.*

