

# *Toward the Brotherhood of Man*



## ***Abstract and train of thoughts***<sup>1</sup>

### **Toward the Brotherhood of Man.**

No spiritual progress at all is possible except by and through Humanity at large, when all sense of separateness, all selfishness, all feeling of personal interest and desire, has been merged in the wider consciousness of Unity. 3

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. 3

#### **Questions raised by Barbara Moskvitinoff.**

#### **Editorial response by Madame Blavatsky.**

The sense of separateness of one's self from his other selves, his brothers and sisters, is delusionary for it breeds the desire of satisfying of self in matter and at the expense of everyone else. 4

What men call "self" is the illusionary reflection of the One Universal Self in the heaving waters of earth. 4

No spiritual progress at all is possible except by and through the humanity at large. 5

### **Aliment for the soul and a warning.**

He who is thoroughly imbued with altruistic feelings, with a willingness to forget self, and readiness to help his neighbour to carry the burden of life, is to become the object of ridicule, slander, and vilification. 6

It is one of the most difficult yet necessary things in life to learn to disdain. Disdain protects and crushes. 7

#### **Suggested reading for students.**

From our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series. 8



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<sup>1</sup> Title page illustration by Connie Ely McClure.

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### Questions raised by Barbara Moskvitinoff.

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. IV, No. 19, March 1889, pp. 87-88.

Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THEOSOPHICAL QUERIES) XI pp. 103-6.

The first object of the Theosophical Society being to promote the principle of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, how can it be reconciled with the aim that, at the same time, it presents in life to every individual being: — the duty of developing his Higher Self, by the sacrifice of every selfish desire, by the conquest of all material interest, for the mere purpose of attaining a higher spiritual perfection, in order that this perfection should transform our *faith* in the spiritual world *into sight* and *knowledge*, and give us “life everlasting.”

How can one practice altruism and philanthropy, when one devotes one’s life to the cultivation of the inner spiritual being and the attainment of total indifference to the physical world?

Can there be a compromise? Can one divide one’s existence, and serve two principles at once? Now if the first, which is the altruistic principle, be taken as a beacon for one’s activity, which is the right way to apply it? If neglecting all personal interest, one works for the welfare of people, by trying to give them a happier earthly existence, may not the accusation be raised against one that it is too materialistic to work *only* for the practical welfare of people, as if men were born merely for enjoyment?

This reproach will be evaded if one holds to the theory that presents the reign of the moral law as the aim of an altruist . . . But what is the right criterion for one’s judgment? . . . Can anybody be certain enough of possessing the real knowledge of truth, to demand blind submission to it from others? And what right has anyone to believe that his opinion must be accepted on authority — when he himself can err? If the Christian principle of giving away everything one possesses to the poor were universally practised, there would be no poor in this world to be benefitted; or rather there would be nobody who would want to possess any worldly goods, and so the benefit of civilization would be lost? This seems very irrational. If, by a firm conviction in one’s

spiritual immortality, and complete indifference to all practical benefit in this world, a certain calmness of mind, can be attained, but through moral suffering, has one a right to impose it upon others? To try to show them that all that makes the enjoyment of life is but temporary and illusive; that we are on the eve of losing everything we love; would not such thoughts darken the existence of the majority, and deprive it of all energy for action in practical life? In such a case, what is the use of our faculties and talents, which must have a physical plane to act upon? Must they be neglected and stifled in order to give the spirit the liberty and the means to devote itself to the attainment of self-perfection, and the study of the higher spiritual knowledge that gives immortality?

BARBARA MOSKVITINOFF

5/17 February 1889  
Petersbourg, Petite Morskaia

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## Editorial response by Madame Blavatsky.

The questions asked and the difficulties propounded in the foregoing letter arise mainly from an imperfect acquaintance with the philosophical teachings of Theosophy. They are a most striking proof of the wisdom of those who have repeatedly urged Theosophists to devote their energies to mastering, at least, the outlines of the metaphysical system upon which our Ethics are based.

**The sense of separateness of one's self from his other selves, his brothers and sisters, is delusionary for it breeds the desire of satisfying of self in matter and at the expense of everyone else.**

**What men call "self" is the illusionary reflection of the One Universal Self in the heaving waters of earth.**

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.



**No spiritual progress at all is possible except by and through the humanity at large.**

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.

This shows also that no blind submission to the commands of another can be demanded, or would 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.

EDITOR, *Lucifer*



## Aliment for the soul and a warning.

**He who is thoroughly imbued with altruistic feelings, with a willingness to forget self, and readiness to help his neighbour to carry the burden of life, is to become the object of ridicule, slander, and vilification.**

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. I (1), September 1887, pp. 71-75.

Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (LITERARY JOTTINGS) VIII pp. 31-33.

It is rumoured that *A Catechism on Every-Day Life*, by a Theosophical writer, is ready for press. Let us hope it will contain no special theology or dogmas, but only wise advice for practical life, in its application to the ordinary events in the existence of every theosophist. The time has come when the veil of illusion is to be pulled aside entirely, not merely playfully, as hitherto done. For if mere members of the theosophical body have nothing to risk, except, perhaps, an occasional friendly stare and laugh at those who, without any special necessity, as believed, pollute the immaculate whiteness of their respectable society skirts by joining an unpopular movement, real theosophists ought to look truth and fact right in the face. To become a true theosophist — *i.e.*, one thoroughly imbued with altruistic feelings, with a willingness to forget self, and readiness to help his neighbour to [32] carry the burden of life — is to become instantaneously transformed into a public target. It is to make oneself a ready thing for heavy “Mrs. Grundy”<sup>2</sup> to sit upon: to become the object of ridicule, slander, and vilification, which will not stop even before an occasional criminal charge. For some theosophists, every move in the *true theosophical direction*, is a forlorn-hope enterprise. All this notwithstanding, the ranks of the “unpopular” society are steadily, if slowly increasing.

- For what does slander and ridicule really matter?
- When have fools ever been slandered, or rich and influential men and women ostracised, however black and soiled in their hearts, or in their secret lives?
- Who ever heard of a Reformer’s or an orator’s course of life running smooth?
- Who of them escaped from being pelted with dirt by his enemies?

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<sup>2</sup> [A figurative name for an extremely conventional or priggish person, a personification of the tyranny of conventional propriety. A tendency to be overly fearful of what the respectable might think is also referred to as Grundyism. Although she began life as a minor character in Thomas Morton’s play *Speed the Plough* (1798), Mrs. Grundy was eventually so well established in the public imagination that Samuel Butler, in his novel *Erewhon*, could refer to her in the form of an anagram (as the goddess Ydgrun). As a figure of speech she can be found throughout European literature. — *Wikipedia*.]

**It is one of the most difficult yet necessary things in life to learn to disdain. Disdain protects and crushes.**

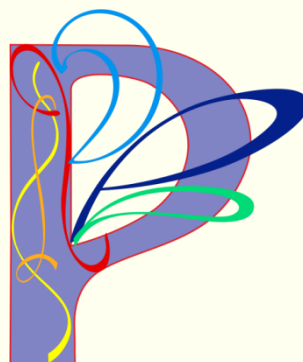
Gautama Buddha, the great Hindu Reformer, was charged by the Brahmins with being a demon, whose form was taken by Vishnu, to encourage men to despise the Vedas, deny the gods, and thus effect their own destruction.

“Say we not well thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?” said the Pharisees to Jesus. “He deceiveth the people . . . Stone him to death!”

“He who surpasses or subdues mankind,  
Must look down on the hate of those below,”<sup>3</sup>

says the great English poet. The latter is echoed in prose by the King of French poets. Writes Victor Hugo [to Abel-François Villemain]:

. . . you have your enemies; but who has not? Guizot has enemies, Thiers has enemies, Lamartine has enemies. Have I not been myself fighting for twenty years? Have I not been for twenty years past hated, rended, sold, betrayed, reviled, hooted, taunted, insulted, calumniated? Have not my books been parodied, and my deeds travestied? I also am beset and spied upon; I also have traps set for me, and I have even been made to fall into them. . . . But what is all that to me? I disdain it. It is one of the most difficult yet necessary things in life to learn to disdain. Disdain protects and crushes. It is [33] a breastplate and a club. You have enemies? Why, it is the story of every man who has done a great deed, or created a new idea. It is the cloud which thunders around everything which shines. . . . Do not bother yourself about it. [Keep your life serene as you keep your life clear.] Do not give your enemies the satisfaction of thinking that they cause you grief or pain. Be happy, be cheerful, be disdainful, be firm.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>3</sup> [Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III, 45. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

<sup>4</sup> [*Choses Vues* (Things Seen). International edition limited to 1,000 copies. Boston: Estes and Lauriat, (1890?), pp. 78-79]

## Suggested reading for students.



### From our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series.

- A WORTHY LIFE IS A VIRTUOUS LIFE
- ANGELS WEEP AT THE SIGHT OF HUMAN SORROW
- CHELAS AND LAY CHELAS
- CHELASHIP RULES FROM THE KIU-TE
- COMMENTARY ON THE GAYATRI BY JUDGE
- DISCHARGING THE DUTY OF ANOTHER IS DANGEROUS
- DIVINE VS. WORLDLY LOVE
- EYE VS. HEART DOCTRINE
- HARMONY IS THE ONE LAW IN NATURE
- HEART DOCTRINE AND HIGHER ETHICS
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- LIGHT ON THE PATH
- LOVE IS THE HEALING POWER OF THE SUCCESSFUL PHYSICIAN
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- NARADA BHAKTI SUTRA
- PROCLUS ON THE TEACHER-DISCIPLE BOND OF LOVE
- PROTREPTICS TO DEVOTIONAL LOVE IN IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA
- REAL LIFE THRILLS IN THE SEVEN BRAINS OF THE HEART
- SEPTUAGINT'S SONG OF SONGS - TR. BRENTON
- STAND READY TO ABANDON ALL YOU HAVE LEARNED WITH THE HEAD
- THAT PURE DESIRE, OF WHOM LOVE IS BORN
- THE BHAGAVAD GITA - SEVEN ESSAYS BY JUDGE
- THE BHAGAVAD GITA - TR. JUDGE
- THE DEVOTIONAL SONGS OF KABIR SAHEB
- THE LEGEND OF THE BLUE LOTUS
- THE PATH, BY REGINALD WILLOUGHBY MACHELL



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- THE STORY OF NARADA AND THE SUPREMACY OF BHAKTI
- THE TRANS-HIMALAYAN MAHATMAS ARE MEN LIVING ON EARTH
- THE VERY BEST OF ALL TALISMANS
- THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE - SEVEN MYSTIC SOUNDS
- THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE - TR. BLAVATSKY
- THEOLOGIA GERMANICA - TR. WINKWORTH
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE AMARANTHINE DREAM
- TRUE PRAYER IS MENTAL UTTERANCE IN SECRET
- WARNINGS TO WOULD-BE OCCULTISTS
- WHEN THE SUN MOVES NORTHWARD

