



# **The Beginning of Real Life**

**By Charles Johnston**



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## The Lord of the Three Worlds

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“All this, verily, is the Eternal; let him draw near to it in the silence, as gleaming through all the world.

“Man, verily, is formed of Will; as a man’s Will is, in this world, so, verily, he himself becomes; and going forth from the world, he is what he has willed; therefore let him follow his Will.

“Formed of mind, bodied in Life, shining like the sun, willing the real, robed in shining ether—doing all things, desiring all things, savouring all things, tasting all things, embracing all that is, silent, unsorrowing;—this is my Soul, in the heart within, smaller than a grain of rye, than a grain of barley, than a grain of mustard-seed, than a grain of rice, or a rice-grain’s kernel;

“This is my Soul, in the heart within, mightier than the earth, mightier than the firmament, mightier than heaven, mightier than all these worlds.

“Doing all things, desiring all things, savouring all things, tasting all things, embracing all that is, silent, unsorrowing;—this is my Soul in the heart within. When I go forth hence, this shall I become. Who has become this, doubts no more.”—*Chhandogya Upanishad*, III:14.

I think we may begin by heartily congratulating all who have thereto contributed, on having reached a result, after twenty-three years’ work, and gained a victory, the like of which the world has not seen for centuries—perhaps for ages.

It is well worth while to consider a little wherein that victory consists.

One has heard good people, during these stormy years, express, with sighs, a deep regret for all our turmoils, and a devout longing that

we might have peace, balmy peace. The lords of life who arranged these things, must have smiled—an inscrutable eastern smile—knowing well that the turmoil was the work; that all these shocks and storms and stresses were the very heart of the whole matter, the essential part of the educational process; the very end and aim for which they were working. The lords of life have little taste for peace, balmy peace.

And after the prodigious shaking which we have gone through, where are we shaken to? what has come of it all?

First, this: We all—that is, all the survivors—have come to hold a very real belief in the Occult World—to use a fine old phrase that has many excellent associations. We got our training in the Old Lady's days, and through her temperament and genius. For without the Occult World, Mme. Blavatsky was simply unintelligible, and more than that, exasperating. And she greatly exasperated all who came across her, unless they succeeded in gaining some hold of the Occult World, and some insight into it, and thereby, into her also. One simply could not know Mme. Blavatsky without getting one's mind full of adepts and initiations, and reincarnations, and elementals, and mysteries, whether lost or found. These things were the air she breathed, and made you breathe, or smother. One had the feeling, in her presence, that it was quite unfashionable not to have been initiated—like wearing a hat of a by-gone day, in a well-dressed crowd. So she gave you the sense of the Occult World—the other half of things, and more than half; and reduced to due humility this self-assertive world we are all so fond of. And the other people got wildly exasperated, and fell upon her and multiplied epithets exceedingly, and that was the first glorious row, grim enough as it looked at the time, to all who had the pleasure of taking part in it. And all who survived found that they had a very real and solid belief in the Occult World, though perhaps no quite clear understanding as to what kind of world it might be. And this belief was not a matter of logic or reason at all;—logic and reason really count for so very little in life; it was a matter of character, of will, automatic, involuntary—a solid reality. People say they believe this or that; but it is character that really counts. They act as they must act; as their will is, to that they go.

Then came the second great row, not equal at all in stress to the first, but yet very full of power and light—for the survivors. This time it was a question of principle—was the Occult World thus or thus? Or, in other words, am I justified in judging and condemning any person whatever, under any circumstances whatever? And this brings in the question of what is called “brotherhood,” the matter that was really tried, during that second time of storm. And as people talk so much of this brotherhood, one may well make at least an attempt to define it. For brotherhood is like the Self in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

“Some talk of it as wonderful, some behold it as wonderful, some hear it as wonderful—but even hearing it, no one knows what it is.”

That is like brotherhood. No one seems to know what it is. It seems to be something like this. Having got some sense of the Occult World, we begin to look at life, in the light of it, and to see the mysterious side of life turning up in all sorts of unexpected quarters. We used to look at people as things outside ourselves, not in any sense a part of us; whom we had to profit by, or suffer by, as the case might be; but always in relation to ourselves. But, with the sense of the occult in life, we begin to get a sense of the occult in people. We begin to feel a second element in them, besides their relation to our own profit and loss. We begin to get a glimpse of their individual selves. It may seem a small thing to say this, but it is not really a small thing. On the contrary, it is the greatest thing possible, excepting only one thing. And most people are born, get married, and die, without ever getting a glimpse of any individual life of anyone whatever, beyond their particular selves. To touch the life of another person, really and consciously, is the rarest thing in this cloud-wrapped world. We all live in a maze of mirrors, and even when we look into each others' eyes we see—ourselves. So with the sense of the Occult, came the revelation; the sense of the individual life of other people: in whatever small and limited degree. And the moment when you first feel the life of another, as vividly as if it were a part of your own consciousness—that moment is the beginning of an epoch. You realize that the life of each is as interesting to him, as important to him, as much his own possession, as your life is for you. And from that time forth, it becomes inherently

impossible to judge or condemn anyone whatever for anything whatever. The thing is a part of his life; his life is his own possession, and there is an end of it. This is not the doctrine of non-resistance. On the contrary. It may be a man's Karma to do something I greatly resent. That is his affair, and I do not dream of condemning him. It may be my Karma to club him for doing it. That is my affair, and he should not dream of condemning me. But the truth is, once, after all the ages, we begin to get a real sense of the fact that other people have souls—have real lives that can touch our consciousness—that moment all talk of condemning, and judging, and all the rest of it, becomes out of date. We have entered a new epoch. As Paul would say, we are not under the Law; we are under Grace. And there is no use saying, or pretending, or wishing, to have reached this insight. It is a question of fact. Either we have, or we have not. And as our will is, so shall we act, no matter what we believe our convictions to be. And the second great storm brought out that sense of things. Those who had the intuition went one way; those who had not, went the other way. And all judgements and condemnations were ludicrously irrelevant, as they always are. So we took our second step in the Occult World. We “gained the human world” and the fulfilment of our desires. And we might indeed spend a series of ages very beneficially in working out that part of our lesson, as indeed we are likely to do. For the problem is, to touch the souls of all other people, in an inward and intimate way, until they are as vivid for us as our own. And then I trust we shall have found a better word to express the result than “brotherhood,”—a term rather stale, and fallen into bad repute.

Now there comes another question to be tried. When we have gained some sense of the Occult World—when we have consented that is, to live for our souls, as well as for our bodies—and when we have further opened the doors of our souls, just a little, so that we get faint glimpses of other people, and see that they have souls too—there comes another matter to be decided. Are we going to get carried away by the genius of other people, and follow after what we see in their souls? or are we going to hold a balance between our souls and theirs, giving due allowance to each? And this question brings us to the third world. For, if we are to find a true balance, we can only do it in one way. The matter seems to be something like this. We all have our

desires, and our fancies, and our hopes, and our fears. And we might well spend an age in watching these things in each other, and find great entertainment therein. But there is more of us than our desires, our hopes, our fears. There is the Will in us; the Genius; the common Power, which possesses us all, rather than is possessed by us. And this Will in us has this quality: whereas our desires may contradict each other, and bring us into conflict with each other, our wills never contradict each other, and they never imitate each other. Thus: all true poetry is the work of the Genius, the Will, above the man's desires. And all true poets have united in singing one great poem, the song of man. There is no contradiction; no imitation; no repetition. There is absolute originality throughout, yet perfect oneness of design. And thus the Will works through our lives. Each of us has an inner power, a genius, a gift; something that never was before, nor shall be again. Something spheral and infinite and immortal. And for that, we live. The whole purpose of our lives is to draw that genius forth through ourselves, and thereby to be ourselves. And I do not mean a poetic gift, or any artistic production of any kind, but something quite different, and much more vital: namely, that each of us has a gift for dealing in a certain way with all other souls; for standing in a certain relation to them; for affecting them by our wills; for touching them and being touched by them; and this gift is singular, and peculiar to each of us. It has never been anticipated, and will never be repeated. Now the question comes: have we the courage to be ourselves?—to stand by our gift, our own revelation?

If we have not come to feel any such gift, it is no matter. There are all the ages before us. There is plenty of time. But having once felt it we are either to have the courage to stand by it, or we are going to go under. Again, it is a question of fact, to be tried as such, and not of convictions, or of what people say that they believe. There is this to be added: the sense of one's own genius, of one's own will, carries with it the sense of immortality, of dawning omnipotence, for the will is at one with the Will universal; and is thereby different from the desires. So that to feel one's own genius, one's own will, one's own Self, is to become immortal; to become lord of the third world.

And the third great storm in our sea decided that. Either we elected each to stand by his own genius, or we did not. And to criticise, and to

judge, and to condemn, and to recriminate, are ludicrously irrelevant; they simply have nothing at all to do with the question at issue; nothing at all to do with the Occult World; but belong wholly to the region of desire and fear, and general cussedness. in which one side of us will still linger through long, glad, enjoyable ages. It is curious, but it is absolutely true, that while we condemn each other, we remain wholly unconscious of each other. The moment we reach the first real consciousness of each other, of each others' lives and souls, that moment we become wholly incapable of condemning at all. Life looks so different after that.

So the survivors have become conscious of three things: first, of their own souls; then of other peoples' souls; then of the universal Soul, manifested in themselves, as in others. And that is our victory, and it is one worth cheering over, for long ages to come.

And to become conscious of these three things is to make a certain very definite attainment in Occultism—to begin, at least, to hold lordship over the three worlds. And that attainment, our twenty odd years of storm and stress have brought. A certain very definite attainment in Occultism. That is the first part of the victory, on gaining which we tender our humble congratulations to the lords of life. But that is not all. We have further the fact that this attainment has been reached by a number of people together—fighting together, very often, it may be; but that only promotes good feeling. The point is, that a number of people, knowing each other, are more or less clearly conscious that they have all reached this definite attainment in Occultism, and have reached it together. A further tender of congratulation to the lords of life—again most humbly offered. Nor is this yet all.

We have further done this in the midst of the working world, in the eye of day, amongst the great crowd of humanity; not in monastic cells, or out of the way corners of jungle or hill, but “right here,” in the world of day. And, so far as I have heard, not one of us has been crucified, or made to drink the hemlock, or burned at the stake. If one were allowed to nominate the aspirants for martyrdom, one might be disposed to regret this. But let that pass. The point is, that no one of the band of the elect of the ages has missed a meal, as

a punishment for his faith. So let no one talk of terrible persecution. Thus the third element of our victory. We are yet in the world, mildly tolerated by the world, and with all our knowledge, and holding that knowledge in common.

Now that a number of people should make this attainment in Occultism—namely, to become conscious of their own souls, their neighbours' souls, and the universal Soul over all; that they should make this attainment in common, and make it in the world;—this is a threefold victory, the like of which has not been seen for ages, and on which we sincerely congratulate the lords of life, and as sincerely congratulate ourselves. The cosmic gods may rest a while on their oars and smoke the cosmic pipe of contentment, and bask in the Central Sun, and contemplate, and generally have a good time, on the strength of all this. The Masters in occult arts may take a holiday, conscious that they have earned it, and enjoy their sweet repose. And so, for a while, may we; and let the deep contentment of our peace steal in upon us, and feel the great quietness and serenity, and eternal youngness of real life. Such peace may be ours, for a while, at least, till the voice arises in the silence, saying: "It is not well. You have reaped, now must you sow."

For it is but natural to think that such great attainments as we have seen ourselves to possess, carry with them certain responsibilities—or shall we be sanctimonious, and say 'certain sweet privileges'?—but of these responsibilities, more anon.



# Meditation

Oriental Department,  
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“The seer is not born, nor dies, nor does He come from aught, or become aught. Unborn, everlasting, eternal, the Ancient is not slain when the body is slain.

“If the slayer thinks to slay Him, if the slain thinks He is slain, both understand not; this slays not, nor is slain.

“Smaller than small, mightier than mighty, this Soul dwells in the heart of every being; without sacrifice he beholds the greatness of the Soul, through the grace of that Ruler, and free from sorrow.

“Seated, that Soul goes far; resting, it goes everywhere. Who else is worthy to know that bright one, who is unsated delight?

“Bodiless in bodies; firm among fleeting things; the wise man grieves not, perceiving that mighty lord, the Soul.

“This Soul is not to be gained by preaching, nor by knowledge, nor by hearing much; whom this Soul chooses, by him it is to be won; and the Soul chooses his body for its own.

“But not he who has ceased not from evil, who has not won peace, who is not intent, nor he whose mind has not won peace, may win Him even by wisdom.

“Of whom priest and warrior are the food, whose anointing is Death—who rightly knows where that Soul is?”—*Katha Upanishad*, I:2.

“The Breath breathes where it will, and the voice of it thou hearest, but knowest not whence it comes, and whither it goes; so is everyone who has been born of the Breath.”

I once gained a great reputation for wisdom, with a tender young Brother, who tiptoed about in search of his soul. He asked me if I

really knew anything about Meditation, and I answered: "Absolutely nothing." He thought that only an adept could make a reply like that.

But if I know nothing about Meditation, or at least about the strange, weird thing he had in mind, I suspect many things. And one of them is, that a great deal of nonsense has been spoken about this somewhat mysterious topic.

Underneath this aspirant's question was an assumption which is really at the root of much human folly—the assumption that we can avail ourselves of the superior wisdom of some one else, to save our souls, or to get into the kingdom of heaven, or to "establish communications with adepts," or whatever expression one may give to this aspiration.

I do not think the enquirer about meditation would have admitted that; I do not think he even realized it. Nevertheless, it is true that numbers of people, who have been studying the traditions of wisdom for years, and who ought to know better, do really believe that they can be "saved," or acquire "spiritual merit," whatever they may be, through the wisdom or knowledge of some one else. And in this supposition there lurks a double danger; a danger to the person believing, and a danger to the person believed in.

The first danger, I think, we have all had chances to observe. We have seen to what extent admiring worship can go; how soon it turns into servile adulation; and how soon this, in its turn, becomes absolute slavery. So that people of mature age, and otherwise sound intellect, go about in bodily and mental fear of their prophets, and are in continual dread that, even in thought, they may offend; and as far as human experience goes, there is apparently no limit at all to the wild absurdities of superstitious dread which an otherwise sane human being can fall into, till we come to the terrorism of the eastern astrologer, stretching from before birth until after death; the tyranny of the Hindu priest, whose disciples are induced to do all kinds of humiliating and idiotic things; and, indeed, the "spiritual" tyranny of priests all the world over, and in every age.

Now as far as the degrading effect of this kind of worship is concerned, I am deeply convinced that it matters very little whether it be bestowed on a worthy or an unworthy object. The condition of moral

deliquescence arrived at is precisely the same. The sufferer gradually loses all self-reliance, all power of initiative, all strength of will, all the elasticity and buoyancy of spirit which alone give him a right to breathe the vital airs. And I would make no exception whatever to this rule, but rather would declare it to be my most assured conviction that worship of any teacher, spiritual pastor, or master, however high, however holy he may be, is invariably weakening and degrading to the worshipper, and deprives him of all possibility of acquiring that very spiritual power which he so much admires in another.

And this sort of worship is very demoralising to its object. There is, in every one of us, a fountain of unquenchable valour, through which we feel ourselves easily able to counterbalance the world, and dwell in firm and buoyant possession of our own lives. There is also in us a boundless possibility of cowardice, through which we are continually driven to seek the feeling or strength by various outer expedients. The pursuit of riches is only one of these expedients. No man seeks wealth, unless he feels himself to be poor. And the greater the avidity of his search, the greater his confession of poverty.

Another expedient is the craving for domination over others. We seek to assure ourselves of our strength, by making other people do things our way, and see things as we see them; and we cannot endure contradiction, and difference of opinion. Some people are born sectarians, always contesting someone's opinion, and fighting for their own view of truth. And they are unhappy, to the utmost depths of misery, when other people disagree with them; and they have ever in their minds a division of mankind into orthodox and heterodox, loyal and traitors, faithful and faithless—the first term of the division meaning nothing more than those who agree with themselves, and their opinions. And that craving to have people see things our way is an element of weakness, for it shows that we have no real and abiding satisfaction in our own truth, for its own intrinsic value. And this element of weakness, going with an otherwise gifted nature, brings the longing for spiritual domination. There is nothing which people are more ready to administer to than this instinct; and the way along that flowery path is swift. It brings at no very distant dale, the willingness to reinforce domination by appeals to all kinds of supernatural authority, whether it be: "thus saith the Lord." or "the Master says—." The appeal

in the one case is as bad as in the other. The truest thing on earth can but be true; it cannot be any truer because an archangel says it. And once the authority of the archangels is invoked, their names are likely to be appended to all kinds of queer and unexpected documents.

Let me give an instance, a perfectly authentic fact. A remarkable clairvoyant, who had a talent for many things, but little ability in matters of practical life, got into the way of endorsing all kinds of true enough visions by saying "Master—says this or that." It finally came down to this: "Master—says you are to pay my land-lady for me." This was done. Then came the codicil: "Master says: I hope you did not forget the washing?"

As far as we can understand human frailty, there is no limit in this direction, just as there is no limit to the foolishness which people may be led into, by the habit of following these supernatural sanctions. The result is bad, in either case. And this, without regard to the initial sanity or sanctity of the culprits.

So that, when my young friend asked me whether I knew anything about mediation, what he really meant was: do you know any psychological trick, which you can teach me, and through which I may be able to save my soul?

Now I think the principle which underlies this, is wholly false, and I shall try to bring this false principle to light. I am very completely convinced that no one can derive any benefit at all from any teacher, pastor, or master, or any "highly evolved entity" whatever, except in so far as that person possesses his own soul, and is consciously master of his own life.

We freely admit that each of us must eat for himself; we would not dream of trying to take exercise by deputy; each of us, without reasoning about it, learns to keep his centre of gravity directly over the centre of support, in such a manner that the line joining the two, if produced, would pass through the centre of the earth; or, to speak plain prose, each one of the thousand five hundred millions of people on the globe has to learn to stand upright, by his own exertions, and to breathe on his own account from the boundless ocean of the air. And we all admit this necessary independence in each person's relation with the natural world, and we should esteem any man to be of unsound

intellect, who maintained the contrary.

Yet how many people will as easily admit that we must learn to stand on our own feet, in the spiritual world? The reason is, because they have no such faith in the spiritual world, as they have in the natural world, and no such belief in our real and intimate relation with spiritual powers. Yet that relation is as intimate, as constant, as uninterrupted, as our relation with gravity, or with the air we breathe, not as a metaphor at all, but as a simple, unadorned fact. We are in spiritual life all the time, whether we know it or not; whether we want it or not; whether we have ever dreamed of it or not. And our evident duty is, to find our own footing, and to keep it as sturdily and as naturally, as we keep our footing in the natural world.

If we get this clearly into our minds, we shall see how misleading is much that is said and written about Meditation. It is suggested that we should “meditate” in order to “come into contact with adepts.” I imagine that the contact, if established, would in most cases be very embarrassing to both parties. But that is not the point. What business has anyone to “come into contact with adepts”, or to want to do so? What a man should really aspire to, is to master his own life, and use his own powers; to become a stable and reliable member of the cosmic family, and to be of such force that he may perform such duties as fall in his way, towards his neighbours and himself.

It may seem that this is a small thing to aspire to. It is anything but a small thing. I never knew anyone yet that had mastered a tithe of his powers, or was in any immediate danger of so doing. For there are unsounded infinities in every man, deep well-springs of immortality, of joy, of power, which only the ages will fully reveal to him, and he has only to begin to take an inventory of his treasures, to learn that they are really boundless. But what chance has anyone to gain this mastery or his own life, if he is all the time running after other peoples opinions? And what worse form can this pursuit take, than the adept-hunting which we have all seen so much of?

I am perfectly certain that no adept, master, magician, sage, or whatever you may call him, can do anything at all for anyone who does not stand on his own feet in the spiritual world, and see with his own eyes. Then there is no longer a question of the big brother doing

something for the little brother, in the spoon-feeding sense. The matter is rather that two people, of the respectable brotherhood of man, have come naturally together, each following his own path, and that they will journey a while in common, each meanwhile doing his own walking, his own breathing, his own seeing.

And what is generally thought of, as meditation, is simply a psychological trick to defeat this natural order of things, and to gain some imagined advantage, beginning with occult powers, and ending with the attainment of Nirvana.

We have been told, by the various adherents of Meditation, that one should set apart an hour, or half an hour, every day, and fix the mind on something, variously suggested, from the dial of a watch, to the mind of Parabrahm, and that by repeating this process, one will finally find himself in the company of the sages. I have known a great many people who advocated these practices, through a good many years, but I cannot say that the result is, on the whole, cheering. Many of them are greatly satisfied with what they say they have attained, and will tell you the number of mansions in the Father's house, or almost anything else, except what is of value for real life; but the truth seems to be that, by following any of these psychic panaceas, they ultimately lose all sane touch with real life, and drift off into some imaginary paradise, which their imaginations have, unknown to themselves, been building up, and in which they pass useless days, until the end comes, and they are set adrift again.

I do not think the great secret is so readily won; and I feel inclined to suspect the wisdom of anyone who professes to have a certain bundle of recipes for spiritual wisdom, whether he be called an adept, or an archangel. Life is not so simple as that. There is a private revelation, to each of us, of the meaning of our own lives, and until we have listened very attentively to that, we shall be ill employed listening to anyone else's wisdom.

It seems to me that this idea of master and pupil is simply an outcome of the instinct of cowardice on the one hand, and domination on the other, of which I have already spoken. This exalting of a human being for worship always fills me with misgiving. The worshipped cannot be more than a human being; the worshipper

cannot be less. One may admire and rejoice in the wisdom of another, but that is no reason for disloyalty towards one's own soul. We may admire a sprint runner, but we do not therefore give up walking, on our own accounts.

These are but a few of the directions in which I think we are in great danger of being misled, or of misleading ourselves. They all arise from looking for light in wrong directions. We must look to our own souls for light, and nowhere else. And we must remember that the finding of the light, the awakening of an intuition, is not the end of the matter, but the beginning. An intuition is a perception of something to do. Then comes the question: have we the courage to do it? Till we settle that, we shall have no second intuition, no further light. And I do not think that one's courage is reinforced by meditation. On the contrary, the more you meditate on a thing to be done, the less likely are you to do it. The real thing is, not meditation, but action. Meditation is the sketch. Action is the picture. Meditation is the plan. Action is the building. A wise rule is: when you have perceived even a little light, meditate no more until you have accomplished what you saw was to be done.

And I question the wisdom of set periods for meditation. The Spirit has its own wild way of speaking to man, and makes little account of his often pious invitations. The great thing is, when that Spirit speaks, be it but once in a life-time, that we shall be ready to obey; and not "through vileness make the great betrayal." When we have carried out one command of the Spirit, it will be time enough to invite the next. I think each of us could shrewdly guess at some one thing to be done, without any prolonged meditation. It is not the insight we lack, so much as the nerve to try if it will work; to make experiments, even at the risk of upsetting our comfortable lives. Our blood runs chill and thin, and no amount of Meditation will warm it. A little action will clear things up, more than a great deal of mediation. The real matter is the question of our wills. The later Indian schools exalted the intellect and its perceptions, and almost forgot the will. And from these schools come the maxims of meditation which are retailed to us.

Nothing, whether in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, can save us at all, except the valour of our own souls.



## [True Poverty and True Wealth]

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There is one Lord, the inmost soul of all beings, who makes visible one power in many forms;—they who behold him dwelling in their hearts have lasting joy that belongs not to others;

Eternal among things not eternal, the Soul of souls;—they who behold him dwelling in their hearts have peace eternal that belongs not to others.—*Katha Upanishad*.

In the oasis of Merv, and all along the vale of Zerafshan, and the Samarcand river, you come upon the ruins of once lovely oriental mansions, each of which has a fountain in its inner court; relics of the flowery summer of Mussulman [Muslim] days. But now the houses are tumbling to pieces, the fountain's are broken and covered over with all sorts of rubbish, fragments of stone, broken tiles, bits of carved beams, dust, withered leaves, drifted in with the wind; and scorpions and spiders, lizards and serpents play about in the basin of the once ice-cool fountain. For in olden days, the water came through the desert-watering rivers from the snow-covered summits of the loftiest uplands in the world.

It is a trite symbol, but we are in much the same case as those old Muslim dwelling places, and there seems a certain element of mockery in thinking that the people you meet have really fountains of living water, of creative power, of regenerative life within them, which might, if set going again, really make them something like the gods of long forgotten days.

There is little that is creative in us, little that has the ring and temper of immortality; our minds are full of the broken fragments of other people's thoughts, our lives are lived for the sake of other people's opinions, and we are conscious of the lowest ebb tide of our celestial energies, so that the triumphant sentences of the old books of wisdom, about immortal joy, everlasting power, and infinite peace, seem rather fine stokes of irony, when we apply them to ourselves. We may be archangels in disguise, but the disguise is a good one; we need not be afraid of being found out.

If we come to analyse it, it is marvellous how much of our lives is based on fear; all the rush for wealth, all the 'massacre of gold,' as a poor poet once called it, is really so much cowardice, and the bad results of this cowardice go much further than its original victims dream of; like people who cry "fire!" in a theatre, they not only run themselves, but also set the others running.

Beyond mere bodily comfort, and a sufficiency of amusement wealth is sought wholly from the meanest possible desire to gain power over other people through their fear and envy; we want to feel richer than other people, or rather to have them feel poorer than we are, and to that end we heap up riches; and so we come to have a society dominated by a band of bald-headed millionaires with their claws out, grasping at each other's piles of cash, and so setting all the rest of us grasping, by imitation. The panic is as catching as all panics are; and if the main energy of our lives goes in that direction, what wonder if the houses of our souls come to look like those dwelling-places in Zerafshan.

We look back on the middle ages as a barbarous epoch of violence and bloodshed, and are complacent in our own superiority. But the ideal of success was far higher then, than it is now; the ideal was personal valour, the personal comeliness, and not merely a swollen bank account attached to a mediocre and grasping personality, with no form or comeliness, that we should desire him. It is well said that this is the great opportunity for spiritual effort and spiritual enlightenment. For never was a time when they were more needed. We talk of the end of the dark ages. We are in the very middle of them, the blackest hour of all. For never before did the whole world cherish so low and poor

ideals of success in life. Even the policy of nations is now guided by the bankers, not the patriots; the question is, what policy will pay.

In art and literature, it is just the same thing; the question is no longer to paint a true picture, or write a really good book, but to do something that will sell well, something catchy, that will appeal to the largest number of commonplace and mediocre minds, and that is why appeals to sensual feelings make up so great a part of modern books, especially in the nation whose novels are the best written in the world. One can always count on the popularity of literary material of that sort.

If these modern men of wealth had a real sense of beauty, or even of fine pageantry, one could forgive them much; but the main matter with them is always the figure at the bank; and not what they can do with it, whether to amuse or edify themselves or others. It thus comes that their wives are a special providence to them, for the concrete sex always likes to have something positive and tangible to show; not merely the desire of possessions, but the present sense of them. Were it not for the spending sex, the world would get absolutely nothing for all these millions, but the sense of a row of figures.

The result of all this is, that craven and abject state which our world has fallen into, under the dominion of the desire for sensation, and the lust of possession, both of which are mere veils to cover up poverty in the sense of real life, of present vigour, of creative power. For, strange as it may seem, those books of old are not uttering irony at all; they are telling the simple facts, the plainest truth, when they speak of our infinite heritage, our immortal possessions. People have the idea that they will come into these things when they die; let us hope they will, to some extent. But the root of their hope is a deep and unconscious conviction that they can never enter into their spiritual inheritance here, in a world where the rights of property are perpetually distracting their attention from the realities of being.

The true ideal has nothing in common with the old monastic vanity of poverty, humility and weakness; of fleeing from the world, and living a life opposed to nature. The true ideal is that every one of us should have a full and present sense of power, such as will leisurely balance all other people, and indeed the whole world itself. And we are

born also to a real conquest over nature, direct, and flowing from our wills, instead of this mere impertinence towards nature, which we call our modern industrial life. We should have, in this life, and in this world, such a sense of power, such a sweeping vision, such serenity, such well-balanced stability, that the change of death, which is to make archangels of us, should find little to change in us or our ideals; but that we should already inherit eternity, while dwelling here.

The root of the lowness and poverty in our lives, in all our lives, whether we are millionaires, or only long to be, is our absolute destitution of real self-reliance, the reliance on the present power and resourcefulness of our souls. That makes our thoughts poor, our emotions poor, our wills poor, our works poor; that is the real cause of the poverty of talent in the world, because we can by no means be persuaded to clear out the rubbish of our fountains, and set them flowing again, in realization of that fine old simile of the inner stream of living water, springing up to everlasting life.

We talk about 'making a living.' If we were less conceited, we should first think that there is a necessity of justifying ourselves for being alive at all. We ought to have something to show for it, instead of being 'mere empty measures, that cumber the granary.' Never believe it, when people tell you that they have no talent and no power, and cannot therefore do this or that. What business have they here, in the midst of a universe teeming with spiritual force? Why can they not appropriate some of it, on the good old principle of the kingdom of heaven taken by violence. We should have more cases of wise old people coming into second youth and power, if we had not so many foolish young people who squander the little power they possess in all kinds of foolishness. And the ideal is not so much a creative activity—that is, an activity which creates things for other people to admire—as first of all a stability and self reliance, an excellent and buoyant life for ourselves. We shall best help other people by paying the strictest attention to our lives and powers.

For when Prajapati made the shadows of early men, he made no two alike; and he meant the diversity to continue. And therefore, if all of us were but content to be ourselves, we should all be different and do different things, and therefore refreshingly original things,

and that would be creation enough, and a sufficient benefaction towards our neighbours

And the heart of the matter is this: if you find or imagine, that you personally have no creative energy or power, no well of immortal waters, in the court of your dwelling, be advised to ask yourself whether you base your life on the hunger of sensations and the lust of possessions; for these two pleas of poverty are the real causes of the bankruptcy of the soul. You can hardly expect to teach others to live brave lives in the eye of day, while you yourself are cowering with chattering teeth. Brace up, archangel, and try what valour is in you. At the worst, I suppose you can only lose your head, and will that greatly matter?

So if I were asked: what are we to do, to spread high ideals in the days to come?—I would answer this: let us try each to discover his own particular soul, and then leave that soul to do the rest. It will soon break forth into a hundred creative energies, like those once proud fountains in Zerafshan, and from the new life the flower-garden of the soul will soon burst into bloom, and the rest of the world will ask nothing better than to press round in mute admiration.



## Dream and Dreamlessness

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, November, 1898

“What is he Soul? The Soul is consciousness among the powers of life. It is the inner light in the heart. And this spirit moves from one world to the other, remaining itself unchanged. It only seems to form imaginations. It only seems to enter into delights.

“And when sleep comes, the spirit rises beyond this world, and the forms of death. For when the spirit descends into birth, and enters into a body, it comes forth in the midst of evils. But when it rises up again at death, it puts evil away.

“The spirit of man has two dwelling-places: this world, and the other world. And the third is the border land, the world of dreams between the other two. And while in this border land, the spirit views the other two: both this world and the other world. And whatever power he has stored up in the other world, he rests in that, and beholds both terrors and delights.

“And when he sinks to sleep, taking with him his material from this all-containing world, felling the wood himself, and himself the builder, he dreams, with the Soul as his radiance, with the Soul as his light. Thus the Soul is the light of man.

“There are no chariots there, nor horses for chariots, nor pathways. He creates for himself chariots, and horses for chariots, and pathways. There are no joys there, nor delights, nor rejoicings. He creates for himself joys, and delights, and rejoicing.

“There are no streams there, nor lotus-lakes, nor rivers. He creates for himself streams, and lotus-lakes. and rivers. For the spirit of man is the Creator.

“And so having found delight and wandered forth in dream, and

having beheld both good and evil, he hurries back again to the waking world, according to his law, according to his place. And whatever he may behold, it does not follow after him. For nothing adheres to the spirit of man.

“Then having found delight, and wandered forth in waking, and having looked on both good and evil, he hurries back again to the dream-world, according to his law, according to his place. And whatever he may behold, it does not follow after him. For nothing adheres to the spirit.

“And as a great fish swims now along one bank of the river, and now along the other, so does the spirit of man pass between these two: dream-life and waking-life.

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“And as a falcon or an eagle soaring to and fro beneath the sky and growing weary, folds his wings and sinks to rest; so, verily, the spirit of man goes to that home where he enters into rest, dreaming no dream, and desiring no desire. And whatever terrors he beheld in the waking-world, he knows now that it was through unwisdom. And like a god or a king he knows: I am the All. This is his highest world.

“This is his highest joy. He is clothed in fearlessness, and has put darkness away. And as one who is wrapped in the arms of the beloved, remembers naught of what is without or within; so, verily, the spirit of man, wrapt in the Great Soul’s inspiration, remembers naught that is without or within. Then has the spirit reached its goal. The Great Soul is its goal. It has left desire behind. It has passed beyond sorrow.

“And wrapt in the Great Soul, the father is father no more, nor the mother a mother, nor the worlds, worlds. There the gods are gods no longer, nor the murderer a murderer, nor the thief a thief; there the outcast is outcast no more, nor the barbarian a barbarian, nor the priest a priest, nor the saint a saint. They are followed neither by good works nor by evil works. The spirit has crossed beyond all the sorrows of the heart.

“This is the world of the Eternal. This is the highest path. This is the highest treasure. This is the highest joy. And all beings live only on the substance of this joy.

“And if there be one amongst men who has gained success and wealth, a lord over others, and richly endowed with all the good things of the world, this is the highest joy of men. But that joy is a hundredfold, and a thousandfold higher. It is the supreme bliss of the Eternal.”—*Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*.

What we need more than all this is to realize the presence and power of the Soul. And not we only, but everyone. And if, after the

manner of the old seekers after wisdom, I were offered one wish, and one wish only, I think I would choose this: to put on record, so that all men might understand it, something of this truth of the nearness of the Soul in life.

This is what we all are seeking, day by day, and year by year, but without knowing it; and when the hour strikes for us, and we go down into the darkness, we know that we have not found it. And when our time of rest is over, and we come forth into life once more, we are doomed to begin our weary search again, in restlessness, in longing, and desire.

For the presence of the Soul is peace. And we have not peace. There is no deep peace and power in our eyes but only fear and unsatisfied desire, and greed, and cunning. And so we are pursuers ever, tirelessly toiling toward a nameless goal, seeking and finding not, weary and not finding rest.

Yet we are the immortals. And such is the power and presence of the Soul, that all men, whatever be their knowledge whatever be their desires, whatever be the foulness and evil, the petulance and pain, that wrap their waking lives like a garment—all men and all beings do day by day, or night by night, enter into the hall of the Eternal, and find rest for their souls.

The passions of day, feverish and sordid, or full of sadness and sorrow, give way before the dreams of night—broken images of the dreams of day, or images of what never entered into the daylight, or long has left it; shadowy things of the borderland between waking and sleeping. And for a while the spirit of man mingles with these fancies, dreaming dreams, and desiring desires. Then the fancies cease and the dreams fade. The weary spirit folds its wings and sinks to rest. The lonely soul of man is wrapt by the Shining. It is wrapt by the Real. It is full of the inbreathing of the Great Soul. And for a while the soul of the meanest and basest that breathes, the soul of the thief, the murderer, the outcast; the doer of innumerable foul deeds and cruel wrongs, enters into the joy of the Eternal, and bathes his soul in living water, in immortal peace.

And the mean, the cruel, the vile, enjoy this perfect peace and solace for their souls on equal terms with the saint, the sage, the seeker

of the soul, overshadowed by their divinity.

And were it not for this entry into peace—day by day, though they know it not—all men must go mad. Our weak human justice might deny the right of the evil and the outcast to enter into that hall of peace, and keep it only for the pure and clean. But the justice of the Great Soul is better than ours, and brings its benediction to all, to the murderer's cell, as well as the monk's, to the palace of the king, and the hut of the savage. For to the Great Soul none are evil or unclean, none weak and insignificant, but all are immortals, though some of us dream evil dreams. The Soul is in all and all are alike the soul.

And between man and man, between sage and sinner, between clean and foul, between weak and strong, this is the only real difference: how much memory they can bring back to their waking, of that overshadowing Soul, and bringing it back, hold it consciously in the hours of their lives. Those who bring back something of that vision are heroes, strong and exultant, poets of fire-kindled speech, clear-eyed sages, strong lovers, full of joy. But all men are haunted by the Soul.

Then comes waking, and men go forth again to their desires, driven hither and thither by the scourge of unrest, tortured by longing, shadowed by fear. And in their eyes are passion and pain, not peace. For they have forgotten utterly the power and freshness of the Soul whose life enfolded them, when they were sunk in sleep.

With the fading of desire, with the victory over fear, comes something of fuller memory. And to remember something of that vision is to feel once again the overshadowing wings of the Soul descending like a benediction: a great peace, a mighty and exultant power. It is to remember how the overshadowing soul took the individual life, and covered it with its wings, putting away from it all loneliness and isolation, soothing the pain of everlasting want, merging the one in the All, full of throbbing power, tremulous joy, and warm waves of Life. In that deep rest, the soul has no boundaries, but enters into limitless Being, the swelling tide of an immortal sea, full of power, and full of peace. There is no longing nor loneliness; for all that lives is one in the Soul, and feels its oneness. The sweetness of the lost is found again, and there is peace. There is no desire there, for the spirit is all things, and there is nothing left beyond it, that it should desire.

There is no fear, for fear is of the darkness, and here is infinite light, in warm waves of radiant consolation. And yet there is a quiet might, like the rest of perfect darkness. There is the security of safest seclusion. There is the conscious delight of exultant individual life.

And when after deepest draughts of living water, the spirit of man descends again to the world of waking, through the borderland of faint dreams, the whole of his lifetime to the grave seems but an hour, with no very weighty matters in it to be settled, before he enters into his rest. It is as though the far horizon of life were lifted up, and brought suddenly close, so that we can see the whole of life in an instant, and look into the clear sky of immortality rising from the horizon. And for a moment we realize that whatever terrors life beholds, come but through unwisdom; that its fever and weariness are the mists of the morning, soon to melt away beneath the sunlight.

Then the spirit of man goes forth again into waking life, and passions and desires weigh once more heavy upon him, and he is driven onward again by the scourge of longing, by weariness, weakness, and fear. And the thief is a thief once more, and the murderer a murderer, and the outcast an outcast. But hidden away in the heart of each, in the heart of all, is the memory of that Shining, at the back of the heavens. And that haunting vision will give their hearts no rest, till they find the resting-place of the immortal.



## The First Fruits of Peace

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, December, 1898

“With soul in perfect peace and rid of fear, standing firm on the path of the Eternal; with steadfast heart and imagination full of the Soul, let the seeker of union rest intent upon the Soul. Thus joined ever with the Soul, the seeker of union, steadfast in thought, wins the peace of the highest beatitude, the presence of the Soul.

“Union is not his who seeks too eagerly the food of life, nor his who fears to taste of life; nor is it his who dreams too much, nor his who flees from dreams. Who brings the Soul with him while he tastes of life, while he walks abroad, in every effort of his works; who brings the Soul with him in his dreams and in his waking, his is the union that makes sorrow cease.

“When all imaginings are set steadfast on the Soul, when there is no allurement in all desires, such a one is a seeker of union. As a flame well sheltered trembles not this is the likeness of the seeker for union, who draws near the Soul with wandering imaginings stilled.

“When imaginings cease in the peace of the path of the Soul, when through the soul, he beholds the Soul, and rejoices in the Soul; when he wins that joy unsurpassed which the Soul knows, but the senses know not; when he stands firm and unwavering in the real;

“When he wins the Soul, and knows nothing more remains to win; when he stands so firm therein that grievous sorrow leads him not to waver; let him know that this is freedom from the bridal of sorrow; this they name the union with the Soul. And this union Shall be sought with valiant and pure heart.

“Perfectly yielding up all desires born of lustful will, steadfastly ruling the senses and powers through the heart; slowly, softly, let him enter rest, valiantly holding to inspiration; letting his heart rest within

the Soul, and ceasing from all wayward imaginings.

“Wherever the heart would wander, wavering and infirm, holding it steadfastly let him draw it under the Soul’s dominion; then joy most excellent draws near to him who seeks the Soul, whose heart has found great peace; joy where the heart’s pain is stilled, in the life of the Eternal, where no darkness is at all.

“Thus ever standing in union with the Soul, the seeker of union, cleansed of darkness, joyfully reaches that highest joy of perfect oneness with the Eternal. There he views the Soul dwelling within all beings, and all beings dwelling in the Soul; bound to the Soul in union; seeing everywhere the Soul.

“He who beholds the Soul in all things, and all things in the Soul, him the Soul loses not, nor does he lose the Soul; he who loves the Life dwelling in all beings, standing in oneness of life, even though he be the chief of sinners, that seeker of union finds the Soul. He who measures all things, whether joy or sorrow, with the measure of the Soul, is esteemed the perfect seeker of union.”—*The Songs of the Master*.

We are heirs of power, but we are fascinated, and held in thrall by fear: fear of loss, of pain, of the poignant sorrow of parting; fear of the blackness of darkness, fear of death and the beyond. There is no pain that wrings the heart like fear, haunting and chilling the warmth of our lives. And fear is a power in itself, dread and menacing, without regard to what is feared. Of all the maladies of the Soul, none paralyzes like fear.

Yet we are born to power, and not to fear. The Genius in us is undying, immortal, easily victor over life. More than this, the Genius has amply provided for the visible life of each of us, ordaining wisely from endless ages. The Genius has gifts and benefactions ready for us, mastery over nature, and all the fields and harvests of the world. Some excellent task is set for every soul, something primeval, undreamed of, the like of which has never been, nor shall be ever: something no power but ourselves can conceive or accomplish, even though the gods were to bend down to the earth, trying to steal our destiny from us for themselves. The Genius has ordained this excellent work, which shall be a new revelation, a long-hidden, pristine power of the soul, stored by, and waiting for us from the beginning.

The Genius has set apart for us friends and lovers and companions, dear as our own souls, who shall fulfil every want of our hearts, and double all our powers. Nothing can rob us of them, nothing can bring

the bitterness of separation, nothing can cause the cutting keenness of parting, but the darkness in our souls which is born of fear. As we only vaguely suspect the riches of our own lives, and look with faint, tremulous hope, towards the powers we should possess, so we hardly dream of the gifts that are held for us by others, ready to be offered with that lavish beneficence that is over all the works of the soul.

When the first great battle is won, the battle of liberty from fear, the dawning sense of power is our reward. For this is the first great battle, and the baser self in us is fear, and fear alone. Fear of loss brings lust; fear of the lonely darkness brings the longing for sensation; fear of other selves, and fear that they shall rob us in our lives, brings cruelty and tyranny, and the fierce struggle of soul with soul. For nothing is so remorseless as fear.

Weary of this haunting dread, and the craven cruelty it brings, we stand upright at last, and conquer fear. Better be free, even for a moment, and then death, and the nethermost hell, than serve this creeping dread any longer. That moment of battle brings not death and the dark, but light and power: the descending benediction of our Genius, and whispers of courage and immortal hope. As the snake puts off its slough, we cast off fear, and look for the first time rightly on the face of the natural world. We were prone and downcast. Now at last we stand upright. The Genius whispers to us how we may master the natural world, and begin that inimitable work set apart for us alone from the ages. It is the realization of our vision of the Soul.

The overshadowing Genius brings a sense of power, of valour, of the vigour of immortal youth; it is the path of the Eternal. Find the old light in the heart, and it shall light you over immortal pathways. There are secrets there to be learned that the gods shall envy. There is the power that stills all fear. There is a sense of immortal possessions, that brings peace. The future, that loomed so dark, is lit up to the horizon, and we catch glimpses of strange and beautiful things that set our hearts beating with high hope and immortal desire.

The descending Genius, that raises our weary hearts, and stills their sorrow with its great power and peace, brings with it one revelation, before which all others pale. Only after that redemption can we for the first time see the lives of other souls; can we feel the life in them

throbbing close to us, with no barriers between. For it is strictly true, and strange as true, that until there is something of the immortal in us, we cannot gain the faintest clear vision of the life of any other soul. We see images and forms which we take to be other lives, but they are hid and masked from us by the coloured clouds of our desires and fears.

This keen realization of the lives of other souls, though we be alone and in the darkness, though waste leagues of space separate us; the sense of the welling and throbbing life outside the open doorways of our hearts; the keen and vivid vision of the power that thrills through others—this is the finest revelation of the dawning soul. This is to see the Soul in all beings; and till our Genius has brought this, all other gifts are in vain, seed-corn thrown on the rocks, that may never move with fresh stirring life.

Even wild passionate longing knows something of this victory over space. Many a heart is stilled into peace by some touch of a distant soul, though it knows it not. The great and valiant souls of the earth answer many calls for help, though no word is spoken, no voice is heard. The burning passion and pain whose very bitterness lifts us above ourselves, brings this assuagement, that it sets free our souls, and they touch other souls, and find consolation. Therefore it is that the passionate heart of the chief of sinners is far further on the royal road than the cold saint, who feels no thrill of life beyond his own.

But only with the presence of the Soul, do we realize the meaning of this power, this well kept secret. The seeming impassible barriers that keep all souls apart, and torment them with loneliness and isolation, are but the fever-mists of fear, that chill the heart to insensibility. There are no barriers or distances for the soul. And those are closest to our open doors, who are the born companions and lovers of our hearts, guided to us by the Genius who overshadows all our lives. At those open doors are greetings and recognitions; benefits are exchanged, and free gifts are given, with a courtly grace that courts might envy.

There is little question of duty, of service, of certain claims to be painfully fulfilled. Realization of that throbbing life is the highest duty, and from that plant all other duties come as inevitable flowers. To realize the life of another is to deal justly, to use the utmost generosity

and gentlest care; for such is the inherent law and nobility of our souls. There is no calculating as to what duties may be offered, what debts paid; we are better and richer than that.

This power to feel the throbbing life of souls is the first-fruit of the great awakening; the first-fruit of peace. And if a man be endowed richly as an angel with every gift and grace of mortal or immortal life, but fail in this, then all his powers are bitter as ashes. And if a man be the chief of sinners, enveloped in all uncleanness, a castaway, foul and impure, and if yet there be in his heart a glowing spot where the hearts of others waken an answering glow, he is firmly set on the path of the Eternal. His foulness and imperfections will fall away, and leave no trace; while the gifts and virtues of the other will become burdens to drag him down. With this realization of the Life in other lives, this touch of the Soul in other souls, this sense of the throbbing Heart in other hearts, comes the first hour of our immortality.



# The Soul's Way

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, January, 1899

“When all the desires that were laid up in the heart are let go, then the mortal becomes immortal, he enters the Eternal. As the slough of a serpent, cast upon an ant-hill, lies lifeless there, so lies his body, when he rises up bodiless, immortal, full of life and radiance eternal.

“The small old Path that stretches far away, has been found and followed by me; by that path go the wise, knowers of the Eternal, to the heavenly world, rising upward free.

“If a man finds the Soul, and knows it as himself, what can he wish for, what can he desire, that he should fret feverishly after the body's life? He who finds the Soul by awakening upwards to meet it, though wandering in this world's wilderness, is lord of all; of all he is the creator; his is the world, for he is the world.

“Even here, we know the Soul; if we know it not, great is our loss; those who know the Soul, become immortal; who know it not, must suffer pain. He who truly knows the Soul, the god, lord of what has been and shall be, thereafter seeks not to hide himself from fear.

“He from whom the bright year comes forth, with all its days, whom the gods worship as the light of lights, the life immortal, in whom all beings rest, and spaces itself, nestles secure, him I know as my soul, and knowing that deathless Eternal, I am immortal.

“The Soul is the Life of life, the eye's Eye, Ear of the ear, and the heart's Heart. Who know this, have learned the secret of the immortal Ancient, the Most High. Learn to behold the One in all things, the immeasurable, that stands ever firm.

“The mighty Soul passes not through the gates of birth, it is Consciousness within the powers. There is a firmament within the

heart where dwells the Master of all, the Lord of all, the Ruler of all; he grows not greater through good works, nor less through evil; he is the King of all, Overlord of all beings, Shepherd of all.

“He is the bridge that holds the worlds apart, lest they come together. This is He whom men of religion seek to find through their scriptures, through worship, charity, purification, innocence; this is he, whom seeking, pilgrims go forth on pilgrimages, and knowing whom the wise men of old sought no more births.

“This is the Soul; it cannot be ensnared, for it is free; it cannot be stricken, for it is almighty; it is not allured, trembles not, fears not; to this Soul cross over neither foul deeds nor fair, it has passed both by, and fair and foul trouble it no longer.

“The Soul’s eternal might grows not by works, nor is diminished by them, who knows that Soul is, him evil allures not. Who knows thus, is full of peace, well-ruled, has ceased from all false gods, endures all things bravely, intends his heart in one-pointed steadfastness; he beholds the Soul within him as the all; evil crosses not over to him, he has crossed over evil; he is free from evil and stain and doubt; he is the Eternal.”—*Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*.

First the intuition of the Soul, the haunting vision of might and joy that has hovered before us for ages. We have sought that joy through life in nature, the life of our mortality. Through long years of thirsty desire we have sought it, and ever as our hands seemed closing on the treasure, it as vanished away, leaving our hearts desolate, longing for the immortal. We have sought the Soul through ages of human life, as the unnamed heart’s desire; following after it in hope and fear, in longing and hate, in pleasure and sorrow, the vestures of our humanity. We have thought to surprise the eternal secret among the things of our human life, to take captive the alluring delight of the immortals. But we are seeking still, and ever within our hearts is that immortal longing, haunting, importunate, which leaves us never, and will not be stilled, but whispers to us in the stillness with a fascinating sweetness that makes dull all the voices of the world.

That restless thirst of joy is our memory of the Soul, of our immortal selves, the heirs of the everlasting. And we shall hear those haunting whispers, ever through the stillness, until they break forth into the song of the Eternal.

In a lull of our weariness and fever, when we cease for a while from our desires and dreams, will come for a moment clear vision of the

Soul; of immortal valour, imperious power, triumphant joy. And thence forth for ever we shall know that the Soul is; even when the clouds and darkness come back heavy upon us, and our vision is gone; and we shall endure to the end, remembering that there is the Soul.

That memory brings life too strong and exultant to need the feasts of the world, which bring not strength but weakness, the cloying allurements of sensuous life. The soul thirsts no more, after it has tasted the immortal waters—or thirsts for these alone. Nor will the soul throw forward any more its hopes and fears into the imagined future; whether for this world or the next, or any other life. For knowing the immortal treasure close at hand, what need a man hope for? And knowing that treasure, what can he fear? Therefore will his soul stand upright, thirsting not for the feasts of the world, hoping no more, neither fearing any more.

Thereafter shall follow peace. The heart's pains shall be stilled. Softly, slowly, shall the quiet of immortal might descend upon the soul, from the greater Soul, and it shall understand how the gods can build forever, yet grow not weary. There shall be peace from all fascinations and imaginings. Hope shall no longer beckon us away from where our treasure is. For possession is the payment of hope. Fear shall no longer lash us with the scourge that makes us quail and cower, that drives us to cruelty and injustice; for where fear is, there is cruelty; where cruelty is, there is fear. We shall desire no more, for the fullness of life leaves nothing to desire. Nor shall we hate any more; for seeing self in all things, how can we hate ourselves, our own exultant life? So shall come peace, the quietude of the soul, and glad heart's-ease.

And from heart's-ease shall follow rest through all the powers, so long racked by the fever of the world. There shall be a healing of all mortal pain, and a vigour of life restored, like the young-eyed gods. Every power of man is now ready for the great work.

Yet before a man can take up that work, he must cease from the worship of false gods, the idols of the world, whom men bow down to here. He must follow no longer the dust-covered ways of the men of desire, and the hunger of gold. They are driven by fear, and hunger for the feast of mortality, but not he; nor will he desire their ways. For he knows the quiet path of the Eternal, where there is peace.

Ceasing from idols, he will learn to follow his Genius; and genius will set the immortal imprint on all he does. For its way is a divine way, a yoke that is easy, a burden that is light. And the secret of genius is easily told.

In the heart of every man, after he has caught the vision, and knows that the Soul is; after he has reached heart's-ease, and quietude of all his powers; after he has ceased from idols, and drawn back from the hot pathways of desire;—in his clean heart there shall dwell yet one longing, one imperious and haunting wish; and it shall seem to him that nothing in life is sweeter than to carry that wish out. He shall have for it all enthusiasm, and the willingness of a freeman's service. And that secret desire of his heart is the work of his Genius, his life's message, the one thing he can do supremely well. It is the private revelation, whispered to him alone, that not even the gods can overhear, not even the sages foretell.

And this life's work a man will perform with such ready joy, such enthusiasm and power, because it is his heart's desire, that all men will be won by it, and will willingly give him whatever he asks, for some share of it. Whether it be some new and excellent way of dealing with the natural world, or with the souls of men, there is this secret for everyone. For a statue is only stone or clay, transformed by the power of the Soul; and a picture but a layer of pigments spread over canvas threads. But the Soul makes these common things divine. The Soul takes common words that fall from all men's lips, the common dreams that dwell in all men's hearts, and weaves them into a song that shall ring resonant for ages, and outwear the hills, awakening in men's hearts the memory of the song everlasting. So too the twanging of wires may be transformed by the Soul into a magical enchantment that shall make men forget all the heart's pains, if the Soul be in it.

Thus common things like clay and stone, coarse threads and wires and words, are touched by the Soul into divinity; and nothing so base and mean in all the world but awaits its artist, its poet, its musician, to awaken it to immortal life. All men are secretly creative and full of genius: and some day each shall bring his gift to light.

And if there be this divine way with the rocks and ores of the natural world, so that they breathe with living beauty, what divinity

may not come forth from the meeting of human souls? They shall be enkindled with immortal fire, set ringing with a diviner music, lit with colours that never sunrise nor the flowers nor the hills in their purple garments dreamed of; grow resonant with a music that shall dull the chants of the seraphim.

Thus there is this work for every man: to embody the secret vision the gods whisper to him alone; in his touch with the natural world; in his ways with the souls of men. And for each, the guide is, the secret desire of his clean heart. He came into the world to do that, he will do it better than all living, past or to come. For this all men will be ready to reward him, as emperors have vied in heaping their treasures on artists.

Yet a man who follows this way, shall need steadfastness and endurance, nor shall the path be easy for his feet. For he has a bad past behind him, and a world yet untransformed around him. Therefore let him keep valour in his heart.

Faith, too, must go with him; a glow of fire; a surplus power that makes all tasks easy; for all best things in the world were done in that high mood, with a divine ease; yet great effort has been in the preparation.

Last comes intentness; the bending of a steady will upon the work. For a statue is dreamed by the soul, but carved by firm single blows; and only the greatest artists can draw a perfect line. So only a valiant soul can deal rightly with another—even with a little child.

Thus the Genius tells of the life's work; it is the hidden heart's desire. Too good to be true, perhaps? But real life is too good to be true, for our faint, weary hearts.



# The Opening Eyelids of the Morn

Oriental Department,  
Theosophical Forum, February, 1899

“There is a small white lotus bud in this house of the Soul; in it there is a firmament, and what is therein is to be searched for and sought.

“And if they should ask: As to this white lotus bud in the house of the Soul, and the firmament that is within it what is hidden there, that should be searched for and sought? Let him answer thus:

“As great as are the heavens above, so great is the heaven within the heart; in it both Heaven and Earth are set, both the Fire and the Breath, the Sun and the Moon, the Lightning and the Stars. All that is in the world, and all that is not—all is set therein.

“And if they should ask: If in this house of the Soul all is set all beings and all desires, when old age comes upon it, and it fails: what is left behind? Let him answer:

“This grows not old when the house grows old, this dies not when its dwelling dies. The house of the Eternal, wherein all desires dwell, endures; it is the Soul, free from evil; for it is neither old age, nor death, nor sorrow, hunger nor thirst; its desires are true, its will is true. Therefore whatever beings seek for here, whatever estate they desire, whatever people or land, in to that they are born.

“But these true desires are covered up with false; of these desires, being true, there is a covering of falsehood. So whoever belonging to him, dying, goes forth from the world, him he cannot find, to behold him. So whoever there is belonging to him, living or dead, and whatever else he wishes for but cannot obtain, when he goes thither, he finds it all; for here his true desires are covered up with false.

“And like as when a treasure of gold is hidden in a field, those who are familiar with the field, walking over and over it, know it not, so,

verily, all these beings go day by day to the world of the Eternal, and know it not, for they are covered up with falsehood.

“This is the Soul, in the heart within; and he who knows this, goes day by day to the celestial world. This is the place of peace, and he who rises above the body, enters the Higher Light, putting off his mortal form. This is the Soul, the Immortal, the Fearless, this is the Eternal, and the name of the Eternal is Everlasting Life.”—*Chhandogya Upanishad*.

The truth above all truths is this: the mighty Power, the abounding and exalting Life, which men of old have called the Soul, is very near to us at all times; and only our many-coloured fancies hinder us from knowing the Soul, entering the Life, becoming the Power. If we feel ourselves bereft, deserted, and forlorn, that too is fancy; it rests with us, when we will, to inherit the realm and the radiance.

The prophets have been rather lugubrious and sad-eyed. They seem to have put themselves on record while the sacrifice of the old Adam was still a recent and painful memory, even a sentimental and comforting regret. One would willingly put the affairs of the Eternal in a more cheering light.

This very sentimentality is itself a fancy, the last self-indulgence of the heart; as the palate, jaded with sweet things, finds a sensual relish in bitter; and as people please themselves, after too much love, by a little hate. So the ascetics dearly relished their mood of sadness, and found much pleasure in their tears.

And it is nothing but a web of fancies that prevents us from here and now inheriting our immortality. The sad prophets have spoken of renouncing the body and all its works. In truth the body has very little to do with it. But fancies about the body have a great deal. It is the fancy that the body is such a warm and comfortable dwelling-place, that keeps us all from becoming aerial travellers. We are so pre-occupied with our bodily lives, and our imaginations are so full of our bodily concerns, and all the sorrows and joys we have come to think of as the body's heritage, that we have literally not a free moment for the Higher Light.

It is really the most natural thing in the world for us to be serene, well-balanced, full of power; with an overflow of energy and vigour that makes all things we do creative, and with a real feeling of the

throbbing and pulsating life all round us, a sympathy which makes our lives tenfold more interesting and full of force. It is really the most natural thing for us to feel our immortality, not only once and again, in beatific vision, but at all times, all through our lives. It is really proper for us to feel the strength within, far outweighing all the confusion of events without; to feel events rising up within, and coming forth through us to the outer world, instead of invading and intimidating us from outside.

That is what we should be: what we are, is the result of fancy. Death and separation and sorrow are mere fancies, and if we were not so wholly engrossed with our dreams, we should know it, and rate them at their very moderate real values. No one has ever yet put on record what an incredible amount of illusion comes into all our lives. We keep crying and lamenting, because we are afraid of the Quiet. We keep ourselves in the dark, because we are afraid that the Light would shine through our sad, beloved dreams, and show them to be the flimsy things they really are. But some one should state, in good round terms, the positive and affirmative side. We need not really shiver, while there is so much sunlight going to waste. We need not fear change, when every new step will be the finding of a hidden treasure; and one of the characteristic things about these new treasures is, that each one, as we find it, seems so very familiar; each new footing gained seems so very natural and homelike, that we come to wonder how our former resting-place seemed a permanent home.

The Law and the Life have ordained matters thus: every day we do a certain amount of real work, springing directly from the will: work which rises up within us and demands to be done. But this work we wrap round with clouds and mists of fancy, of fears and hopes, of all kinds of vain imaginings, which have simply nothing to do with things as they really are. And at last the rush and torrent of our fancies wear us out, and bring us to the time of wrinkles and grey hairs. But work did not wear us out, nor the exercise of creative will. The more the will does, the stronger it grows, the better able to create. What wears us out, is the incredible amount of foolishness we manage to mix in with our work, the noise and stir of which must create much unfavourable comment among the dignified mountain pines.

As our lives wear us out, so does each day of life. And then we enter the world of dreams, and fancy carries us away altogether, and has things all her own way. And curiously enough, though the dreams are very unpleasant while we are awake, they begin to be pleasant as soon as we go to sleep; and the reason of this is, that, in going to sleep, we really triumph over one fancy: the fancy that we, personally, are responsible for the working of the material world. It is this responsibility which gives the modern man his brow of care; and the archangels, whose real charge it is, must find his interference rather trying. We are not really so very responsible; not the personal part of us, at least. So we are much easier in our minds, when we elect to let the good world go on without us, and sink for a while to sleep. We feel that there is still some risk of the universe going awry, and that half-conscious feeling will in due time wake us again.

But while we sleep, we feel easier. We take our fancies as they come, the gay with the grave, and we are not responsible. Then, after a while, we rise above the coloured clouds, and enter the sunlight of the Life, where our peace is, and our power: our proper dwelling-place and home. It is strange to think that the eternal secret is not further off than that. A little dreaming, a little sleep, and we are in the midst of it; and it would be well for us, if the dreaming did not begin again. We should find we had gained very much, and lost very little; we should find we had gained the Radiance and the Realm, the Life and the Power; and that we were amongst a serene and very august company, whom we should recognize with a certain awestruck surprise.

And this happens to us day by day, for that life in the Radiance is our real day; and not the sad outward hours of our tribulation. Yet we are foolish enough to leave it all, to come back again and dream and lament, and think it all so real and so sad. We have become once more, in our fancy, responsible for the right working of the whole visible world.

Then we are all very much afraid of each other, and fear has torment. And from fear come envy, hatred, all uncharitableness. When we grow a little, we shall find that no one can trespass in our kingdom; that each of us is sovereign lord; and then we shall grow very benevolent.

There is great solace for us, within the curtains of the night. But we are not meant to withdraw and hide ourselves in the darkness. We are to come forth and work; our wills are to subdue the whole visible world, and the instinct to work and to conquer is strong and sound within us.

Conquerors we shall be, and victors, and immortal, when we shake off the web of fancies. The white lotus of the soul, still in the bud with us, will then open in full bloom, and we shall come forth exultant, under the opening eyelids of that morning, the morning of the everlasting day.



## The Realm, the Radiance, and the Power

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, March, 1899

“Learn now of me, how he who has won the first great victory, shall go forward to the everlasting Power. Here is the perfect rule of wisdom, briefly told:

“Let him hold himself firmly in the ray of the illumined Soul, freeing himself from the tyranny of sensations, and rising above lusts and hate; “Let him dwell in solitude; let him be sparing of bodily lusts; let him subordinate thought, word, and deed to the Light; let him steadily bring himself under the inspired will; let him overcome self-reference;

“Let him rid himself of these things: conceit, violence, arrogance, sensuality, jealousy, graspingness; then, free from the sense of appropriation, and full of the great peace, he builds with the everlasting Power.”—*Songs of the Master*.

The perfect rule of wisdom here set forth, holds the answer to the difficulty and perplexity we are facing at this very time: the question what to do next. We have won the first great victory. And now we are waiting, in a kind of quietness and uncertainty, knowing that something has been gained, but not seeing clearly what it is, not able to give any lucid account of it to ourselves; not seeing whither our victory is to lead us. To use an idiom: we cannot see where to take hold; where to catch on.

This is far from being a new difficulty, or a perplexity peculiar to ourselves, or to the present hour. On the contrary, this uncertain and waiting attitude is a quite inevitable, and constantly recurring stage on the great path of life: all who have passed along the path, have faced it,

just as we are doing; and it is so familiar a friend that its position is marked in all the books of the Mysteries.

We shall make the matter clearer, if we go back a little, and see what our victory consists in. We may put it on record that every stage on the path consists of three parts, and that we have passed two of the three, in the stage we are travelling on. Every stage has three divisions: the time of aspiration; the time of illumination; the time of realization. And the moment of perplexity comes after illumination, and before realization—the point where we now stand.

We have all passed through the time of aspiration. We all know how it was with us. First, the time of miserable unrest; of crying for the light, but without in the least knowing what we wanted, or what our malady was. Nothing but a great dissatisfaction; a sense of the meanness of our lives. That was the first stirring of the soul. Then came a stronger longing for the realm, the radiance, and the power: for all the dim glory hidden in our souls. At first the thought of it was cherished as an almost hopeless regret, a sadness for something far beyond our reach. But here, as elsewhere, the appetite grows with eating. And aspiration gradually nursed itself into hope. We knew that the realm and the radiance were real; and we watched for the gleaming of the light that led us on, till hope became fulfilment; till aspiration ripened into illumination.

The full illumination may or may not remain within our conscious memory: but the sense of it is there. We know that the Oversoul has gleamed into our hearts, that we are inwardly open to the immortal sea. We may not know how we know this, nor remember our hour of revelation. But the radiance haunts us; the brooding divinity is there.

That is the second stage. Now comes the third. We have to work that radiant hour into our lives, to realize it in character and in work; to embody our revelation. When we have done this fully, we shall be ready to rise to a new illumination and a new realization; and so the great work goes on. But how to realize our sense of the Soul? That is the problem that brings us the perplexity of waiting. The memory and sense of the Soul haunt us like a shining sea we have seen in dreams, but we cannot find our way back to it; or we are on ice so smooth, that every movement sets us slipping. We can get no grasp on it, no hold,

no leverage to move ourselves by. We cannot make our start in life.

The perplexity is a real one. But we overdo it. We never lose a chance of telling ourselves that we are at the end of our powers. That is one of the privileges of sovereign man. But there are ways out of our difficulty.

The first clue is this: it is not really we ourselves who have to find the way; it is not we who have to form the plan, and win the battle. That is already provided for, by the lord of life and death in each of us. The great Life, the everlasting Power, which, like a strong torrent, flows through the channel of our lives, has seen to that. We are not personally responsible for the moving power, for the vital force that is to carry us onwards. A sense of this brings stillness; and, in the stillness, the lord of life and death, the Genius, who really is responsible, will be able to catch our attention, and get his idea into our heads. But we try the patience of the Genius.

There are two elements: first, the almighty Power; then, our individual selves. Our work is, to express the Power through our individual selves. That is what the sage of old meant, by bidding us keep firmly in the ray of the illumined Soul.

Our perplexity is due to this: a new power is to enter our lives, and it is so unlike anything we are familiar with, that it takes us a long time to recognize it; it takes us a long time to become conscious that we have recognized it. Then at last we shall be ready to move forwards.

It is another of man's privileges, to get into mischief of precisely the same kind, a hundred times in succession. This is what happens at this point of progress. We get entangled in the very things that we have just conquered, on our upward path of aspiration. There is a new air about them now, and we get taken in again. The traps that catch us are two, one for each of the inferior worlds, into which we have dropped back after our hour of illumination in the third world, the world at the back of the heavens. The two dear foes are, the lust of sensations, and the conceit of our personal selves. To get rid of the lust of sensation, is like a bath in the ocean, or a long breath of mountain air. To get rid of conceit is like a harassed debtor's sudden release from all financial liabilities. These are the things that stand in the way, and keep us from hearing the voice of the Genius.

It is not sensation that we are to conquer, but the lust of sensation; the preoccupation of our fancies, by memory and desire. Sensation is the earth, quite clean in its due place. The lust of sensation is that same earth afloat in the sea of emotion; the muddy wave of a shallow sea.

The position is this: our souls have a layer of sensation below us; a layer of inspiration above us. We cannot do justice to both at once; we cannot have the sense of both at once. If we are preoccupied with the one, we shall be deaf to the other. But we are here to catch the voice of inspiration. Before we catch it, we must close our ears to the voices of the earth. People fancy they cannot get on without sensation, and that if it ceased for a moment, they would die. They have to learn the contrary. To put this in another way: the perpetual thinking of certain sensations, as dwelling in certain parts of our natural bodies, forms a web which holds the psychic body within the physical body, and prevents its going forth to commune with the Soul. We must forget about our natural bodies for awhile, or we shall remain prisoners, till death tumbles us out into the blue ether.

It is not a question of deadening sensation, and growing rigid. It is rather that we must wash our memories and fancies clean, at least for a while. We are to receive a quite new kind of impression, from a new direction. We cannot be in two places at once. This is the very simple truth which underlies all ascetic ideals. Abstinence, in itself, has not the slightest value, but the stillness that goes with it is needed, if we are to hear the other voice.

Then that dear enemy, who comes back to us as often as recurring springtime; the conceit of our personal selves. It is something like this: we are made of three things.—the animal, the personal, the divine. Our life really streams down from the divine, through the personal life, to be expressed by the animal, in the visible world. For the animal can really express very noble and subtle things, in his looks and works. But the personal part of us, the middle man, labours under the delusion that he is doing it all; and he thinks, moreover, that whatever he wants, must be good for all three. So he exasperates the creative man above him, and makes the animal man do many unwholesome and exciting things, which bring him to an early grave. It is the illusion of very young people, that all half-heard conversation is about themselves;

and that all the world is watching them. That part of youth often lasts long; and it is this fatuity which defeats the Genius. The personal man thinks that everything which goes on is for his benefit; he wants to get a profit from everything, and is continually trying to wrest things in his direction, instead of letting them go clear through, to express themselves in the outer world. What is there in it for me? asks the personal man; and that instinct vitiates all good work. That is what the old sage meant by the sense of appropriation. It is the sin of the middle world. Vanity keeps many a man from hearing the voice of the soul. The vanity of what he fancies his personal self to be, of what he fancies others think of him, and expect of him, keeps many a man from daring to obey the voice of the soul, when he has heard it. And the personal man is an adept at pleading in his own favour. He is a most plausible knave, and very sorry for himself.

We cannot listen to the soul, because we are thinking of our troubles; and vanity is father to most of them. The sage of old has mentioned other things which stand in our light. There is arrogance, the cheerful assurance of superiority, which seems to lighten every man who comes into the world. At least, we all use moral looking-glasses. Then violence, in which nature rebukes us. She makes a noise only when she is destroying. All her building goes on in silence; all the splendid vitality of spring comes forth without the audible stirring of a leaf. She can move a continent, and no one hears a grain of sand fall. Then jealousy, and the rest, that we know as much of as any sage. These things make the noise of our personal selves, which fills our ears, and drowns the voice of the silence.

These are the things that thwart us, when we should be standing in the ray of the illumined Soul. They keep back the stillness, in which the new voice should speak. Every inspiration comes from within and above us; from the Life in the radiance and the realm. The Life speaks to the individual soul, and seeks to be expressed through the work of the individual soul. Now all souls are different. So all expressions of the Life will be different, though inspired by the same Power; just as the same sun brings forth a hundred different flowers, from as many different seeds. Each of us has his seed of genius and power, his individual talent and gift. And the problem is, to let it be quickened by the eternal sunlight.

Here is at once a difficulty, and a delight. The work will be different for each of us; so that no one can really show the way to another. But its fruit will be different for each, so that each of us will have the delight of original creation. We are in the presence of the Power, the Radiance, the Life. The Oversoul is brooding palpably over us, and we feel the haunting presence. But it is all so new, so unprecedented, so strange, that we do not know how to begin, or how to put our hands to the work.

Well, there is plenty of time. Work that is to last forever, need not be hurried. We shall not be taken to task, for making the gods wait. But that splendid presence will haunt us, brooding over our days and nights, until we are carried away by its mighty breath of creative fire, and then we shall know what the lord of life and death was whispering to us through the silence.

## The Secret of Power

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, April, 1899

“He who, dwelling in the earth, is other than the earth, whom the earth knows not, for whom the earth is a body, who rules the earth from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in the waters, is other than the waters, whom the waters know not, for whom the waters are a body, who rules the waters from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in fire, is other than fire, whom fire knows not, for whom fire is a body, who rules fire from within.—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in the firmament, is other than the firmament, whom the firmament knows not, for whom the firmament is a body, who rules the firmament from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in the wind, is other than the wind, whom the wind knows not, for whom the wind is a body, who rules the wind from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in the heavens, is other than the heavens, whom the heavens know not, for whom the heavens are a body, who rules the heavens from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in the sun, is other than the sun, whom the sun knows not, for whom the sun is a body, who rules the sun from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in the spaces, is other than the spaces, whom the spaces know not, for whom the spaces are a body, who rules the spaces from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in moon and star, is other than moon and star,

whom moon and star know not, for whom moon and star are a body, who rules moon and star from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in the ether, is other than the ether, whom the ether knows not, for whom the ether is a body, who rules the ether from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in the darkness, is other than the darkness, whom the darkness knows not, for whom the darkness is a body, who rules the darkness from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in radiance, is other than radiance, whom radiance knows not, for whom radiance is a body, who rules radiance from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in all beings, is other than all beings, whom all beings know not, for whom all beings are a body, who rules all beings from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in life, is other than life, whom life knows not, for whom life is a body, who rules life from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in the word, is other than the word, whom the word knows not, whose body is the word, who rules the word from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in the eye, is other than the eye, Whom the eye knows not, for whom the eye is a body, who rules the eye from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in hearing, is other than hearing, whom hearing knows not, for whom hearing is a body, who rules hearing from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in the heart, is other than the heart, whom the heart knows not, for whom the heart is a body, who rules the heart from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“He who, dwelling in intellect, is other than intellect, whom intellect knows not, from whom intellect is a body, who rules intellect from within—he is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal.

“The unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the unknown knower; no other than he is the seer, no other than he is the hearer, no other than he is the thinker, no other than he is the knower—this is thy Soul, the inner ruler, immortal; and all that is other than he, is subject to sorrow.”—*Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*.

The first secret concerning power is, that it is inherent in everyone, and the birthright of everyone. It is weakness that is the anomaly, a lawless outgrowth from the proper being of man, a thing in itself, and not a mere deficiency of power. Weakness, like fear and sorrow, like

desire and gloomy hopelessness, is a positive burden, an added vesture of illusion, and not merely a want or something missing.

The root of weakness is the sense of loneliness, of isolation, of separateness from other lives, through which we believe ourselves arrayed against all men, and all men against us. It is the feeling that we have a separate fate, a destiny for which we are responsible, and which, we modestly conceive, is, under our guidance, likely to go greatly astray; therefore we are pre-occupied with dread, and weakened and unfitted for work by our imaginary burden. For in sober truth, we have no separate fate, no isolated destiny; for our destiny is the destiny of the Eternal, and that is already well provided for. So that he who, in his own person, would bear the burden of the universe, and ever feels that burden crushing him down, is really trying to do badly what the Everlasting has already done, altogether well.

We should feel within ourselves that we have no individual fate; that the great life welling up within us, is all life, the immortal Life itself, which was from the beginning, and when we realize that the buoyant Soul is bearing our burdens, we shall lose something of our brow of care.

There are one or two among the powers of that Soul, which we are so familiar with, that we have never recognized them for what they are; it may bring the presence of the Soul home to us, if we enumerate them, and recognize how intimately we possess them.

First of all, the web of powers which bind us to the natural world, and through which we live and move and have our being in the natural world, held in place as firmly as the stars are upheld in the blue ether; these powers are really the outer vesture of the Soul; they are not us, nor from us, nor did we devise them, nor can we loosen their firm and benevolent hold until our hour is struck, not by us, but by the Soul. The web of powers was there before us: all we did, was, at our coming, to avail ourselves of it, with a deep, instinctive wisdom, wiser than all knowledge, which is also of the Soul.

Then again that more celestial web of powers, which binds us to each other, through love and hate, through desire and anger, through ill-wishing and well-wishing; even the intuition that tells us that other souls are there at all—that, too, is of the Soul; it is not from

ourselves; by taking thought, we could not have created it; not by taking thought, can we take it away. There lies that intuition in our hearts, the root and fountain of every human act, and it is not of us, but of the Soul.

Higher than instinct and intuition, we have inspiration, the hope and longing for our fuller life, the great power brooding above us which tells us that our fuller life is; that there are immortal waters, if we could find them. That most secret and splendid ambition is set in our hearts, not by ourselves, but by the Soul, who rules our lives from within.

There is no past; there is no future. These are but the shadows cast backward and forward, by the everlasting now. It is never yesterday, nor is it ever tomorrow; always today. So that today goes on with us, moving as we move, hastening as we hasten, lagging when we lag; but never separating from us a hair's-breadth. That everlasting now is the eternalness of the Soul; an august companion, whom we have forgotten from his very familiarity. At this very moment, we are dwelling in the midst of eternity.

As it is never yesterday nor tomorrow, but always today, so it is never elsewhere, but always here. Here, in the heart of us, we dwell perpetually, never crossing the threshold of our enduring dwelling. And that all-present here is the home of the Soul.

We would do well to let the thought of the everlasting now sink into us, and dwell with us; to watch the hours coming forward with us, in the perpetual today; feeling and seeing, vividly and consciously, that it is always now, always the present, always the eternal. And in that ever-present now dwell all the powers of the universe, all that ever were, and all that ever shall be.

In like manner, we would do well to realize the all-present here; to feel that we are never elsewhere, but always at the heart of things, here in the temple of our home. The great horizons and wide, terrifying spaces which loom round us, are but the curtains of our thoughts; we shall never get lost, nor go astray through those desert-places of the ether, for it will always be here with us, as it is ever now.

Here and now, for evermore—that is the life of the Soul, unshaken, supreme; and these two powers, these two revelations, we have with us

always.—gods that we have grown so familiar with, that we no longer discern their divinity.

Neither in the natural world, nor in the hearts of others, nor in the great Heart of all things, do we dwell of ourselves, or from ourselves. It was all provided for, without our interference. So we should take heart for what is to come; we are not answerable for its success, nor have we a separate fate. We should learn to rest in that great peace, which is ever here; in that great power which is in the everlasting now.

And feeling thus our present divinity, we shall put away the burden of panic fear for our fates, which we so painfully, so needlessly bear; and standing upright, rid of our burden, we may begin the real life which shall be the manifestation of our power.

The Soul within is waiting for that, to put us in possession of our inheritance; to bring us into that mastery of the natural world which our instinctive powers already foreshadow and forecast. We are related to all the natural world by a web of instincts; but that is not all; we are destined to turn that simple relation into perfect mastery. Then, for each of us, his body shall be the whole horizon, nothing less than the whole natural World, With all its life.

And the Soul purposes that, instead of the dim intuition of other souls, we shall have perfect knowledge, perfect oneness, the vivid presence of a single life throbbing through us all. When we realize it, each of us shall have the power of all. But to find others, we must lose ourselves. In proportion as we do that, we can already enter into the power of all men, and find a friend within every citadel, who speaks our language, and is ready to carry out our will. And there is no limit to that power, short of the limits of the eternal and infinite.

But the deepest fountain of our power is neither the natural world, with its miracles, nor the human world, with its fair mysteries, but that which dwells within these, whom these know not, whose body these are, the eternal Soul, who is ready to speak with our lips, to work with our hands, to look forth through our eyes, as soon as we are willing to make the sacrifice of our loneliness, the offering of our sorrow; the renunciation of our fear.



# The Water of Life

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, May, 1899

“Narada came to Sanatkumara, saying: Master, teach me to know the Soul: for I have heard from the sages that he who knows the Soul crosses over the sea of sorrow. But I, Master, am sorrowful; therefore guide me over to sorrow’s further shore.

“He answered him: All thou knowest already, is but words. But thou shouldst seek to find out truth. For when a man knows, he declares the truth; but without knowing, he cannot declare the truth; therefore thou shouldst seek after understanding.

“When he gains insight, he understands; without insight, he cannot understand, but through insight, he understands; therefore thou shouldst seek to gain insight.

“When a man aspires, then he gains insight; without aspiration there is no insight, but insight comes through aspiration. Therefore thou shouldst seek for aspiration.

“What a man grows forth from, towards that he aspires; if he grows not forth from it, he cannot aspire after it, but he aspires because he grows forth from it. Therefore thou shouldst seek thy source, from which thou growest forth.

“When a man acts, then he grows; if he does not act, he cannot grow, but he grows through action. Therefore thou shouldst follow after action.

“When he finds joy, then he acts; if he finds not joy, he will not act, but he acts when he finds joy. Therefore seek to find out joy.

“Where the Boundless is, there is joy: there is no joy in what is limited, but the Infinite is joy. Therefore seek to know the Limitless.

“When he neither sees nor hears nor perceives anything but the Soul,

that is the Limitless; but where he sees, hears, and perceives what is other than the Soul, there is limitation. The Boundless is immortal, but the limited is subject to death; the Boundless is rooted in its own greatness, but not in what men call greatness. For men call these things greatness: cattle and horses, elephants and gold, slaves and women, lands and houses. But not this greatness do I speak of.

“It is beneath, it is above; it is to the west, it is to the east; it is to the south, it is to the north; it is the all. But I myself am this: I am beneath, I am above; I am to the west, I am to the east; I am to the south, I am to the north; I am the All. But I am the Soul: the Soul is beneath, the Soul is above; the Soul is to the west, the Soul is to the east; the Soul is to the south, the Soul is to the north; the Soul is the All.

“He who beholds this thus, understanding it thus, and knowing it thus, the Soul is his delight, the Soul is his pleasure; the Soul is his friend, the Soul is his joy: he is king over himself, and works his will through all the worlds. They who know not this, are subject to others; their world passes away, nor do they work their desire throughout the worlds.

“The Seer beholds not death nor sickness nor sorrow; the Seer beholds the All, and in all things finds the All.

“He who takes only pure food from the world, becomes pure in being; then he remembers truly, and from that true memory come the loosening of all the knots of the heart.

“Thus when his error was worn away, the Master Sanatkumara showed him the shore that is beyond the darkness. Therefore they tell that he has crossed to the further shore.”—*Chhandogya Upanishad*.

We all come forth from the Soul, which is boundless Joy. The memory of that joy remains with us and haunts us, and the longing for it fills us with sorrow. All the works and ways of man, all his follies and his sins, are but his passionate strivings to find his way back there, to the Soul from whence he came.

The Soul that man is, is the fullness of abounding life, glowing with power, self-sustained, self-replenished, radiant and exultant. Fallen from grace, and driven into exile in his narrow shell of personal life, he seeks to give himself that sense of abounding life by outward sensations, for the veriest sensualist seeks nothing but keenness of life, strong feeling, a vivid sense of the activity of his being. In reality, there is no impurity in this, for the sense of vividest life is his birthright, and he is only seeking what is his own. There is no impurity, but there is futility, and a certain shadow of pain.

For any outward sensation whatever, be it good or bad, be it painful or pleasant, if it be kept up unbroken and unintermitted, will certainly bring numbness, and a total inability to perceive it any longer. There is no possibility of continued keenness for a single sensation.

The whole sensual world lies under this law; and therefore throughout the whole sensual world there is alternation: pain bursting in upon pleasure; death hurrying on the heels of life. Were there no cold, we could not feel heat; if there were no evil, we could not speak of good; and only the presence of the devils gives their holiness to the gods.

This two-sidedness runs through the whole natural world as we know it in sensation; and the natural world mirrored in sensation is the psychic world. Nothing psychic transcends the personal self with its isolation; nor is there any help or liberation for it throughout the whole psychic realm. All things psychic come under the law of alternation; all things psychic are subject to death.

Sensation is nothing but this: an attempt to feign the vividness of real life by an unreal expedient; by keenness of outward stimulus, instead of fullness of inward power. But even pleasure becomes numbness and insensibility; even unbroken life becomes miserable weariness, so that the personal self, in its desperation has created for itself pain, to cure the numbness of pleasure; has discovered death, to break the weariness of miserably prolonged life. Numbness and insensibility terrify the personal self far more than pain and death; therefore it has sought out these grim expedients, to slake its thirst for the keen sense of being; a thirst that is a tragical memory of its old days in the shadow of the Soul.

All this is wrong and needless. In the true destiny of man, is no place for pain or sorrow, no room for sickness and death. These things belong only to the hither shore; on the further shore, where we should inhabit, they cannot dwell. What we need, to cure us of sorrow, is the inflowing of the Soul.

We need to find our way back to the living waters; deep draughts of that boundless flood will give us the sense of abounding and exultant life within ourselves; the very prize we seek so vainly to gain

by the way of sensation. And through desperate struggles, and almost despairing aspiration, we are finding our way back; for we can only aspire thither, from whence we have come.

The first draught of the Waters of life, every man may have for nothing; the second and all following draughts must be paid for, and paid for in full. The first draught of the immortal life will teach us that there is another source of vividness of being, besides sensation; a source the very opposite of sensation, set against it as the night is set against the day; and of which the way of sensation is but the poor distorted copy, seeking to give what it can never give; what is the gift only of the Soul. If we would drink a second time of the waters of life; if we would drink this time consciously and knowingly, we must pay for the draught by conquering the lust of sensation, for the two cannot go together. The body may be true to sensation, live its life, and die its death; or it may be true to the life of the Soul, and be gradually transformed to a vesture of the immortals. But it cannot be true to both; one or the other must be effaced; and there is nothing more awful than the desolation of falling back into death and the darkness, after once we have tasted of life and beheld the light. But to struggle and gain freedom from the lust of sensation, whose thrall we have been for so many ages, is a task that might try a hero's soul; yet the prize is worth it, for the prize is immortality.

The real fullness of immortal life, as against the imitation; gold as against dross; this is the first boon of the Soul. The next is one which we may well regard as a perpetual miracle: the one great miracle of life. It is the finding of our other selves. The water of life is a sea above us and beyond us; and therefore our first free draught has taken us out of ourselves, thus admonishing us that this 'ourselves' is only a small part of the matter: a very insignificant inlet of the infinite sea. And here comes the price to be paid for the second draught. We can no more hold to the little inlet of our personalities; we must open our hearts to the infinite sea. To find the immortal waters a second time, we must lose ourselves. That is the price, and it must be paid. To sink back into the lonely personal self, after seeing its smallness, is to be guilty of a baseness that brings long, slow death; but to rise altogether above our selves, and let nothing remain in us to check the Soul, requires a fortitude that is divine. No human soul accomplishes this without

bitter weeping and wailing, without almost heartbreaking and despair; as no soul frees itself from lust without passing through a black gloom of despondency, deadness, and the shadow of death.

But in losing ourselves, we find our other selves. We were under the impression, in old days, that we really saw and knew and understood the people round us; but we now recognize how vastly we were mistaken. Simple as may be the heart of man, it needs god to understand it: and we must attain to godlike power and insight, by driving our selfhood aside, before we can even feel the presence of the simplest heart. But when the first great victory is won, when the divine quietness and strength descend on us like the soft wings of the nestling twilight, then the radiance begins to gleam and glow to us through the darkness from other hearts, as the stars come out through the mantling shadows of evening. And no sight on earth or in heaven can vie with the marvel and miracle of this, our first initiation into real human life.

Thus we gradually make our way back into the inheritance of the immortals. The rising tide of the water of life, at first a faint spring, often stifled and hidden and defiled, gradually washes us and makes us clean, restoring us to immortal strength, to the freshness of everlasting youth. All we do will have the new and unprecedented quality of a creative act; we shall perpetually embody in our works some new secret of the Soul; and there are still hidden secrets as fine as the decking of the forests in springtime, or the lighting of the stars.

But nothing in this world or any other will equal the recognition of the divine and creative quality in other souls; there is where we shall find our true inheritance: and we shall find it in increasing measure, with the rising onflow of the Soul. If man is not yet redeemed it is more the fault of the redeemers than of man.



# The Tree of Life

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, June, 1899

“Rooted above, with branches downwards, stands the immemorial Tree of Life. This, verily, is called the Shining, the Eternal, the Immortal. In it are all worlds set, nor does any go beyond.”—*Katha Upanishad*.

“Learn now from me, concerning Hunger and Thirst. For a man hungers, as they say, the waters, verily, guide what is eaten by him; like as there are guides of cattle, guides of horses, guides of men, in the same way are the waters guides of what is eaten. This stands forth as an outgrowth; know, therefore, that is not without a root. And where would its root be, but in the Waters? Therefore, through Food as the outgrowth, seek its root, the Waters; and through the Waters as outgrowth, seek their root, the Radiance; and through the Radiance as outgrowth, seek its root in Being; for all creatures are rooted in Being, Being is their home, in Being are they set firm.

“And likewise when a man thirsts, as they say the Radiance guides what he drinks; like as there are leaders of cattle, leaders of horses, leaders of men, so is the Radiance the leader of the waters. This stands forth as an outgrowth; know, therefore, that it is not without a root. And where would the root be, but in the Radiance; therefore, through the waters as outgrowth, seek their root, the Radiance; and through the Radiance as outgrowth, seek its root in Being; for all creatures are rooted in Being, Being is their home, in Being are they set firm.

“And how these three powers, on entering into man, become each threefold, has been taught by me before. When man goes forth in death, Voice in him enters into Mind, Mind enters into Life, Life into Radiance, and Radiance into the higher Divinity. This Soul, verily, is the Self of all beings; it is the Real; it is the Self; that thou art, O Shvetaketu.”—*Chhandogya Upanishad*.

Man is the Tree of Life, rooted in the Eternal, and branching downwards through the three worlds. Measuring downwards from the Eternal, which is infinite Life itself, the highest of the three worlds is the causal world, the world of will and power, creative, above space and time, and therefore beginningless, endless. In the causal world is the first outgrowth of the Tree of Man: the causal self, with its celestial vesture, drawing its life directly from the one Life, and vividly touching and answering to all other selves.

The second outgrowth of the Tree of Life is in the second world, the world of the waters: the psychic realm of emotional and passionate life. Here, the psychic self falls under the dominion of time, though not yet of space; therefore all pure psychic energies are free from the bonds of space, though subject to time. The free psychic self can exercise all its powers across the wide deserts of space, as if space were not; space has no being for the psychic self.

The third outgrowth of the immemorial tree is in the lowest world, the world of sensation, of the natural body, of the physical man. And as sensations are contacts of surface, and surface means space, therefore this lower world is subject to space as well as time.

As the leaves of the tree gather sustenance from the air; drawing in material from the outer world, transforming it, and adding it to the substance of the tree; so the outermost growth of the tree of man, the physical body in the natural world, gathers material through sensations from the world around it, transforms it through emotional life, and adds it at last to man's lasting possessions in the causal world. Sensations are the food in the fable; all that is drawn from the natural world, the whole body of sensations, is spoken of as food; while all that comes to us from psychic and emotional life is spoken of as drink, as our sustenance drawn from the waters. And as emotion takes up sensation, and weaves it into the psychic body of man, so the waters become the leaders and guides of food. As will guides emotion, the Radiance behind is the guide of the waters. Therefore, the symbolic food of regenerate man is imaged as sacramental bread and wine, transformed and instinct with life.

This is the symbol of the Tree of Life; ancient as man's first paradise, and to be found again when he returns to his home, when

the Tree shall bear twelve manner of fruit. While man is true to the symbol, it is well with him. If he fails, he is driven forth, and comes under the dominion of mighty fear. For the true man must perpetually draw his sustenance through the Radiance; derive the substance of his life, his sense of power and endurance, from his root in the Eternal; and only so long as life is flowing to him through his root, can his bodily and psychic outgrowths draw in and assimilate the substance of the outward world.

Man's instant inspiration, in every act, in every bond, must come from his root in the Radiance, or he violates his law of life. When we seek the root of stability and power in the outer world, in a bulwark and barrier of material things, the sap is failing from our branches, and we are already under sentence of death. For the utmost material gains are hounded irrevocably by man's mortality; the longer they have lasted, the nearer is the end. Therefore, the votaries of wealth are haunted by the inexorable spectre, drawing nearer and nearer, and the end is swift darkness and oblivion.

And it is part of the curse on falseness to life's first law, that they who seek stability and power where they are not, never secure what they seek for a single faultless instant. There is always nature's grinding mutation fighting against them, grimly certain to win. Nine parts in ten of man's ambition are not material or sensual at all, but purely psychic, a matter of feeling, not sensation; therefore ambition brings us under the psychic law, insatiate and grasping personality, egotism thirsting and crying to be slaked, yet never satisfied, or possible to satisfy. For egotism prompts endless comparison with others, and no man ever excelled all men in all things. Even if we surpassed all the living, there are still the serene and mighty dead, challenging comparison, whom no man can excel. And as we rise in life, the dead rise with us, and we must measure ourselves against the best of all time. Therefore the hour this instinct of comparison enters life, that same hour peace leaves it.

Sensual life is under the sway of grinding mutation. perpetual building through dissolution. Psychic life is under egotism, ever comparing itself with others; whence come envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharity. Both are subject to death, and the shadow of death is on

them. Over both hangs the black mantle of fear. As men grow away from pleasant and wholesome animal life, and its instinctive direct dealing with nature, they come under the realm of psychical law, under the sway of fear. And when many are fearful together, fear soon breaks into panic; one running makes the others run, all racing for an invisible goal, trampling each other down in the race. This is the Struggle for Life, which surges and rages around us—no law of nature at all, but a wave sent forth into nature, from the fearful heart of man.

And all the misery of the struggle, where nine fail through weakness, for one who wins through strength, comes from this panic of fear; yet the victors are to be little envied, for they are doomed to struggle again among themselves, with the black garland of mortality waiting as the one certain prize for the victor among victors.

There is a cure for fear, and one cure only: once more to break through from the psychic world of emotion to the causal world of power; to rest in the Radiance, not in sensuality; to be strong in will, not in possessions doomed to waste away. It is only as every act flows from the world of will, rising clear and lucent in the Radiance, that man is man at all, a conscious worker in immortality. The first certain sign that a man's life is flowing from this source, is the passing away of the evil genius of envy, of comparison with its miserable fruits. For he who lives creatively, from his genius, finds all things in him new, impossible of comparison with anything that has been before, or shall be after. Take the simplest instance: for thousands of years, the world's singers have been adding line after line of true music and beauty to the great epic of man; yet the same line has never been written twice; all are individual and perfect. Nor did any true singer in his hour of inspiration ever feel, or dream of, comparison with others; singing in glad forgetfulness, in the fullness of his heart, intent only on his song.

Thus it should be, not with song only, but with every act and instinct of the will; always something new and unprecedented; for the living will of man is better than any of its works. Therefore, the way of escape from fear is this: at all hazards, and with high, indomitable valour, to break through the mind-woven barriers into the living world of will and power. Thereafter, the initiative of life will flow forth naturally from the highest, from the eternal and boundless sea of Life.

Though still fighting, and battling valiantly with pure joy in the fight, the visible man stands aside in the battle; the Warrior is other than he; his unborn, deathless Self.

The Radiance glows in every heart of man. Nothing but pure faith in the Radiance, sterling fidelity, is needed to lead man back to his home. But faith and valour are treasures which grow, like the blue champaka flower, hardly elsewhere than in the gardens of heaven. So that the ancients fabled that only sons of Jove himself, high king of gods and men, could ever hope to win to the immortal world. For the seeming-valiant are often valiant from fear, running bravely to escape the pursuer behind them.

Every man is heir to conscious immortality, not in some future world shimmering along the rim of heaven, but here and now; for here, he is in the midst of the Eternal; even now he is in the heart of the everlasting. And finding our immortality, we find that sense of present and instant power, the want of which has made us miserable, driving us in our misery to make others wretched with us. It is for the man of valour to claim his heritage; the usurper is only his craven self; so by the Self, let him overcome the self, and win his crown.

When the well-springs of light and power are opened, all the long forgotten potencies of the will, the riches of heart and soul and understanding, begin to stir and open in the sunlight. There is no longer the question, what work we shall do; we ask now whether all time will be long enough for us to complete it, with the power we now have at command, and the fine perfection which has become our standard.

The work before us includes the transforming of the whole natural world, till it is instantly subject to our wills, ready to embody the secrets of the highest. We are destined to utmost conquest over all material powers. This splendid instinct of mastery drives men into right action even now, while they believe wrongly; for will is far wiser than thought. But our methods of material conquest are all short-sighted; our ponderous materialisms essay the conquest of space and time, but in a wrong and halting way. For the smallest liberation of psychic life from its material husk and vesture is a final conquest over space; the least infiltration of the Radiance is a final victory over time, for it makes man immortal, freeing him from time.



## The Lord of the Will

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, July, 1899

“These are but passing vestures of the everlasting lord; he suffers no detriment, he is illimitable; therefore, son of warriors, fight!

“He who sees the Soul as making an end, he who sees the Soul as suffering an ending—err both; for the Soul destroys not, nor is destroyed.

“It begins not with birth, nor ends with death, nor, coming to being, shall it pass away; beginningless, eternal, everlasting, the Ancient passes not when the vesture passes.

“He who has the vision of this eternal who suffers no loss for ever, this Unborn who passes not away, whom does he kill, son of princes, whom does he slay?

“As a man lays aside worn vestures and takes others new, so the lord of all vestures putting worn-out forms aside, takes other new ones.

“Him weapons wound not, nor fire burns; him waters wet not, nor dry winds parch; for not to be hurt by sword or fire, by water or parching wind is this one everlasting in all, this unshaken rock immemorial.”—*Songs of the Master*.

Even troops of no great experience, fresh to the art of war, often meet a sudden attack well, and stand up against it with a steady courage which brings victory; but there is a moment after the victory, which tries even the stoutest veterans. There comes a lull, a relaxation, when, nothing more remains to be done, nothing to be suffered, and the removal of the fighting strain leaves everything vague and uncertain, giving nothing which the will can grasp or lay hold of; then even the most tried and trusted soldier sometimes go to pieces, their

nerve utterly breaking down. In that hour of weakness, there often enter seeds of pestilence and plague which destroy more victims than war; and this penalty every country has suffered, after a sternly fought campaign, most of all when it has resulted in victory.

We are at that dead point now, or just passing it; with the turn of the year we should begin once more to feel our energies rise and grow, for the days that are to come. But meanwhile we should each and all be prepared for that old reaction after toil, when we come to ask what good was it, whether it was worth while, and, most of all, to wonder, with great discouragement, what is coming next. It would be more than miraculous, if this law overlooked us; and we can even gain a certain grim reassurance from the fact that, in the divine dispensation of nature's backwash, we are not forgotten.

One has heard it said of the letters of a sage to his disciples, that they contain nothing new, nothing which has not been said long ago, in all our books. Like most things people say, and many things they do, this judgement is infinitely shallow; it is like accusing a master of mathematics of only taking the formula from the books, to solve the orbit of a new comet. The weak disciples who bring such criticism to bear, might have their latent sense of humour stirred and drawn forth to daylight, if they realized that, not only in the wise books of our own generation, but in those of five thousand or ten thousand years ago, every phase of their green-sickness was already clearly described and well provided for. So it is not to be wondered at, if there is provision also for this gloom and lassitude of ours.

The truth is, we have come to the end of the old; we have as yet no certain grip of the new; and, to use the good old parable, having set hand to the plough, we are at this moment debating with ourselves the expediency of looking back, and thereby damning ourselves, as unfit for the kingdom. The mood is a trying one, a period of nervous doubt that strains the strongest wills; and for this reason above all, that we cannot even lay hold of anything to find fault with, can identify no one on whom to lay the blame. Fate has been unkind to us in that; for it is infinitely easier to belabour the scapegoat than to lay hold of the matter, and set it right for ourselves.

Half the trouble goes, when we give it a form and name, and

steadily look it in the face; when we realize that these dog-days of the soul, like all the moods that pass before it, like all the vestures which it wears, are but passing veils of the everlasting lord, and that he suffers no detriment. Even the clear recognition of the mood of weak desponding is the will's first effort to put it away. And here we gain a second grain of consolation: the will is with us. The soul, lord of the will, has a fine reserve of inherent energy, to bring forth against just such a lull in valour as this, and that store of power is easily adequate to the not very stern task of tiding us over. We are far stronger than we know, and it takes all turns of mood and circumstance to teach us our full strength.

And here come prescriptions rife from the ancient books, written in the days when men possessed their souls, and were not afraid to say so; the first counsel is, that it is not we ourselves who are to contribute the energy for our future moving, nor even we who are to choose the way. All that has been done long ago, by the Soul which had no beginning, the Soul which shall have no end. The choice of the way and anxious deliberation of means, are of the mind only; and we have done with the mind's leading, when we come into the sunlight of the Soul; henceforth, the mind's duty will only be to catch the intuition, and make it applicable to our daily life, but the intuition itself does not come from the mind.

So that what we have to do, has been settled long ago, and lies already perfect in the Soul; our task is merely to give it being in the natural world, making a body for it by our wills. And as the work is a work of the Soul, it cannot spring from any lower source, from our desires or from our fears, from our ambitions or from our hopes. Therefore these things must stand aside, as motive powers. And it is to this very withdrawal of hope and fear, of ambition and desire, so long the causes and sources of all we have done, that our present lassitude is due; that quietness and loneliness is really the portal of the Soul, the one portal through which it can enter life. And our deep unrest is the herald of its coming.

We must take to heart what has so long sat easily on our lips: that we are immortal; that the Soul in us can suffer no detriment; that its intimate nature is joy; that our heritage is power. And keeping in mind

that our future work is of the immortal, of the Soul, we shall better understand the reason of our perplexity; for what can our minds yet conceive of the clear purpose and destiny of our immortal selves? And that purpose and that destiny must mirror themselves from the Soul into our minds, before we can take the next step forward. What we can do, is, not to add new lustre and vision to the Soul, for the Soul already knows all things, but to prepare ourselves to receive the message, and then, perhaps hardest of all, to wait.

Every taint of self-seeking for our ambitions and our desires must be laid aside; have indeed been laid aside, before we have reached the place of loneliness and gloom; though we shall still carry out all those energies through which of old, unlike charity, we sought our own. Here, indeed, lies one secret of health: to carry on, through mere industry and by a sort of divine obstinacy, the outer and material frame-work of our lives, even in loneliness; even in gloom; for this very activity of ours, free now from all self-seeking, is a potent invocation to the Soul. Overshadowing us from of old, that immemorial Ancient has through all our days been seeking to pass the message on to us; but we have ever been too prepossessed and preoccupied by our ambitions and our desires; thus making a false usurping self, as centre of these desires, which stood as an impediment of the Soul. Now that the barrier-self has been melted away or broken up by storms, our whole mid-world is an empty and unrestful void, crying out to be filled; and our doubt is the echo of that cry.

We must guard ourselves against seeking to frame the message too soon into words; into phrases and reasons intelligible to our minds; for by doing that, we should invite certain confusion. The message must first work a transformation in us; only then shall we be attuned to understand it. But this much we can easily put into words: our work is, here in the great heart of being, to lead the life of immortal powers. And the first part of an immortal is, to be rid of fear. The Soul can suffer no detriment; therefore what can we fear? weapons wound it not, nor does fire burn it, waters wet it not, nor is it withered by desert winds. And this is as true of the fires and storms of passion or sorrow as of the fire and wind of the natural world. Passion and sorrow do not touch the Soul; and that Soul we are; therefore we should sit serene.

But the Soul is lord of the will; and the will perpetually creates, or is ready incessantly to create, when the way to it shall be opened by the passing of desire. Therefore the liberation of the Soul in us will make us builders and creators. All that we do, will have a new efficacy and sterling quality, even in the smallest things, we who were perpetually smitten with weakness, devoid of the grasp and energy to strike home, to fight to the finish, shall begin to see a new vigour and strength in all our works, shall find them at last adequate, able to stand, able to suffer strain and stress. In the days of our desires, we found all enterprises crumbling under our hands; and, as the near presence of the Soul made us half-hearted in our desires, and inwardly untrue to them, all that we conceived in desire failed to come to the birth; we were under a curse of inefficiency, even in little things. Nor among people altogether driven by desire, can any gain success or wealth by strongly desiring them; the successful and wealthy are those who are driven on by their genius, quite unconsciously to themselves; they are carrying on some great work, of which many or all equally reap the fruit; and in proportion as they interpose their desires in the way of their genius, they are cursed and tainted by inefficiency. The great masters of success are slaves to the creative will; and we can emulate their success, not by imitating their energies, but by embodying in ourselves the different work the will has in store for us.

Therefore, as a first reward, we shall have a release of power, a fresh flood from within, making us able to do better all that we do, and making us able to do that better thing which, hitherto, we have not been able to do at all. Scripture quotation is in order; let us take a scriptural enunciation of this same law of efficacy through renunciation. Besides the shorter promise to those who seek first the realm and righteousness, that, 'all these things shall be added unto you', we have a specific prophecy: 'he shall receive an hundredfold, now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands; and in the world to come, life everlasting.' We are to keep in mind that the followers of him who made this promise are now, and have been for centuries, the greatest owners of real estate in the world. But apart from its particular application, the law holds good everywhere; immense increased efficiency in every part of our lives, the moment we surrender to the Soul. Yet the hope of that power can

never be the motive of the surrender.

So that one fruitful ground for apprehensions should really bear a better crop; a crop of hopes, not fears. Yet we shall err, if we take this increased worldly efficiency to be the only, or even the chief end. It is merely an outward accident; the bloom on the fruit. But the fruit itself is the Soul, which carries as a seed within it, the promise of its own proper work; a work which has little enough to do with this nether world, except to transform it into the likeness of its own immortal dwelling-place.

The work of the Soul is the irradiation of life; for ourselves, for our other selves, for our oneness with the All-self. A union in eternal power for these three, and no lesser task, we shall do well to ponder over every word spoken of the Soul, by the sages of old; every word should be a gleam of light to us. It is the lord of all veils and vestures; therefore of our present discontent, which is but its veil. It suffers no detriment, therefore our terror dies. It causes no detriment, therefore how far soever the Soul may lead us, we shall never thereby risk to injure others, and so should die another cause of fear. For all souls work in so true a harmony that the better I mind my own business, the better I am serving yours, and this for lasting and immortal ends. Egotisms can do and suffer detriment, and this is the tragedy of the world; but souls, in the light of the Soul, neither slay nor are slain. Follow your genius to the last, and you make all men your debtors. The Soul wears out old vestures and old forms, and lays firm grasp on others new; and this sloughing of old forms by the Power in us is always a time of pain, of uncertainty, of doubt. It does not yet appear what we shall be.

But in this last quietness, is made really the most excellent work; for the conceiving and inspiration of that work, not we are answerable; it comes from deeper fountains than our wells. Therefore we should throw aside this mantle of apprehension and dread, of doubt and fear. Doubt and fear also are provided for. We cannot lift the clouds, but we can await the sunlight. We cannot bring the light, but we can receive the light; that lonely radiance that never was on land or sea. We cannot engender the will, but we can carry out the will, when it arises newborn in us. Therefore, sons of warriors, fight!

## “Not Unto Us”

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, August, 1899

“All of life, throughout all the world, is to be the dwelling-place of the King; by renouncing life thou shalt possess it, nor envy any man his wealth.

“Working here in the world, and accomplishing all works, a man should be willing to live a hundred ages; this shall be the law for thee also, and no other; nor does work smirch the soul.

“There are realms where no sunlight comes, in blind darkness enwrapped; to this darkness they go forth, whatsoever creatures thwart the Soul.

“The One unmoving is swifter than thought, nor did the powers reach it, for it outstripped them; standing, this outspeeds the others running; in it the Great Breath sets the waters.

“This moves, yet moves not; it is afar, yet near; it is in the heart of all that is, yet it is outside all things.

“He who comes to see all creatures in the Soul, and sees the Soul within all beings, no longer shrinks back from the Soul in fear.

“When all beings have become the Soul for the seer, then what delusion remains, or what sorrow, for him beholding the One Life?

“He encircled the shining life, the bodiless, woundless, frameless, the pure and faultless life. He, the Poet of the world, the wise Seer who holds all things, the Self-being; He ordained all things wisely throughout immortal ages.”—*The Ritual of Initiation*.

These are the opening verses of a hymn whose position among the Books of Wisdom is specially significant. It stands at the turning point of the path, closing the old, and ushering in the new. Its words might

well stand engraved over the doorway leading from the lesser to the greater Mysteries, and in truth it forms part of the ritual of admission into them.

The difference between the lesser and the greater Mysteries is clearly marked everywhere throughout the books of Wisdom; and it is one which we can easily understand. More than that, on our understanding it, and making it effective in our own lives and wills, depends our power to take that last step over the threshold, which at this moment lies immediately before us, and the taking of which will give us entry into the house of life.

The lesser Mysteries are to instruct the mind and imagination, every power of the individual soul; to raise and illumine the heart and will, till the whole personal nature, the whole conscious habitual self is brought into harmony with the great brooding Life which overshadows it. when the lesser Mysteries are learned, a man can say: I am master of the teaching; I have learned all that there was for me to learn; I have purified my will from desire; all my life is lived in harmony with the better law; what then remains to be done?

There remains this—and it is the most tremendous and vital truth in life: the time has come for the personal soul to give place altogether to the Soul; the time has come for the great invocation, the answer to which is Initiation; an entry into the hall of the immortals. The Oversoul is to descend and dwell within the body, in place of the personal soul; henceforth, the personal soul is no longer lord within the dwelling, but must speak the words, and do the works of another; and that other, the hidden divinity, who was before the beginning of the worlds.

This is the last struggle, the last offering laid on the altar; and it would be vain to think this battle can be won with less than the valour of the immortals. It is the deed of the will which demands the highest courage ever called for from the heart of man. For his heart must open to the infinite heart of being; his will submit to the immemorial will; his selfhood sink in the eternal Self; his very soul lose itself in the everlasting Soul. Thenceforth, he is no longer a man among men, but one of the immortals, strong with an infinite strength, gentle with boundless pity, glad with an undying Joy. The Soul works through

him, that ancient poet of the world, who throughout ages has ordained all things well.

So clear is it that this last step is a sacrifice, a deed calling for divine courage and will, that, in the great drama of the Mysteries which has overshadowed the last two millenniums, it has for its symbol the Crucifixion. The soul at the august threshold is shrouded in the gloom of dark Gethsemane; the symbols of the offering are the crown of thorns, the scourge, the nails, the spear.

But for us, and for the age that is to come, that symbol is no longer valid; the great secret will come to us, not in weakness, but in power; not in fear but in valour; and we shall see, not death, but the rising from the dead. Yet the hour will come for us, which has come for all the immortal company of those who have gone before; and we shall be well advised to prepare for it in the silence and the darkness, in which great destiny decrees that our eyes shall be made ready for the dawn. We have reached the utmost limit of the path of mortal life; we stand before the door, wide open, though hidden from us in gloom. Henceforth, two ways alone are open to us: to go boldly forward, or ignominiously to retreat, and through vileness make the great betrayal. This is the choice we have brought upon ourselves, by advancing thus far, and now there is no possibility of withdrawing from the choice or further delaying the day of fate. Events will hurry forward to meet us; the stillness will suddenly become vocal with voices; the darkness that seemed to shut us in, will grow alive with human souls.

We must advance, or we must retreat. There is no halting any longer possible; and across that threshold no man has ever yet carried his own will, his own personal self, his separate and isolated being; that must be left at the hither side of the door; nothing can enter but that in us which is of the eternal Soul.

Here are some of the conditions which surround this last battle for immortality: there must be a certain weariness of life, and yet withal a firm and resolute will. The weariness of weakness is of no avail; the sad return from life that comes of failure will not profit here. It is rather a sense that this old game of human life, as we have played it, is played out; that we know the moves, have tested the value of the stakes; have been winners and losers so often that we find no pleasure in the one

event, nor are greatly cast down by the other. This better world-weariness is rather a kind of perplexity in the face of life, a sense that we have done what we could, and been always foiled; that the real life has all along eluded our grasp; that while we played the rules, they were not the real rules, nor that the real game. We were fighting, not with swords, but with buttoned foils.

Therefore within our weariness there must be a vast reserve of will; a strength tainted by no unconquered flaw of lust or fear. We must have saved the best of ourselves, even without knowing it; we must have full reserves of valour, for great work lies before us. Perhaps we may gain some idea of this mood of perplexed weariness, by picturing ourselves as advancing on the path, among endless difficulties, through gathering gloom; and, instead of the hoped-for goal, finding ourselves confronted at last with a blind wall, no entry being visible, nor any further possibility of advance. As we turn our backs on it, full of doubts and misgiving, a door is suddenly opened behind us, and the light streams through to us from the immortal light.

We must be very well done with hopes or fears for our human life, before we can see the light that comes to us from that long hidden doorway. Then again a second quality is needed: we must be very ready to give up our own wills, our own conception, formed before, of what we expect from the remainder of our life, and our whole future. We might as well try to form a picture of the sunrise, from long study of a smoky lamp. We must have no reservations; we must make no bargains with the Soul, nor seek to impose our notions upon the Most High. It is everything or nothing, in this last throw of life; and we must not think too anxiously of insurance in case of failure. For that is to court failure, and to invoke, not the radiance, but the shadows of the night. The great Soul is to enter into us, to make his dwelling-place in our souls; and we must fain leave the rest to the Soul. And this assurance may once again be given, which has been given so many times before; that so far from really weakening our hold on human life, and leaving us at life's mercy, the great change, when it passes over us, will fill us with strength, so that only after the lesson shall we realize how great, how boundless are our powers, even the powers that handle daily life. And further, no detriment can come to anyone through our sacrifice; rather, only after that sacrifice, shall we gain the power to

help any human soul.

So we must give up our future; we must understand that we, the benevolent personal selves, who filled such generous spaces in our own horizons, have no longer any future at all; there will be no reward for us, no purpose, no goal, no hope or consolation; for we shall have lost ourselves, to find that better Life whose least act is a benediction. And among the misty visions that we shall give up, this also stands: the thought that, by any contriving, we are to save the world; to bring spiritual blessings to this and future ages. Only the immortals can do that, and we are not yet of the company of the immortals. When we have been admitted into that august company, we shall have time enough to consider what was the signal benefit we purposed to confer on our fellow men.

And last of all comes courage. Without that, we shall be nowhere on the great day. We must have the certain knowledge that there is divinity, that there are life-giving powers, that there is a sea of life; we must have firm faith in the Soul, otherwise we shall never make the surrender, never dare to utter that tremendous invocation. Yet even with high valour and firm faith, we cannot see the goal beforehand. We must pass through the darkness, before we see the light. We must lose our lives, to win them.

It is ordained by the law that at the hour of trial each one of us must stand alone. In the final choice, no god may help us, no devil hinder us. For all we can see, we are making the great renunciation for the first time since the dawning of the world. We must descend in utter solitude into the valley of the shadow. Therefore that law which works in smallest things, as in the greatest, has brought it to pass that for a long time we have heard no clear voice from behind the veil, seen no certain leading from those who have reached the other side. And, as time shortens the days of fate, that silence will grow greater, our loneliness will be more complete. And when we realize the purpose of it, we shall thank the gods that this was so. For thus only, through the darkness, could our eyes be made ready for that light which no mortal yet beheld—for to see it is to become immortal; only thus, in the silence, could our ears be attuned to hear the infinite song of life.

All that has been said of our past progress, and of the path we have

already passed, is true, and yet a part only of the truth. We stand as the first fruits of ages of effort and sacrifice, ages of toil. And that toil was our own and other's. Not one of us, but has again and again come close to the heart of the secret, wearing the ground round the doorway with often returning steps. From many lives in many lands, we may draw strength for this our final victory. And victory it shall be. We shall cross the threshold. We shall invoke the Soul, and enter the immortal gateway; and thenceforth we shall live as the artificers and craftsmen of the Soul. The power that made the worlds shall dwell in us in present divinity; and then only shall we know what power means. The wisdom that guided all things shall outshine our human light, and then only shall we know what radiance can flood the heart of man. The Self of all beings shall abide with us; then only shall we be ready for the revelation of our own divinity, and the living divinity of our other selves.

# The Turning Tide

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, September, 1899

“There are those who draw near to Thee through will, holding Thee ever in their hearts: there are those who draw near in thought to the unchanging Eternal: which of these follow the more excellent way?”

“They who draw near to me, holding me ever in their hearts, and with hearts drawn into me, full of perfect aspiration, these I esteem followers of the highest way.

“Yet they who draw near in thought to the unchanging nameless Eternal, the unthinkable all-present, the unmoving foundation which stands for ever firm:

Checking every impulse toward sensual life, with souls for ever balanced, these also come to me, rejoicing in the well-being of all creatures.

“Yet the path is hard, for those who fasten their thought on the unmanifest; the unmanifest way is difficult for those who dwell in bodies.

“But they who rest all the works of their wills on me, who aspire in heart towards me, who draw near single-minded, seeking the vision of me,

“For them I become a deliverer, raising them up from the ocean of death and embodied life: I quickly lift up those who lodge their wills in me.

“Therefore lead thy heart forward into me: let thy soul enter me; and thenceforth thou shalt surely abide with me forever.”—*Songs of the Master*.

Century after century the tide has flowed in from the great sea of Life, to refresh the hearts and lives of men: and after leaving with them

a certain measure of power and inspiration, has flowed back again lonely to the great lonely ocean.

But this time it is to be otherwise. The tide is to carry us with it to the immortal sea. Already the flood is full. The quiet time between flow and ebb is upon us, and the moment draws nearer when we must launch our boats upon the waves. Perhaps we should like it to be for ever high water, in a tideless sea: so that we might linger endlessly in the shallow margin; on the deep, yet within comfortable sight of the shore. Yet this may not be. The eternal tides of life must come and go, with the great heart-beats of the eternal Being; and the tide which flowed must ebb, carrying us out with it into the unknown, or leaving us stranded on the beach.

If it were a comfortable inland lake, there would be no tide, no ebb, and no hazardous setting forth for the unknown: but this is the boundless ocean, and we must soon make up our minds whether to go or stay; to remain sheltered among the sand-hills, or trim our sails and set forth with the evening breeze into the gathering twilight, the purple gloom that covers the unknown.

There will be some among us who elect to turn hack at the last, thinking that their courage and desire for adventure in the unknown will have grown, and that they will be of better heart, next time the tide comes in. Yet many of us will make the voyage, and begin to learn the secrets of the immortal sea. The twilight of evening, while we still linger under the shadow of the shore, will soon become the first dawning on the deep, and we shall feel the strong life of the everlasting begin to tingle in our veins. Little by little, we shall learn to forget that we were once shore-dwellers, sheltering ourselves among time's sand-hills, and grow more and more into the life of our ever-flowing, yet ever restful home.

Every simile may be strained too far; and this one, perhaps, has been carried far enough. Yet we must speak in symbols, for only in the inviolate life of nature can we find images of the living powers of the soul. Our human life is too corrupt, too sophisticated, too full of wire-drawn subtleties, of artificial thought and wholly false values, to yield us even the material of true symbols. We are hardened, frozen as it were into strange forms and pressures of life; the sap has flowed from

us, and we are left withered and dry, along the shores of death. Therefore, this symbol of the sea of life has its first application here. All that is hard and crystallized in us all rigid forms and dry husks of by-gone times, all the unchanging moulds of mind which cramp our imaginations and limit the outflow of our hearts by fancied boundaries; all this hard, dry life must pass away, to give place to the everflowing waters of the ocean. We must be ready to live henceforward without any fixed barrier or defence; open on all sides to the flowing tides of life; responsive to the instant inspiration of the soul, an inspiration which each time surpasses itself, and makes old and outworn even our previous intuition. Therefore the truth of the symbol: we must learn to live on the ever-flowing deep, and no longer on firm and unchanging earth.

There is something very disconcerting in this, perhaps: we would greatly prefer some definite rule, some set task to be done; we would heartily thank the sage who prescribed for us some decalogue, saying that through fulfilling the law we might enter into life. Yet this is just what no sage will do, or would dare to do. Each of us must find his own light, discover his own genius, gain his own footing in the immortal world. We have to deal in the last analysis not with a school of sages, but with the Eternal; with immemorial Life, through which alone the sages come into their power. And no initiation, even the last and highest of all, will ever lift the veil from that mystery; we shall never know whence is the eternal, infinite Life. It must suffice us to know that the Life is, and that we are the Life.

Then comes the world-old question, often asked and often answered: how are we best to enter into the Life? Are we to follow faith or works, meditation or action, thought or will? One answer to this question is translated here. Let us apply the answer to our present needs.

The path of thought and meditation is this, and it will really lead us at last to the goal: we live between two worlds, the hissing sea of the senses on one side, and the quiet deep of the Eternal on the other. If we can make every movement of our imagination cease to respond to the seething waves of the sensual sea, and more and more mirror the quiet deep above, we shall in the fullness of time win a perfect oneness

with that peace, and enter living into the living world.

Yet this is a hard way, and the heart of mortal man cannot often compass it. There is another path, the way of will. At every moment of the way, we have some best inspiration, some highest thought; and the path of will directs that we should instantly turn this thought into an act, without even inquiring whether we might reach some thought newer and higher, and in whose light our present act would show full of imperfections and shortcomings. Instant act, for every best thought; no delay, no question or hesitation; no splitting of hairs, nor endless refining of motives, but instant action; instant realization through the will.

The will itself is colourless, equally ready for every act, whether it be to mould earthen jars or carve marble statues. All acts are alike to the will. But if we draw its power into us, and gain the habit of instant act, even for simple and everyday inspirations, we shall be able to count on our will when the great day of illumination comes. Always let the will in us be creative, never let it fall from its divinity to imitate. The difference is this: we imitate, when we act from a thought in some mind other than our own, and thereby we make our will the servant of another's thought; we are creative when we let the will in us answer only to the thought which rises within ourselves, and thereby we become free. Every imitation makes it harder for the will in us to regain its freedom, and carries us further and further from the fountain of our life. Every creative act, where the will in us responds to a flash from within, makes us stronger, and brings us closer to our home. Therefore we shall soonest become obedient to the immortal tide, if we gain the habit of instant act, and if we act only from within. This is the easier way, smoother for mortal feet to tread; more accessible for common humanity than the difficult path of pure thought.

The habit of will, of instant action, will serve us well at the present hour, and in the hours immediately to come. For as we begin the life of the immortal, the fountains of the deep will be unseated within us, and innumerable inspirations, long since forgotten and faded out of human life, will begin to make their way back into the morning twilight of our hearts. If we linger too long, too minutely pondering and questioning, the swift inspiration will flit a way to

some other more responsive soul; we should embody each inspiration at once, without an instant's hesitation. At the least, we shall have learned something, while hesitation has few lessons, and those few ignoble. At the most, we shall have given a new embodied life to the word of the Supreme.

This endless visible world has powers without end stored up in it, which men for ages have utterly forgotten; it has endless powers which no mortal ever knew. For the visible world is the outermost garment of the Life, and in no way less full of treasure than its source. An inspiration of the will, after we have once boldly embarked, may be the key to some forgotten secret, or to some secret never known. If we act, we may discover the secret; if we hesitate, we shall learn nothing.

Then there is the really magical world which surrounds us, and of which our ignorance is as great as the peace of God; the magical world of our other selves. We cannot learn its first secret until we embark; we shall never learn it at all, unless we act. For to those who have set out, there come endless flashes of intuition as to our other selves; gleams of that great secret, that our other selves are touching us immediately all the time, in direct defiance of the frivolous veils of space. And a life, keen, vivid, infinitely full of promise begins for us with the first intuition of human life; when for the first time our other selves begin to touch us from within.

That is a work which will still be new after ages; for us, it has hardly yet begun. So that we need have no fear that the time will hang heavy on our hands. Every human soul has endless needs and endless powers which are simply never touched in our present life as we have come to live it. That is something of what we mean by the crystallizing and hardening of life, which must all be melted away by the immortal waters. And we may begin at any moment to supply these needs and learn these unknown powers; at any moment after we have embarked with the turning tide. There is all the Oversoul yet to be worked into the tissue of human relations. and now is as good a time as any to begin. Each of us will have his own gleams, his own inspirations, unlike all others, for the great Soul is alive and original at every part; therefore we ought from the outset to eschew the bad habit of copying, and act each one of us bravely for ourselves. So only do children learn

to walk. Yet one rule may be laid down as of universal application: let us always think of people as our other selves.

Last task of all, and one embracing all the others: we are to find and keep wide open the doorway between our private souls and the great heart of Life. If we fail in this, all else is futile. Acts of charity have no more virtue for us than crimes; crimes have even the greater virtue of sincerity. If we are faithful in this, ever invoking the immemorial light, and drawing the Power into ourselves, than all will be altogether well, though we have to work our way up from the very mire and madness of passion. We shall learn many things on the way, that the white angels do not dream of. Therefore, this last counsel of all: the light, and always the light, though the world be wrapped in darkness, though the heavens fall.

# The Guardian of the Gate

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, October, 1899

“Seeking the gifts of the gods, Vajashravasa of old offered up all his possessions. He had a son, by name Nachiketas. While the cattle were being led up for the sacrifice, aspiration entered the boy. He pondered thus:

“‘They have drunk water, they have eaten grass, given their milk, they have lost their strength. Joyless worlds verily he gains, who offers only these.’

“He spoke to his father, saying: ‘To whom wilt thou give me?’ A second and a third time he asked him.

“His father answered: ‘To Death I give thee!’

“Nachiketas pondered: ‘I go before many that shall follow after. I go in the midst, since many have gone before. What then is this work of Death, which he will work on me today?’

“‘Look forward: as it was with those who went before—look backward—so shall it be with those who follow after. As corn, a mortal ripens; as corn he is born again.’

“Nachiketas, coming to the House of Death, stood at the door, thus meditating: ‘when a pure guest enters, the Fire-god enters the house; therefore they give him the greeting of peace. Bring water, therefore, for thy guest, O Death, son of the sun!’

“‘Hopes and expectations, friends and kindly speech, sacrifice and purification, sons and cattle—it destroys all this for the man of little wisdom, in whose house a pure guest is not welcomed with food.’

“After three days Death returning addresses him: ‘For the three nights thou hast dwelt in this house of mine without welcome of food, thou a pure guest, and worthy of all honour—honour to thee, guest,

may it be well with me—therefore against this, choose thou three wishes!”—*Katha Upanishad*.

From the House of Death in the great times of old, to a magic-lantern show in these lesser days, is a long cry; yet there is the same moral, and a sound one, underlying both: a moral we have need of, at this present time. Let us take the modern instance first.

When a good lantern has been found, with a perfect light, a picture full of colour and detail, and a white screen to throw it on; when, finally, one who understands these things is there to handle the lantern, and an audience is gathered, eager to see the show, there is yet one chief condition to fulfil, without which all the rest is futile, and can only lead to portentous failure. The darkness must first be complete.

Even when the light is at its brightest, perfectly focused and centred upon the screen, so that the rays are already painting their picture there, and carrying it thence into the very eyes of the waiting audience, unless all other lights be quite cut off, they may receive those rays for ever on their very nerves of vision, and yet see nothing, nor know that there is anything there to see. And even after they have had clear vision of the picture, if other lights be suddenly turned on, it instantly vanishes; and even though the very same rays are still pouring into their eyes, they will see nothing at all, until darkness once more brings back the revelation.

I have used this image already, to point one moral of the occult world; to suggest the word of an enigma which has caused many to stumble. The riddle is, our forgetfulness of former births. The answer is, that the memory of them, and of them all, is with us even now, in pictures as vivid as any magic-lantern show, endowed with movement and with living voices, with a sense of by-gone years which yet dwell with us forever. Yet we see nothing, for our eyes are blinded by the day-light, and by our own lamps and candles which shut out that finer light.

Perfectly true for the memory of past births, this image is of far wider application, extending indeed to our whole life in the occult world, to all that follows after our regeneration. It is true for our whole inheritance in the Real, for all the wisdom and immortal will that wait

for us, in the day of our initiation. We can only inherit when the lights that blinded us cease to enter our eyes, for we can only then see where lies our inheritance. The truth is as inexorable as it is simple. We cannot feel the immortal world of will, until we have come forth from the dominance of sensation.

The purpose of the Life is to make us present immortals: strong, exultant, creative. But we must first put from us two things: our lust of sensation, and the assumption that something is due from the world to our personal selves. Either one of these will shut us out altogether from the kingdom. The lust of sensation bars the way, because it is a condition of utter weakness of dependency and fear; the dread that our beloved sensation may cease, puts us at the mercy of every chance of fate, and we are constantly preoccupied with the fear that we shall be robbed. This is not the mood of the creative gods.

The other barrier, our demand on the world for consideration and tribute, based on what grounds one knows one knows not, is even more absolute. Perpetually waiting for what is to come to us from without, whether wealth or fame or whatever it be, we keep away from us the real truth, that all things must come to us from within; we are to be enriched, not by the tributes of the world, but by our own creative power. The one source may grow weaker, and cease. The other grows stronger for ever. The receiver of tribute is ever dependent on his tributaries, but the creator is king.

The vital truth then, the heart and soul of our new life, is this: we are to live directly from the will in us, bringing it to bear on the outer world of natural powers, on our other selves, and on our own inner world. We are to find our sense of strength in that, and not in our sensations or emotions. We are to have the sense of strength through the immediate presence of the will, and not through our outward possessions, nor because other people tell us we are strong. For that is why we seek wealth: to see ourselves mirrored large in the world's admiring eyes, that thereby we may come to believe in our own wealth. But the great sea of will lies behind us, ready to serve and strengthen us endlessly; ready to pour living divinity into our works and days, until all becomes changed to the likeness of the immortals. Our whole being is to pass through the furnace of regeneration, so that

we shall awake, and arise to a new universe, founded and based upon the immortal will, wherein the material world hangs suspended like a coloured cloud.

We are to found ourselves inwardly on our immortal part, and to build our whole lives on that, in fearless faith, in perfect power. From being merely receptive of the waves of material life, we are to become receptive of the sea of immortal will, drawing it into us from above, gathering immediate strength direct from the great Life, and fearing not to claim our divine inheritance in the Power. All the tides of the immortal ocean are with us now, in our attempt and aspiration, but not for long. It is ordained that the immortal waters shall soon flow out again to the everlasting silence and peace.

These good things we have told ourselves, and our better part knows that they are true. But there is another part in us, the old realm and domain of original sin, including more of us than we would have the archangels know, which refuses to believe at all in the radiance and the realm, lamenting that the goods we had are taken away, while the new things promised us are phantoms, shadows in the mist; and so between these two voices we fall into much sadness and sorrow.

This sadness which comes to us, on the heels of departing sensuality, and when we have had the grace to grow ashamed of our vain self-esteem, has long been known as the Guardian of the Gate. It is a mood we must meet and pass through, if we are to stay beside the mystic portal until the lingering lord within returns. It is the darkness our eyes must grow used to, before they can gain the vision of the better light. And as the aspirant of old waited three days and three dark nights at the door of Death, so must we wait, till the noise and turmoil of the senses ceases somewhat from our ears; till a truer estimate of our little personalities opens the way for a right estimation of our coming divinity. And as the aspirant of old received the gift of immortal wisdom, immortal power, and immortal joy; so too shall we receive, if we but endure the darkness—that darkness which comes to us in mercy, to prepare our eyes for the blinding sunrise of the Life.

The sadness of waiting is as inevitable, as little to be escaped, as little to be lamented, as the weariness which comes over the tired nerves of the voluptuary, when he repents him, and turns from his

wicked ways. And it sometimes befalls that the penitent repents of his repentance, and returns once more to cull the sweets. Many who have painfully reached the door of imperious Death, the Lord of Initiation, have fled again before the third day, when he should return, unable to endure the darkness, frightened by the silence, and so sinking down again in the sensual sea. And much has been written in a very tragical tone of the sadness of waiting, so prone are we mortals to self-pity; yet there is no true tragedy here, unless convalescence be tragic. The true tragedy is, not to have the courage to wait. The waiting is indeed our only hope. For except across this valley of the shadow, we cannot come to the hills of light. Only by virtue of the darkness can we catch the rays of the rising sun.

We are well through the shadow now, and the day of our dawning is at hand. Hidden hands have led us far through the mysterious valley, without our knowing it; we are close to our journey's end. But we shall not therefore escape the shadow-land of sorrow, the dim days of lamentation, the misery of waiting at the door. Therefore we do well to fortify our hearts with courage and endurance, to clear our thoughts and strengthen them by the understanding that these things must be so, and the reason why they must so be, for only those who endure to the end will see salvation; the crown of life is for none who are not faithful to death.

Our souls have been led back from the world of daylight, from the surging sea of sensuality, to the very threshold of the everlasting doors, and we stand waiting without. We are still not perfectly inured to the darkness which alone can fit us for the light, and we would not be veritable children of men if we did not mark our time of waiting with dirges for the days that are dead, and elegies of regret for the sensual world we must leave behind us.

People sometimes say they have given up sensuality, and yet come into no true revelation. Yet this is a mere confusion of words. All our outward life is sensual; all life that depends on receiving from without, instead of creating from within; and there is little to choose between the slave of fine emotions and the slave of coarsest stimulants of sense. In truth, the latter is more likely to turn back from the error of his ways, as he is less subtly and deeply corrupted.

Vanity is a far more deadly evil than sensuality; and vanity, in its essence, is a claim for consideration and tribute to be paid to our personal selves, something due to the fine and worthy persons we esteem ourselves to be. The sense of grievance that goes with this claim would be comical, were it not such a deadly sign of weakness, such a barrier to the birth of the will. All the middle life in us which advances these claims must be broken down, before the will can flow clear through. We must outlive the sense that our daily lives and our personal selves are so portentously real, before we can open the door of the soul, and enter into life eternal.

Therefore before we complain against the gods, and magnify the sorrows of our waiting, we would do well to see whether we are perfect in these two things: whether the desires that dwell in the heart have been let go, and all personal vanity forgotten. And then let us be of good courage, waiting on the coming of the gods.

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“HE DESCENDED INTO HELL.”

The passage translated at the beginning of the Oriental Department, from the *Katha Upanishad*, tells the very same story which was embodied hundreds or thousands of years later, in the Apostles' Creed. The Father sends the Son forth as the sacrificial victim. The Son is delivered up to Death, and descends into the House of the Dead, rising again the third day.

But the story is older still. It is the outline of every rite of Initiation, whether in India, in Chaldea, or in Egypt. It is even older than all these: older than the Mysteries, which are as old as man; for it is the story of the Descent of the Soul.

The Soul is the son of the Eternal, which has descended into Hell, into the House of Death, where we all live, and which we all inhabit even now. We are the spirits in prison, to whom the Messenger was sent. The three days of our dwelling there, are past, present, future; the three mirages into which we break the everlasting Now.

But it is not only written that the Son descended; it is written that he rose again from among the Dead, the dead in sensuality and futility. It is written that the Son ascended again, learning the lesson of the

great Initiator, Death, who is the veiled Genius of Life.

And in every land, whether it be Chaldea or Egypt or India, or wherever the Mysteries have dwelt in outward sanctuaries and shrines, the rite closes with the words: "Awake! Arise!" or be forever fallen.



## “The Crown of Life”

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, November, 1899

“Laying all thy works in thought on me, and full of me, let thy imagination be ever bent on me, holding firmly to the illumined soul.

“With thought full of me thou shalt cross over all hard places by my sovereign grace. But if through vanity thou obey not, thou shalt perish. “If clinging to vanity, thou thinkest: ‘I will not fight the fight,’ thy decision is delusive, for nature will constrain thee.

“Bound down by the power of thine own work that was born with thee, what thou wilt not do in thy delusion, thou shalt do against thy will.

“The Master stands in the heart of all beings, leading all beings onwards through the world-glamour, as though carried forward by some outward power.

“Take thy refuge in him with all thy heart and soul. By his sovereign grace thou shalt come to the eternal dwelling-place and everlasting peace.

“Thus do I teach thee wisdom, more secret than all secrets. Perfectly pondering it, as thou desirest, so do.

“Hear once again my last word, the final secret. My beloved, thou art firm of heart, therefore I shall declare to thee thy desire.

“Let thy soul rest in me, let thy love be toward me, offering all to me, full of reverence for me. Thou shalt verily come to me—this is truth I promise thee, for thou art dear to me.

“Giving up all other laws and bonds, take refuge in me alone; I will free thee from all the hosts of darkness. Sorrow no more.”—*Songs of the Master*.

After the servitude of sensual life is broken, and the weakness of

vanity is overcome, there are long grey days of quietness, and at last, for those who endure, there is the sunrise of the everlasting Life.

The victory is gained. Eternity is begun. The mortal rises up immortal from the fire of death, in a vesture coloured like the sun. And thenceforward each day and every work accomplished add to the certainty of victory, the firm knowledge that liberation has been won. And the fruits of victory are these:

There is first an abundant sense of life; a full and throbbing vigour, that makes glad the heart, changing the old-time burden of our natural life into a pleasure; a pastime whose charm grows, not dulls, with use. Nature's law is cheerful energy, effective, abundant, adequate. And coming under the power of the law, we inherit the secret of nature's immortal youth, and find life not a struggle but a delight. We catch the great chords of the eternal song, and know in our hearts that the heart of things is altogether well.

Yet this flowing vigour, splendid as it is, is but the outer vesture of a far higher gift, the sense of inward rightness and power. We have opened the everlasting fountains, and henceforth our wellsprings can never go dry. In the days of our vanity, a little calamity was enough to overwhelm us, for vanity is the weakest thing in the world. But now we are unconquerable, we are of the stuff that the gods are made of, and calamity can knock no longer at our doors.

In our human life, there was one thing more notable than all others, a shadow of utter blackness. We felt ourselves of more worth than the stones, yet the stones remained, while we passed away. We had a higher life than the streams, yet the streams failed not, though our knell was rung. In a nature that moved and lived eternally, man, the best work of nature, was doomed to die.

But that cloud has lifted. We have conquered death. And though we cannot tell of a certainty what awaits us in the great Beyond, yet we do know this: that with us it will be altogether well; for there is that in us which laughs at death, or greets it as a friend and ally, bending death with all things else to the furtherance of our everlasting ends.

And there is that in us which laughs at separation. We are already in some sense, and we feel that we shall be ever with less reservation, lords and masters over space. Wherever living souls are, we are; our

interests are there, our work is being done there, our spirit is conscious there. For there is but the one world-old Soul of Man, the Divine, and that Soul we know ourselves to be. And this knowledge is not of the lips, but of the heart and will. We can feel the everlasting Soul throbbing in us, and without us, in every soul of our other selves. We exiled ourselves for ages from our dominion in our other selves by our vanity and lust. But the days of our exile are ended, and we have come again into power. Henceforth, whatever the soul of man attempts, whatever the Soul attempts in man, we have a share in it; whatever good thing is undertaken, that makes for the honour of our life, we can help it, and bring support to every struggling heart of man.

Nor need we rely on our own sense of oneness only; our secret will instantly be guessed by our other selves. They will open their hearts to us, making us the allies of their wills, for nothing wins and charms like the living presence of the Soul. All men recognize their lord, and give him welcome, with relief and gladness opening their doors. That is a dominion which grows forever; not in abstract theory, but in living possession. We have kindred in every heart of man; we have fellowship in all his infinite work.

Yet greatest boon of all, greater even than the splendid victories over time and space, over death and separation, is the present power that initiates us into the secret of the creative gods. We are become children of the Will. There is no misery like the sense of wasting powers and slipping opportunities, when the days of life are falling through our fingers, and we cannot lay hold on them, nor gain the mastery over them. That sense of impotence, of foiled will, of weakness, is the greatest curse of life; and there is no boon like the getting rid of it.

Out of the futility into power; into conscious firmness and mastery; that is the essence of our victory, of our initiation into the Soul. For this is the heart of our secret, that the Soul is, that it is here and now; and that our doors open into the Soul.

Henceforth, our separate lives are closed. There is no more of them, nor of our separate interests and fears. We are the Soul, doing the work of the Soul, and sharing its everlasting power and youth. We need not defend the outposts of our little lives against the fancied hosts

of enemies who threatened us all around; we can fall back on the reserve of the army, the host of universal Life. If our hearts are weary, if the battle has worn us out, we can withdraw into the shadow of the Soul, and there in silence and in peace, draw in great refreshment, coming forth again into the morning of the gods. Great horizons begin to glint and gleam to us, and we are already guessing at the mighty secrets of hidden life.

The greatness and the beneficence of all life are beginning to be revealed to us; the awful majesty and might that runs through us all, as the warp and woof of our being. We are initiated into the tremendous purposes that underlie it all, till our hearts thrill with dread and echo with deep delight. It is the Life, splendid, majestic, full of darkness and awe, thrilling with beneficence and power; we feel ourselves in presence of the Life.

As the mists scatter and lift before the sunrise, so do the shadows that surrounded us pass away. And so rapidly does the complexion of our life change with the lifting mists, that we are left breathless, hardly able as yet to steady ourselves in thought amid the dawning of this new-opening world. It was for this we were so long kept waiting; it was for this we endured the interminable watches of the night. Time seemed to go so slow with us that we feared old Time was dead. Now we are caught up and carried forward so rapidly that we have scarce time to feel our great alleviation, the splendid liberty that has at last descended into our days.

Henceforth, it matters little what we do, in our separate and isolated selves. For the great Life works, though we sleep. The Soul builds, even though we pass idle days. Whatever is good, the Life is carrying forward incessantly; and the Life cannot but win. Whatever is evil is rushing into conflict with the Soul, and the Soul cannot but prevail. Yet it shall be our pleasure to take our share in the building; in honour, we shall be abashed to be found shirking, while great nature throbs with creative life.

Of old time, we worked falsely, not knowing where our true power lay. We laboured for our sensual satisfaction, never suspecting that sensuality can never bring us satisfaction, but only weakness and numbness and death. We worked for vanity, longing and thirsting to

see admiration of ourselves and our wealth in others' eyes; never seeing that the preoccupation of vanity made us detestable to all men of good-will, and a laughing-stock to everyone in whom was rather malice than good-will.

Therefore our work of other days was doomed before it was begun. At the best, it brought us the opiate of delusion, and we lived the fools of hope. Most men still live thus, and will for ages. They dream that their reward is the sensual fruit of their labours, not seeing that their reward was their work itself. Therefore they live, working wisely, but believing very foolishly; and at last, finding no lasting delight in the sensual goal they set themselves, they droop, and incontinently die.

But not so shall we work. The Life is not pre-occupied with our sensual delights, nor striving to gratify our vanities; the Life is not working for any ends like these. The Soul works to create, in us, and with our hands. And for every creative work, the Soul has set its own reward; the power of a further and better creation, with every circumstance, every advantage of position or possessions, which that new creative act demands. If I have worked wisely and joyfully, and, coming to the end of my work, require large material resources to embody my new vision, the title-deeds to new possessions will presently come to light; if I need a nation to work out my revelation of the Soul, I shall find myself leader of a nation; or, if I need nothing but the simplest natural life, with large, plain outlines quite unadorned, the Soul will give me that. Thus is our payment and our promotion, and the manner and measure of it is best left in the hands of the Soul.

This we come to see, throughout all life. Life is not a bill of pains and penalties, but an endless vista of opportunities for us and all men; a vista in no wise barred by sorrow and separation, nor in any way broken by death. The splendid march of life, and of all life, goes forward incessantly, from instant to instant, from hour to hour. That is where we have our inheritance. We are of the stuff that moves the world, that builds high heaven, that glows through death, and knows itself immortal.

If you are oppressed with sorrow, lonely and alone, deeming yourself forgotten of the gods, and outcast in the desert of a world where is no good, nor any love or tenderness, be sure that you are

deluding yourself with the misery of things that are not, and shutting yourself out from the splendour and joy and solace of the things that are. Though the darkness is round you, and there is no sound but the cry that is so miserable, it fears to utter itself aloud, yet know with certainty that unseen beneficence is near; your sorrow is known, you are not forgotten. Not a pain will go without its solace, not a sorrow will fall on you, but it is the shadow of a coming joy. You are very well provided for, though you know it not; every least desire and effort is counted, nothing goes for naught; the perfectest justice will be measured out, where justice is all mercy, for you are not alone, but though you know it not, held firm in the arms of infinite Life.

The darkness will change to the grey quietness of dawn; after dawn will come full sunshine, and you will recognize with gladness and rejoicing that there are no more sad tomorrows, for you have been born into the light of everlasting day.

## Indicative Words for the Future

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, December, 1899

“You are to hand on this teaching of mine; yet never to those who lack fervent aspiration, who love not, or who will not listen, condemning me.

“He who shall set forth this highest mystery amongst my lovers, with uttermost love for me, shall of a surety come to me.

“Nor amongst all mankind shall any be dearer to me throughout all the world, nor shall any other offer me more acceptable sacrifice.

“And whoever shall recount this sacred discourse between us two, offers to me the sacrifice of wisdom; this do I declare.

“And whoever listens, full of aspiration and eager for wisdom, shall go at death to happy worlds, the reward of righteous works.

“Have you heard and understood with singleness of heart? Are your delusions of unwisdom gone, conqueror of enduring wealth?”—*Songs of the Master*.

Friends, Countrymen and Lovers: let me for once lay aside the impersonal form of these papers, to speak to you direct. In a sense the work they were intended to accomplish is completed; the result is attained; the account is closed.

We have passed through a long period of transition with what grace and patience the gods vouchsafed; it is ended, and the victory is with us. Not such a splendid victory, perhaps, as some of us hoped for; not so showy or magnificent; yet, believe me, a victory very substantial and real; of such profound significance and far-reaching effect that we shall not live to see the final fruit of it; no, nor those yet unborn who shall

in due time take our places.

The heart of our victory is this: the divine power of spiritual self-reliance, the present sense of the Eternal within ourselves. This give us individual insight into the law of the real, with individual initiative to embody the light of the highest in our own acts and lives. We are become substantial and alive, responsible agents, so that each one of us could and would carry on the purposes of the gods, alone and in the dark; how much more then, united and in full light. Of our own knowledge, we now know something of the soul; of our own power, we can and will act out that knowledge.

To the gaining of this end, as we now can see, the period of darkness and silence was indispensable; had we still been visibly led, we would not have learned to find our way. Had we been fed with outward signs, we should have failed to recognize the inward light. But now we know.

Nor will it be long before we are called to make our knowledge effective. For cyclic time, which seemed to stand still with us, will presently begin to bring in his revenges. The tide is turning; has in truth turned. We shall soon have ample opportunity to see why it was imperative, just at this juncture, to stop the general outflow of force, and so to stop it as to compel us to find our feet.

The law which has dominated us for the last quarter-century, and with many of whose effects we are familiar in the incidents of our own lives, will presently set the tide flowing full in the opposite direction, and this tide we shall have to meet, guiding it so far as may be, giving to its currents such direction as may be most profitable in the next springtime of the gods.

We have for years seen an outflow towards spiritual liberty; towards freedom from ecclesiastical dogma and gross materialism. We are now to meet the reaction; dogma, gathering its forces once more together for a mighty and sustained effort, will try to force a definite mould and impress on all thought; it is for us to see that this mould shall not become a prison. Materialism, more in morals than in philosophy, more as an avowed purpose and ideal of life than as a speculation, will arise, awakened after a sleep of a generation, eager to recover the ground it has lost.

There will be a universal tendency, a steady tide setting in through the moral world, and inwardly affecting our hearts and minds, in the direction of hardness, of uniformity, of consolidation. We must be prepared to act as the centres of that radiant force which will run counter to this tide. Look back a few years, and you will understand this better. Just at the time dogma and materialism were breaking up, under the periodic influence of cyclic law, we were put in possession of a definite and complete system. We were ranged into an ordered army, to meet and face the cyclic tide. Look back a few years, and you will understand this better. Just at the time dogma and materialism were breaking up, under the periodic influence of cyclic law, we were put in possession of a definite and complete system, we were ranged into an ordered army, to meet and face the cyclic tide. With the reverse current, we must take the opposite course. We must separate and dissolve, so as to be, not a united and uniform body, but so many effective units, each a centre of radiant force drawn direct from the highest, from within, from the fountain of life. We must give up our serried conformation, and learn the methods of guerilla warfare.

This is not because of our lessened numbers. Quite the contrary, the lessening of our numbers is the effect, the natural selection of the law. For many who were fit enough to hold their own in a crowded host would be quite unable to take their place as guerrillas, to exercise that individual responsibility, initiative, alert inventiveness and self-reliance which make us able to do battle alone and in the dark, and, if need be, to die in the dark and alone. This requires finer mettle, and a more carefully selected force. And this we now have and are.

Our self-reliance and initiative as radiant centres will be exercised in two ways, according as we have set firm our foothold in the psychic or the causal world; after that great and vital division of inner things which has been insisted on again and again. To the psychic world belong understanding of law, the dear grasp of principles, a firm apprehension of the doctrine, and ability to apply the teaching at whatever point and in whatever way instant occasion may demand. A thousand of us, putting this power and energy into practice, will have to meet with a thousand different conditions, and to deal with them in a thousand different ways. Each of us has to become a radiant centre for our own environment, our own circle of mental and moral

energies, and therein to apply the tradition we have received to the best advantage; to sow such seed as may bear fruit in the next two generations. We must speak ever as original centres, each one of us; never as representatives of a movement or a body, for thus the personal and local application of the teaching would be lost. A general rule will fit no individual case. Therefore we shall look to it that each one of us is ready to answer for himself, armed at point, alert, girt for the battle. We shall have to look to our clearness and sufficiency of thought, as never before; and remember this, the responsibility for neglect or failure will no longer be shared with some central or guiding body—the general staff, as it were—but must be met in full, and paid for, by the individual alone. In this sense, we shall be an instrument for distributing the teaching, but as a congeries of living, self-reliant, fully responsible centres, not as an organized machine.

But this is not to be a crusade of lip-service. The will must vivify and ensoul everything. We shall be met at all points with set of circumstances in which we shall be compelled to decide, not in theory but in act, whether we shall do what is good and pleasant-seeming for our personal selves, or what makes for the general welfare. Our first choice will be between energy and sloth, between work and waiting. And the responsibility will lie wholly with each of us. The time for laying the blame on leaders is gone by.

We are come of age, and must pay our debts. Nor will it be the duty of anyone esteemed a leader to point out, direct, guide or encourage. Freely they stand who stand, or fall who fall.

This is not because the heart of pity is hardened, or because the fountains of mercy are dried up. It is the word of the law. That tendency towards hardening, conformity, rigidity which comes with the turning tide, and which makes dogma and materialism inevitable—that tendency will not halt for us. If we give it a centre to work on, it will harden us, beat us into dogmatism, force us into materialized forms. This will be visible soon enough in all bodies which do rely on leadership, on uniformity, on orthodoxy, on hidden ambition. But we shall escape. And we shall escape without dissolution, for though divided outwardly, each a separate, fully responsible unit, we shall be united inwardly, in a deeper place to which the reaction cannot come,

we shall be united in the oneness of our inspiration.

Thus far, for our work as it springs from stability in the psychic world, Those in whom the causal self has come to conscious life will not be engaged chiefly with principles and laws, doctrines and traditions, but with the living and immortal powers that make law and principle alike. They will work directly from the soul, listening to no other oracle. What their work shall be, is known only to the soul in them; it shall be creative, issuing new upon the universe. They will lift for themselves that dark veil which shrouds the hidden divinity; they will make manifest to men what the gods make manifest to them. For them, who can offer counsel? For to them shall inwardly speak the soul; when that voice is uttered, all human tongues are still.

Once more, though wise words will be potent, deeds will be far more vital. We must win the victories of the will. It is not an opinion which we are to meet, but a forceful tide, bearing upon us inwardly, subtly, urging us by voices which shall seem our own. Glib talk will then profit little. We cannot cheat the gods.

We must have the courage of the soul. With valour, all things are possible; without it, what profit is there in the tongues of men and angels? We must choose and act upon our choice: choose between valour and cowardice; between vigour and sloth; between light and darkness; between moral life and death. Above all, we must choose between the universal soul as it speaks to us, and our personal welfare, our personal comfort, our personal profit. We are living either for vanity or for worth; but by no possibility for both.

We are living either for inner rightness with the law, or for appearances, for the opinions of others who, if truth be told, are very indifferent to all we can say and do, unless we can be made to serve their own vanities. We shall live either for the immortal in us, who has seen so many births, or for the craven person who usurps and shivers in usurping.

We shall be radiant centres for the work of the common soul, the ancient immortal who from the beginning has accepted all worship and all prayers, to whatsoever deity offered. We shall not so much talk rebirth and immortality, as live rebirth and immortality, bearing the responsibility of the soul as faithful ambassadors and envoys. The time

has come for sending forth the disciples. We have reaped; now we must sow.

Nor shall we be downcast at this new charge put upon us, but rather encouraged, glad of heart that in the fullness of the time we also have been deemed worthy; entering our inheritance, not as a burden of debt, but as a splendid opportunity to gather strength and wisdom, to make our own the treasures of the power and the light, until the hour strikes for us to enter into peace.

We shall need forethought; we shall need knowledge; we shall need wisdom and good-will; but above all, courage, the fire that enkindles the heart and makes it glad; the flame that warms the blood, till it rises in full and stimulating force; the brightness which lights the eye to see everywhere the joy of victory. Therefore let us fight the fight.

We shall live and work in the midst of a thousand illusions, with no measure of the real values of the dim, hurrying powers that hem us in on all sides, mysterious, menacing or encouraging; with no guiding light but the star within, that shines from everlasting. The holy source of that light we now know, how it stands as the sentinel of the Eternal, on the confines of our darkness and night. All things may change, but that light will never change, glowing with steady radiance in our souls. Where much is vague in our dreamland, this at least we know: living faithful to that inward fire, following wherever it may lead, even through the black darkness of death, even through evil report, danger, destitution, we cannot take one step amiss, but will complete the perfect work allotted to us of old, and in the great day awake to find we have rendered worthy service, breaking down one more barrier between the souls of men and the everlasting Light.

## Songs of the Master

Oriental Department,  
*Theosophical Forum*, January-April, 1900

### Introductory.

Before all things remember that the Bhagavad Gita is a textbook of the Mysteries. It has seven keys, and holds seven meanings. But at the heart stands one ideal, crown and well-spring of all the rest; the immortal life of man. To give this central light its due pre-eminence, we shall pass over much of interest and of value, lest from the too great number of the trees we lose our vision of the forest.

Among things here to be left out, we may count first the side of history; all enlarging on the epoch of world-life which gave the Songs their birth. That period stands as a turning-point of the fate of mighty races; behind it lies the sunny youth of India, stretching back to the golden age. After it comes a long epoch of decline, till we reach the India of today in her servitude and degradation. The races which fought at Kurukshetra are representative of great human types who still wage their endless war; to tell their tale in full would be to write all human history.

But this much we may clearly hold in view; considered as part of the world-history, the Bhagavad Gita and the cycle of bardic songs which were its source come from the mighty war fought out five thousand years ago, when the princes of the Rajput race, with the shadow of fell eclipse coming on them after glorious ages, met in

fratricidal strife, and strewed the Indian plains with their dead bodies.

The first fruit of this for India was the uprising of the priestly race of Brahmans, who till then had held the second place. The polity of ancient India, the form of social life and state, grew from the commingling of four races: red, white, yellow, and black. These have their well-marked affinities in many lands, their links in lost continents, their source in the annals of bygone worlds. We cannot here follow them through their wanderings. It must suffice that the red race of Rajputs held kinship with Egypt and Chaldea, as with certain peoples in the lands of the west. This red race drew its life-impulse from the third, and held the Great Mysteries as a splendid inheritance, with their twin teachings of rebirth and liberation. From the king-initiates of this race come the great Upanishads. From this race Krishna sprang. To this race belonged the Buddha. Of this race comes the great Rajput who stands as our ideal today.

With the civil war the Rajputs lost their power. It fell into the hands of their former pupils and servants, the Brahmans, sons of a white race from the north, beyond the Snowy Range. Until the Rajputs initiated them, the Brahmans had never heard of rebirth or liberation. They bowed down to the shades of the fathers, as the Coreans and Chinamen do today. They called on many gods, praying for solid blessings of this earth, and for substantial delights in the world to come. Because the Rajputs fell five thousand years ago, their motherland is subject to foreign rule, till the time be fulfilled. Because the Brahmans profited by that fall to take their place, India is full of priest-craft. Yet as these very Brahmans were once faithful disciples of the kingly teachers, they still hold the heart of the teaching as their most precious heritage, being the only body now living openly in the world in unbroken possession of the mystery records.

The Brahmans, a race of ritualists with minds full of order and system, gave India a strong impulsion towards formal philosophy and analytic thought, adding this to the old divine magic of their Rajput masters. From other races, the yellow and the black, came the impulse of emotion, the religion of passionate faith breaking forth along the way of works, in the acts of a religion of service. These three, the intuition of the soul, the message of reason, the service of bodily act,

touch the three great worlds of life. India as a Mystery land, embodied all three; they were mingled in her temple teachings; all three have their place in the Master's Songs. Thus this scripture is a reconciler of intuition, thought and act. Here is yet another of its seven keys. To use it fully, we should have to embody all that is known of the divine magic, the intellectual history, and the worship of India so full of mystical rites, and this through a period of thousands of years. This cannot be accomplished here. Therefore we must resign ourselves to see much omitted. Striking these varied notes and letting them sink again to silence, we pass on to the heart of the teaching, the message of immortal man.

### The Final Goal.

After we reach a certain ripeness, there is only one theme in the world which has any serious value: the great transformation, whereby mortal man enters into his immortality, reborn out of weakness into power, out of serfdom into mastery, out of the psychic into the spiritual world. No longer drifting and cowering, victim of the universe, waif of cosmic forces, he takes his place at the heart of things, growing one with the essence of all being, in the omnipresent here, the everlasting now.

The fiery transformation which brings him forth a god, an undivided part of the highest divinity, touches and transmutes his every power, beginning with the bodily and sensual self, where he is set in the clay of the natural earth; touching then and illumining the whole middle nature of man, his world of cloud and storms, of hailstones and rain, of genial zephyrs and cherishing winds; finally kindling with the supreme radiance of inspiration his crown of life, that spirit in him which rises up to the eternal sunlight, which is kindred with the stars.

Of this threefold change, the first part makes him a king in nature, ready to rule through will instead of begging through desire; now for the first time gaining real power over the immemorial forces that build the hills, that keep the seas in station, that swing the worlds forth on their circling ways. There is a touch and mastery of all nature's powers, flowing directly from the physical will and knit with it; as muscular

effort is knit with the power of gravity, able to use it, able to withstand it, able to turn it to a hundred ends of man. So with every force. All are to be handled without intermediary, by the will acting unaided and alone. So far, mastery over the physical world and what dwells therein.

This is but the threshold of his inheritance. The court of the temple is his discovery of his kind, his new revelation of the soul of man. With immortality, comes his first initiation into true human life. For while still of those who perish, wrapped in the thick cloud-veils of personal fancy, man is debarred from beholding man, or sees him only as in a glass darkly, but now face to face. Looking into each other's eyes with human eyes, we see our own images, and these inverted. To see each other's souls, we must look with the eyes of the soul. Then shall we first behold the glowing life in every heart, and not only see it but possess it. For this is the soul's everlasting miracle, that we can become each other, and yet remain ourselves.

A man may dominate other men by fear, driving them as a tiger drives a herd of gazelles, but this is still a part of our mere brute history, untouched with any human light. True man can be touched only by the soul. And if a conqueror can send his flaming will through a great army, till all weak wills in it scorn death and danger, and count lingering wounds and privation an honour, how much greater the enkindling of our immortality by the immortal and heroic soul, whereby we rise altogether above the barriers of sorrow and death.

If the entry into the souls of others be the court of the temple, there is yet the holy of holies where the immortal enters in alone, to learn his omnipotence, his enduring majesty and might. He comprehends the secret of his power over nature, beginning with the mere muscular effort which holds him erect upon the earth, and ending with the most potent magical arts. He is master in the midst of nature, because the soul in him is one with the soul that made the worlds, and can at any time claim full rights in its own dominions. He learns too the secret source of his unity with all mankind, his possession of the powers of all other souls. It is because the soul in him is one with the soul in them; because there is but one soul, for him, for them, for us all, the mighty immortal into whose being he has passed. He learns something of the radiance of his own divinity, the eternal secret of life, hid with the

darkness before all worlds. Thus the king long exiled and forlorn, wandering in desert weariness, in sorrow often, in sickness often, once again reclaims his kingdom, setting the diadem of life upon his brow. The great transformation is consummated. Man the immortal has taken the place of mortal man.

#### Pistis—Aspiration.

This is the splendid termination of the struggle, the prize of conquest, viewed in the warm light of victory. Yet all was not triumph or gladness, all was not victory or power. Say rather that there was bitter darkness and dire strife, that there was the poignant weakness of wounds received in conflict, that there were utmost misery of defeat, heart-rending despair, black storms of suffering most pitiful, and hardest of all to bear, the dire doubt whether there was any path at all, any soul, any divinity, any immortal being.

From this cloud-mantled place of setting forth, progress was made only by fierce aspiration working in the dark, the blind longing of a faith that dared not wear the name of hope, a hope black as despair; a foothold beaten by clouds, with floods flowing round it, the firm earth altogether gone, yet no gleam of heaven breaking through the clouds, nor any warrant that with their breaking would come vision of heaven at all, rather than the appalling blackness of the formless void.

This is the path of aspiration, the grim tragedy of the soul, of which all human tragedies are but copies. For all our tragedies turn on this: whether the soul of some other is to be trusted; whether the soul in us can face its fate and reach its goal. But here is tried the greater question whether there be any soul at all, or mere darkness and the irremediable kingdom of death.

#### Gnosis—Illumination

Out of the darkness by dire struggle, by slippery paths, after many discouragements, through many sorrows, mortal man at last comes forth into the light. His first path is ended. His first victory is won. He is met in the sunshine by his immortal self who takes him by the hand and leads him in to the presence of the Eternal; the unveiled majesty, dark with exceeding brightness, silent with fullness of song, still

through infinite power.

There all boundaries are swept away. There is no longer any parting between thyself and others, myself and thee. The mortal is lost in the immortal; both are lost in the supreme. Thus does the soul bathe in living waters, in the infinite ocean of light. This is the second division of the way: the path of inspiration. Nor is the vision of fairness only, full of quiet peace. It is also grand and terrible. The Power treats in high-handed fashion the sentimentalities of worlds, of angels and men. By fierce and fiery paths does the Providence of things win to its ends. Death is as much its tool and plaything as is life. No weapon does it wield more potently than sorrow. In the blackness of darkness are its secret purposes fulfilled.

#### Sophia—Realization.

After fullness of inspiration, the soul comes back to its mortal dwelling, full of a mighty power, charged with tremendous secrets, knowing itself for no lost fragment of despair cast forth on the waves of fate, but very divinity, part and parcel of the highest in all beings, in all worlds. The full vision of illumination shrinks to a fiery gleam in the heart, a flame that burns unquenchable, to transform, to consume. to create, till all things be full of light. Sharing the power and essence of the divine, the soul has inherited the divine task, to conquer all beings and all souls for divinity, for oneness, for perfection.

Before the newborn immortal opens the third division of the way: the path of realization. He is to weave his knowledge into life, to break all barriers down, and let in the souls of men. He is to widen that glowing heart of his heart which links him to the divine.

#### II.

The centre and heart of the whole matter is the Great Initiation, the revelation of the divine. The way of aspiration is the preparation for this; the way of realization if the fruit of it, the practical application to life, to the immediate position of the individual soul, of the sublime vision, the grand sweeping view of all life, of the great Life itself, mysterious and supreme, which Initiation gives. This magical and wonderful event, beside which all else past or to come in human life is

dwarfed to insignificance, is not the invention of institution of any man of body of men; it is a providential law, a necessity inherent in the very being of the Eternal, the expression in will and act of the oneness between the single soul and the Soul of all.

#### The Great Initiation.

Perhaps we may make clearer the reality of this great and mysterious event by a parable, a simile. Think of a wayfarer, outcast, forlorn, wandering in the gathering dusk through a pathless wilderness knowing not at all which way he should turn, nor whether there be any pathway leading upward and onward to the house of his home. Sleep, the deep, motionless sleep of utter heart-weariness, comes upon the pilgrim; and while his body lies there lifeless and rigid on the night-overshadowed earth, his immortal brother descends to him, drawing the soul forth from the body, and carrying it swiftly to the beginning of the way, the clearly seen outset of the path that shall lead him homewards.

Nor does the beneficence of the immortal cease at this, but he carries the wondering soul swiftly forward, over ground now lit as clear as day, and full of colour, for there is no night nor darkness for the eyes of the soul; the immortal carries it forward, passing swiftly through the gloom of overhanging forests where dim forms of fear flit among the boughs, along precipitous pathways, where are chasms so deep that no sun has ever lit their abysses, over ridges sharp as a razor's edge, where dizzy declivities sweep down on either hand; yet where the path is ever clearly marked, definite, and seen to be safe though very hard to tread.

Then the deserts and rocks and fearsome forests are left behind; there comes glory on the grass, and radiance of flowers that catch the purest colours of the sunrise; the fountains murmur of peace and power, there is divinity even in the song of the birds; and there before the wondering eyes of the pilgrim soul rises the house of his home, the resting-place from all sorrow that so long has haunted him, full of shining, the present abode of the water of life.

So swift has been his journey that it seemed to consume no measure of time; and even the journeying itself shrinks away in

thought before the one vision of the radiant goal; then, when the soul has drunk the heavenly fountain and drawn itself up to the full measure of its immortal power and stature, the great brother beckons to it again, and then comes swift-winged return along the traversed path. Once more so rapid is the flight of the twain who are yet one, that time seems to stand still to let them pass; yet once more every detail, every rock and stone and tree on the road stands out in clear sunlight, and prints its image on the memory of the soul.

### The Return.

The wanderer awakes again into the body, thrilling through and through with the awe and splendour of his revelation; there is still the blackness of night across the desert wilderness where he lies, and the howling of winds, and the moaning of wandering unseen beasts. But to him there runs through the blackness an inner shining, as when a tapestry of black is warped with threads of gold, and there are other voices than the wailing of the wind and the cry of the birds and beasts of prey; voices jubilant and exultant, that sing aloud in his heart of the glory that is for evermore. Then little by little the gleam goes out of the night-air; gloom steals up closer and closer to him, and at last slips through the doorway into his heart; the clear image of the mountain-soaring way he has beheld, grows gradually fainter, becoming at last dim as the memory of a dream. But one thing he still holds bright as day in his heart—the image of the opening of the path, where the desert shapes itself into the first semblance of a road. This remains, it even grows clearer and clearer, as the rest fades, and at last the image begins to cry out to him with clear and imperious voice: Let there be no more lingering and delay; the moment for setting forth is Now.

The grey and inhospitable dawn steals over the desert, with chill lights that only bring out the desolation hid by kindly night; but the cold light also brings it revelation. For the traveller who deemed himself alone, and sorrowed for himself most of all because of his loneliness, now finds himself surrounded by a great company, haggard and worn and downcast; knowing nothing of whither they would go; seeing nothing of each other, but spell-bound and glamour-cast, so that each one talked aloud to himself, with hurrying and meaningless words, or burst forth in senseless laughter, or broke down in pitiful

tears. Each one supposed himself alone as far as all others were concerned, yet saw around him a band of phantoms, dim shadows, all variously distorted images of himself, and with these he talked or lamented, with these he laughed or wept.

### The Setting Out.

But there is one miraculous thing which now befalls the pilgrim. As though some of the radiance lingered luminous on him; as though from him resounded some of that piercing, soul-compelling melody that echoes for ever around the fountain of life—by these or whatever causes distinguished, it is evident that each of the sorrowing company, though seeing none of these around, can at least see him. And with what startled joy and hunger of companionship they cry out to him for help and pity; with what stretching forth of hands, trembling of pale lips, lighting up of haggard face. And he, the pilgrim, burning to set forth upon his journey, yet finds himself compelled to stay. These too are seeking the path; these too are thirsting for the immortal fountain; these too seek the house of their home. Once and again, he breaks away from their importunity, and sets forth strong and confident across the desert, knowing that soon his feet shall be set firm upon the path he has been so many ages seeking.

Yet their faces haunt him. The pity of their outcry draws him back. Their lamentation is far keener than before, for the face of a friend had appeared to them out of the lonely desolation, and now that face is withdrawn. For he presently learns that they can see him only when his eyes are turned full upon them, and when he tries to go before them they lose him utterly, and cry out in the awful misery of their pain.

The pilgrim with a sinking heart, as he thinks of that divine pathway, yet with a strong exultation rising within him against all reason, turns back again to rejoin the spell-bound throng. And with what infinite gladness they welcome him, with what lighting up of eyes that had grown tear-dimmed at his going; with what glad tremulousness of lips that try to smile. Nor is this his only reward, though this were reward enough. For he sees with marvelling and astonishment that he is already at the beginning of the path, which he

had thought far away, and which he had believed himself to have turned back from, surrendering all search of it to succour these.

#### The Moment of Choice.

Such is the mystery of the Great Initiation, as far as parable and symbol can make it clear. And the infinitely pitiful law of our divinity has decreed that not once only shall that sublime vision descend upon the pilgrim, but that at every obstacle overcome, at every stage of the journey conquered, and most of all, for every one of these his brothers set upon the path, the pilgrim shall be rapt forth, from the darkness of his body by the twin immortal, and once more borne along that soaring way, till they come together to where the meadows are luminous with enamelled flowers, where there is choral melody in the singing of the birds, where the sunshine eternally glints and gleams from the spray of the fountain of life.

The immortal brother bends down to him again and again, gathering him up to join his winged flight, and swift as an eagle he is carried through the blue pathways of the ether, and borne forward to full vision of the shining goal.

And on waking there is ever that hour of glowing joy and full remembrance, knitting the end of the dream into his daily life, so that what lies closest to him remains clearly seen even when the great dream fades, and he has instant and unwavering conscience of what he should do next.

For every man, there comes somewhere in the endless series of his lives, one life which shall be the turning-point; and in that life there is one hour of firm resolve, which sets the crown on all the past, and opens the door on the luminous future. It is an hour of silence and of loneliness, with no counsellor but his own innermost soul, and none to tell him which way he should turn, nor even that his time is come. Yet such is its intimate divinity, that the soul knows well the hour of its birth into his life; if there be those who seem to shrink and hesitate, be certain that they are not yet ripe, that there is some vital lesson still unlearned, that a weak link in their chain of faith has to be strengthened. For these, for whom it is written that they may not now pass forward, do not utter vain regrets; it is thus far best for them, for

soundness and ripeness they must have who pass through that door, and these they have yet to gain. They are but sharing the common fate of all living, and for them too the splendid hour will dawn; what does it matter that they must first pass through the silence, since in the silence there is infinite peace?

### III.

Has it ever occurred to you to wonder what it all means—why there should be such strain and stress in this our human life? To ask whence comes this eternal warfare, this deathly struggle forced upon Arjuna by Krishna, and to which we are all so incessantly urged? The full answer is the secret of the gods, and the only way to learn their well-kept secrets is to become one of them. But a mere mortal may guess at least this much.

It seems to be the inevitable result of the great crossing over, the tremendous transition from the animal to the divine; and we shall get our first clue to the mystery by looking somewhat closely to the real conditions of animal life. The life of the animal, the life in instinct, has this great characteristic, that it takes cognizance only of single and concrete objects. But even that expression is abstract, and therefore untrue to an animal life. Let us say, then, that such an animal as the squirrel sees and thinks of only the one acorn or nut that lies directly before him; his whole success in life depends on his direct intentness upon this, his going straight forward towards it, his single eye to securing it. The slightest wandering, and he is lost, for in the unceasing struggle of the one against all, and of all against each, his quarry would instantly fall to another, while he meditated upon its abstract being.

The animal, therefore, must concentrate upon each fruit or root, each single item of his prey, or he loses touch with the actual, and that means for him the change called death. But change is pain, and pain is change; therefore he has the alternative of single-hearted hunting, or starvation and extinction. But why this necessity of death? Again the answer is, because it is the inevitable result of a change. For within the individual, there is not fluidity and room enough for the full changes of a race's development. The type must become now great, now small; now tropical, now arctic; now terrestrial, now arboreal. There have

been horses and as small as rabbits, elephants no bigger than swine, or again lizard-like creatures almost as large as whales. This range of variation is impossible within a single body; progression of type is likewise impossible; therefore we must have death, and death is change, and change is pain. Here is the root of all our tragedy.

If devotion to the single fruit, the single body, be the type and tragedy of animal life, the life of the divinity is the very opposite; a fusion of all individuals in a single Being, in one idea, as Plato called it, which embraces within itself the possibility of all individuals of each family or tribe; and behind all ideas lies the one great archetype, the Eternal. That great flaming single Life whence all has come forth, is likewise the goal whither all must again return. And here we have the second clue to our mystery: the tragedy of life lies in the necessity of crossing over the ocean between the single fact and the undivided Eternal; or, to speak once more in the concrete, in the passage from the sensual egotist to the divine Soul.

For this tremendous transition, there must be some bridge or neutral ground; the immediate passage from the one to the All seems and is impossible, inconceivable. This transition is that sea of psychic human life which is at once our glory and our shame, our opportunity and our peril, our sorrow and our joy. As there is change at every step, there is pain at every step; and where consciousness becomes larger and keener, the pain is exquisite misery. But every step of change brings the soul nearer to the changeless infinite One, therefore that growing nearness of each step makes each step a growing joy, till at last the heart expands in ecstasy into the Heart of all Being.

Therefore from the infinitely varied and infinitely numerous facts and lives of the outward world we are to pass over to the one great stable Life; and for this we must ford the river of birth and death, take on the likeness of humanity, and cross the psychic sea. Let us consider what the man is, that the animal is not; remembering always that the line between is a wavering one, for there is a kind of men that are close to the animals, a kind of animal that comes close to men, as an Arabian Occult School quaintly puts it. This is the great difference: man looks with forward and reverted eye; man remembers and expects.

But for memory and expectation there must be an addition to the animal's powers; the pure animal consciousness cannot get away from the single fruit, the single fact. Each fruit gathered is for it all in all. Nothing else enters its consciousness. In like manner, with the animals sex is the incident of a season, a few weeks in the year, and then utterly forgotten and put out of mind. The animals sleep when they sleep; when they wake they are awake. Man is both or neither, always complex, always unsteady, always wavering.

What makes the difference? It is this: man can see into the mirror-world; his mind is a mirror, holding the image of the fruit already eaten, and keeping it to compare with all other fruits. Hence in his mind from comparison arises dissatisfaction with the next found smaller fruit, exultation over one larger and finer, expectation of one better still, and fear of finding none at all. From that one glimpse in the magic mirror are born all the emotions of our human life.

Take this same sense as it has developed and grown, in its last and greatest degeneration. Man has become a glutton, swollen, unwieldy, needing to cover himself with clothes, lest the wholesome and moral animals should laugh at his misshapen limbs. That is where his imagination has led him, and his brooding over the image of his food. He is a degenerate, a monstrous departure from the law, a storehouse of ills that haunt and torture him, and from which the happy animals are nearly free; the deer of the forest have no spectacled physicians, when they fall into a brief sickness, either it is gone by the morrow, or kindly death sets them free. And man has one more curse: the haunting fear of starvation that lashes and scourges nearly all our race; and starvation is admitted by all economists to be the hinge of the wealth of nations. Happy man, whose destiny turns about so delightful a fact.

The animal lives today, and fears no evil; his eye is clear and free from all disturbance and misgiving. He is dead tomorrow, and there is an end, and at no time is there any great break in his primeval peace. But man shudders and cowers. He sees the dead, and broods over death. He has caught another glimpse of the mirror-world, and seen his dead self therein. And from that time on, the image will haunt him, until he arises from the pyre immortal, in a vesture coloured like the sun.

Yet one more miserable privilege, and we have the whole account of man. Sex with him has ceased to be the incident of a season; it has grown to be a haunting presence through all his life. He is never quite free from it, not even in silence and solitude of his rest; for the most part, he is a driven slave, the whip-lash of insatiate longing over him always; ever goaded by the misery of desire.

From brooding on his hunger and his search for food; from holding ever in imagination the picture of his desires, man at last works out for himself a central image among all the images of his mirror, an image of his own body, which he calls his personal self. With the birth of that shadow-man, his human history begins. For thus, wars are fought, constitutions built, kingdoms conquered, battles won. This lean ghost who has never stood in the bright eye of day, is king of all the human world; all our history is his; all that lies between the animal and the god.

All growth means change of this image; all change means pain. Therefore human life is one long tragedy. Whatever bright days break the storms, either come in from clean and wholesome animal life below, or are the gifts of the gods, prematurely vouchsafed from above. This is the history of the personal self, and his daily bread is egotism and vanity; egotism, or that brooding over his own being, which comes of his perpetual glimpses in the mirror, and vanity, which comes of perpetual chasing after mirrored images, when his image unites itself with one of the great primal instincts of the animal, with the desire of food or sex, and when fear overshadows both, then his misery is supreme; jealousy and the fear of destitution have marked him for their prey.

God created man, they say, and the devil made looking-glasses. Having gone thus far, both withdrew, and the result we see. It is true in a sense, for the astral light, or the psychic mirror-world, is the basis and field of all diabolism whatsoever. The evident results we see on all hands, in our whole emotional life, in desire and fear, in memory and expectation, in love and hate, in hunger and satiety, in desire of life and dread of death.

But what is the reason of it all? Why such lavish ingenuity for our torment? Can we find some natural and sufficient cause for it all? If we

go back to our point of departure, we shall soon perceive one. For this very complex of images, this power to image and hold the many facts in the one imaginary pictures, is the missing link we sought, between the sensual fact in its infinite diversity and the divine idea in its inviolable oneness.

All human life means. therefore. the approach. and ultimately the coming- together of these two things: the psychic image of the sensual fact. and the spiritual image of the divine idea. the principle or power which stands single behind every tribe or family or genus of the natural world. And the tragedy of our human life consists in the continual striving of the lower or astral image towards the higher or spiritual principle. The crown of life is their coalescence. when the partition wall is broken down. and the twain are made one.

For this grand and tortured epic of man, there is a fitting moral and conclusion. Each sensual fact of animal life finds its transformation, its transfiguration, its apotheosis. Let us begin where we began before, with animal hunger. The animal, pressed forward by that instinct which is its one divine revelation, seeks berry after berry, fruit after fruit, victim after victim; each for the time is its all-in-all. But not so man. He is haunted and overshadowed by the idea. He carries with him the image of each fruit, forbidden or permitted, and compares it with all others, gradually enlarging his image and adding to its complexity until it becomes wholly impossible for any sensuous fact to satisfy him, and he has inherited divine discontent, ever seeking, finding never. But though mortal man seeks hopeless, man the immortal is destined to find. The image coalesces with the idea, and he inherits the bread of life, the food of the gods, the all-satisfying Being of the Eternal.

Take again the animal's instinct for warmth and shelter. To very wonderful instinctive acts it leads, like the building of ants and bees, the dams of beavers, the nests of birds, the burrows of foxes and rabbits. But man broods on these things, heaping image on image, remembering the essence of all sunny shelters he has seen or dreamed of, goaded onward by the image of very cold and icy storm, and so seeking some hiding-place from the wind, some shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And that haunting perfection makes him miserably

dissatisfied with every human home; the image is drawing near the ideal, and as his immortality descends upon him, the twain become one, and he enters his everlasting home, the house of the Most High, the perfect eternal.

One thing more. the most insistent of all. Sex, for the animal, was an unremembered break in the food-finding of the year. For man it becomes a haunting image, its animal part entirely subordinated and needed only to give new life to the image. First there is only the image of his sensation; then the image of the complementary being who shall fulfil it; and lastly a haunting sense of another self, another life, which through desire, or fear, through jealousy or longing, never leaves him but dwells with him ever, and thus by the strangest possible way he has found the doorway to his other selves. Nothing less tyrannical than desire would have awakened him from his self-absorbed egotism; nothing less miserable than longing would have driven him beyond the sensual fact to the image; nothing less haunting than the image would have led him up to the ideal, the possibility of a shared consciousness, a common life. Thus once more, the boundary-wall is broken down, and the twain are become one.

The last great victory is over the shadow-man whom we call our personal selves. He is not a solitary shadow, but a shadow shadow-haunted. He longs for admiration, he fears ridicule, he seeks power, he looks for love. And every emotion helps to build up some shadow of his other selves, till at last his whole world is peopled with shadows, and then the divine, descending from above, touches all with the miraculous wand, and the shadows come alive. He is in the realised presence of his other selves; he has beheld divine humanity; he is on the threshold of oneness with the Self of All Beings, the Everlasting.

#### IV.

The secret of Life is whispered for ever in our ears, summoning us to enter the hall of everlasting youth, bidding us unbar the door of our present divinity, pointing the path of unconquerable power, revealing to mortal man the secret of man the immortal. We are challenged to make true for ourselves the dreams we have dreamed of God.

There is a newborn hope in the message of the unseen as it comes

to us. We have passed out of the shadow into the sunshine. The clouds that hung so long about the door have lifted. The burden of the world's anguish has melted away. Since the Cross first threw its black shadow along the earth, the promise of immortal life was held forth to those only who turned back in bitterness from the world, whose garb was sackcloth, their best hope despair. Their master was the Man of Sorrows. Their password was Renunciation. But we have left behind us the old evangel of pain. Our new watchword is Victory. Our Genius is the lord of Joy. We are to renounce no longer but to conquer: to overcome the world not by flight but by possession. No longer exiles but victors shall knock at the immortal doors.

The genius of our age has drawn very near to the secret. We have merged all ideals in one; to conquer, to be strong. Power and valour are our divinities. We no longer worship wealth but the will that wins it. Our one goal is the sense of success, and we see nothing but the goal. Even death we have almost forgotten, transforming the old king of terrors into a gentle and not unwelcome shadow. Nothing is remembered but the lust of strength. One step forward will change it to the lust of immortality.

For a little experience of life is enough to teach us that in sensual success we miss our ideal. The sense of power slips past us into our works, leaving us poor and empty-handed. When in the very glow of victory we see the tinsel glitter fade, we are at the threshold of the unseen world; we are ready to understand that we were better than our goal, that we were born to more lasting triumphs. The time has come for us to claim our divinity. In the midst of our success, the finger of the hidden immortal touches us, and we are called forth from the arena of the world, to hear the whispered secret of our inheritance. The glamour of sensual life has fallen from our eyes, and we are ready to lift the back veil of death.

When we draw back from life and sensual success, as something very good, yet not good enough to satisfy our heart's desire, we come to a lull of quiet loneliness, a hush of silence in the dark. In that solitude and gloom we may catch the vision of the truer way and surprise the world-old secret of human life. Hitherto we have lived believing ourselves closed in by the visible world, buried in the heart of

sensual life, and held there firmly by our bodily fate. But we begin to divine that we are really set firm in the immortal world, leaning forward into sensual life from the life above it, never losing our firm foundation there. In the midst of death we are in life.

Thus our destinies are passed between two worlds: the world of desire and death, and the world of will and immortality. When we learn to live from the will as we tried to live from sensual desires, we shall be already immortal, and enter living an immortal world. Therefore our worship of will brings us near to the portal of peace.

This is the secret that shadows itself forth in the stillness and darkness. Soon will follow clearer vision that we have drawn our life from the world of the immortal, day by day since the beginning. But this simplest of all secrets was hidden from us by the seething of our desires. We and all creatures enter every day into the immortal world, though we know it not. Nor shall we remember, until the hush of stillness comes upon us when we draw hack victorious yet disappointed from our battle with the material world. Not till we have renounced can our eyes open.

Every day we wage our warfare with the world. Every night, when the throb of desire and the whirl of the senses grow still, we sink, as we call it, to sleep. We might more truly say we arise to our awakening. The shadows of our desires hover awhile around us, haunting us as we linger in the borderland of dreams. As our desires were, so are our dreams; things fair or hideous, grim or radiant with lovely light. But dreams soon fade and desires cease, and we enter into our rest, we pass from the world of the senses to the realm of immortal will. We enter in through the golden portal, far better than the fabled gates of ivory or horn, and for awhile we are immortal in power, immortal in peace. For without power, there is no peace.

Beyond the land of dreams and the shadows of desire stands the gate of peace. All men enter there and all creatures. Were it not so, all men must go mad. And within that portal all are equal. All alike awake to their immortal selves. Sinner and saint have left their difference at the threshold. They enter in together as pure living souls, weak and strong are one there, high and lowly are one. The immortal sunshine, the living water, are for all. For great Life has wrapt us round with

beneficence, so that even now we are in the midst of the everlasting.

Thus we all enter the power beyond the veil of dreams, we all draw our lives alike from the sea of life. In the radiance we are all one, wrapt in the terrible flame of Life. Yet we forget. We come back again shivering across the threshold, and hasten to wrap our pure divinity in a mist of dreams. The saint once more takes his white garment; the sinner, his reel vesture of desire. The weak is weak again, and the strong exults. Their dreams are once more real to them; and these dreams are the world of our mortality.

We return to the world of daylight to live for a few more hours in the strength brought back from the immortal world. Our earthen lamps are replenished for another watch. We strain and stagger under the burden of our dreams, driven by hope and fear, by desire and hate. Fear is the fiercest scourge of all; making us cowards, it makes us also cruel. Thus we fall away from our divinity, robbed of every shred of memory by the army of shadows that meet us on the threshold, with their captain, fear. Yet in all our phantom-world, there is no illusion so absolute a lie as fear. We are the gods, the immortals; yet we cower and cringe. We are children of the will, yet slaves of fear. Therefore our ideal of valour brings us near the threshold, for it bids us kill the captain of the shadows who bar our way. But for a long time yet, the shadow of fear will lurk in the haunted darkness of our human hearts.

Another day ends, and our tide ebbs. The storm of our desires has worn us out, and overcome with weariness, we sink to rest, we rise to power. And all our prayer and aspiration, all the fervour of our faith has no aim but this: to reach awake the sea of power we bathe in, while asleep. Therefore we close our eyes in aspiration, seeking once again the light behind the veil. So great is the beneficence of sleep, so mighty a benison is ever near to us. We enter perpetually, but we always forget. Our power slips from us as we return through the cloud-zone of dreamland. Round every pillow gather thick the terrors and pains of life, not less than its ambitions and its hopes, instantly invading us as we come back to waking.

Therefore we gain this clew to the secret. The door of our immortality is open to us day by day. But we are so ridden with dreams that our immortal inheritance brings us no profit. Therefore

we must elude the army of dreams. We must bring back to the light of day the present sense of our divinity which illumined us in dreamlessness. A thing so simple as that is the open door of our salvation. Our Genius bids us gather power and conquer fear. And fear once mastered, we may begin to disband the army of dreams, the ghosts that haunt our borderland and make us forget. The diminished army on the frontier is no longer strong enough to keep us from smuggling through with us something of our dreamless vision, some memory of the immortal world. We glean these memories day by day, in the silence of the morning, in the first hush of waking, as we bring back into every morning something of the freshness of everlasting youth.

At first, what we carry back with us will seem more dream-like than dreams. Yet dreams have their power, as we should know, whose whole lives are guided by dreams. First a dream-memory only; a haunting shimmer of other worlds; a secret freshness and gladness, coming we know not whence. Yet a vision so full of unearthly fascination and allurement that we would follow it rather than the solidest reality of day. Thus far all the poets have reached. This is the secret of their inspiration. They are haunted by the dreamless dream; it lingers in beauty over all their works. Even the faint memory of this vision is brightness enough to illumine hearts throughout all the world.

Yet poets and the devout do not hold all the secret. They are still in the greyness of the morning. We are heirs to the full glory of the noonday sun. With fidelity and strong will we are to make real the fragments of our remembered dream, imposing them upon the shadows of the day, and in their light transforming all our world. The seers and poets fail, because they do not rest in will. The vision bursts from their hearts in a rapture of song and prayer, leaving their wills unenkindled. We are the richer, but they are poorer. They should have sealed their lips, guarding the vision in their hearts till they had wrought it into the fabric of their lives.

The highest valour is needed, to make our vision real. We must battle with the whole army of shadows, the princes and powers of the air. We must fight to the death, if we would inherit life. As the fight is waged with dauntless courage, we are ever more penetrated with the

piercing intuition that our waking world is the real dream; the true waking is elsewhere, a better reality than this. Thus we begin to remember. Thus far the sages go. Their message is full of whispers that our life is a dream. But they do not go far enough. They should pass on dauntless to the other shore, to the real world of their immortality. It lies about us in sleep. It is not far from us in our waking.

Thus we gather the fruits that drift to us in the dawn from the other shore. There will come a time when that world begins to outshine this. Then we shall be ready for undimmed illumination. We shall really launch our boat upon the waves. Rapt from our mortal bodies in paradise, we shall hear words not lawful for our mortal lips to utter, for the only lips that can tell of them are already immortal. No longer dimly overshadowed by the Soul, we enter through the silence into the very being of the Soul itself. We know with awe that we have inherited our immortality. We have found our treasure. With undimmed and boundless vision, we behold the shining ocean of life. The radiance and the realm are ours. We are filled full of infinite power, infinite peace.



## The Heart of the Mystery

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“... Beheld the immortals sweatless, steady-eyed, their garlands fresh, and touching not the ground; but he, doubled by his shadow, standing there upon the earth, was stained with dust and sweat, his garland faded.”

What heart but at times grows weary of this our human life, with its births, its marriages, its deaths; with its pathways of small ambition and sordid struggle leading forward in monotonous deadly certainty to the green mound beneath the cypresses? Who has not cried out in spirit against it all, longing to turn back from the beaten road where mankind runs, with a dazed eagerness like that haunted herd of Gadara, swept by demoniac presences down the steep to the blue Genesaret waves? There is pathos in it too, and pitifulness; even for the most infatuate, life soon wears so threadbare, so seamed with dullest commonness, that the hurrying troop of doomed men and women would presently cast away their burden, were it not snatched from their shoulders by the old man with the hourglass, who ushers them into the silence.

Who has not felt in moments of clear sight, in hours of inspiration, that these good people are ridden with dreams, and we along with them; that we have elsewhere a quite other history not made of epitaphs but written in letters of gold, with words of fire, in the serene halls of the immortals? Man dreams that he moves forward; he only moves from dream to dream. He is demon-ridden, dwelling altogether

among shadows, and that most of all when he is most confidently sensual and material. But there are times when he outgrows the form and colour of his dream, and must have change. The sleeper restlessly moves and murmurs in his sleep; then for one startled moment he opens his eyes to the everlasting sunshine.

Then comes a new dream, a new epoch, a new era. So it was two thousand years ago, when the Roman world of beneficent callous force was wearing itself out, when the dream of Olympian Jove was fading. Then were spoken words among the Galilean hills that let in the light of the Eternal, and for a moment the eyes of mortal man gazed into the shining eyes of his brother the immortal. Then mankind sank back again to dream. There remained only broken fragments of the message, like words set echoing among the rocks, to hear evidence of the revelation. The old Roman dream of dominion flowed back again, staining the ray of celestial light. What belonged to Caesar was rendered to God.

The new era enthroned a heavenly monarch in the purple, darkening altogether the true vision of the divine, the vision of man the immortal. Our kingdoms and empires with their claims of election and grace, their mandate from on high, were but copies of imperial Rome touched with the ray of Galilee; our divinity, but an image of these earthly potentates exalted to the heavens, an autocrat at exacting homage, gathering tribute, and entering into treaties with mankind. A few enjoyed the suffrage of salvation; the rest were doomed to servitude in hell.

Centuries have passed, and this dream too has faded. The power of the celestial Caesar has declined. His jewelled throne is crumbling. The nether fires are out. The golden city is deserted; grass is growing in its streets. The songs of cherubim and seraphim are stilled, and silence reigns through the high halls of heaven. With the passing of the divine Caesar's throne, fades too the materialism which undermined it, hardly outliving his fall. Materialism is already out of date, grown grotesque and antiquated. We are offered instead a physical proof of our immortality, material evidence of the enduring soul.

So that dream within a dream has faded, and there comes a lull, when the light from beyond the heavens once more sends forth its ray

to challenge the darkness. As of old, it brings the message of our present immortality, not in a dim future paradise, but here and now; of salvation not by faith or works, but by creative will; of immediate and intimate touch with the eternal heart of being. Even here and now, we are in the midst of the everlasting; we catch the immortal whisper, feel the immortal fire in our hearts, the touch of an immortal finger summoning us forth into light.

Then the dreams of our desires come upon us again, and imaginings of terror; the cynical unfaith of sensuality, and that very human cry for yet a little slumbering and sleep. We are once more entangled among shadows, and hurry forward dazed to the lake-edge of Gadara. Yet there is a golden clew to guide us forth from this labyrinth of dreams; there is a path that leads us back from the abyss of death, easy to find, yet hard to follow, and calling for the valour and vision of immortals in those who would tread its ways.

The shadows may be met and overcome. And first of all, the shadow of our sensuality. Our error here is easy to indicate, and well worth mending; for its fruit is inevitable death. We sin by meeting the natural world in a wrong and vicious way; with a demand for sensations, instead of an offer of work. We desire keenness of feeling, keenness of life; and we have a right to it, but we take the wrong way to gain it, and nature herself ceaselessly admonishes us of our mistake.

Nature intends sensation only as a guide to work, a guide for the will; but we make sensation an end in itself, and thus incur inevitable doom. For sensation which is not turned to the purposes of the will must bear one of two fruits: either at every repetition the stir of feeling will grow less, rendered callous by use until there comes the dullness of total insensibility; or, if the outward stimulus be constantly increased, as it must be to give even the same excitement, it will grow at last to such a pitch that the natural body is worn out and torn to pieces. These alternatives are but differing forms of death.

Perfecting his creature throughout ages, God at last gave him reason and called him man. This was the fruit of that gift of freedom; for every power committed to his will, the new-enfranchised creature devised an abuse, to the end of sensuality. The power to choose and reason upon his food lies wholly within his will; with the result that

he grows blurred and bloated from excess, or lean-eyed and cavernous with hungry longing. The faculty to reproduce his kind, also entrusted to him, he has transformed from a pure instinct to an absorbing passion; after a brief pairing season, animals are sexless throughout the year, but man is ever insatiate with hungry longings. Of the bodily powers, God kept to himself the heart and the life-breath, holding them back from his creature's interference. Were it otherwise, man in his perverseness seeking sensuality even in these, would have broken the vital casket in fragments, abolishing himself long ago from the earth.

It is well that the animals are dumb. They might mock their lord. Sensuality is as foreign to them as the fear of death. These are the sign-manuals of our humanity. Yet the instinct which leads so far astray is a pure one, destined to an infinitely better reward, a far higher fulfilment than any dreamed by man. For the lust of life is at heart the desire of immortality, the longing for infinite being. But we err in meeting nature through our appetites, not through our wills; in coming into the world with a demand, when we should come with an offer of creative work, work carried out through the insight and inspiration of our immortal part. Even bodily health comes always through exertion, and never through sensation; so direct is the admonition of our natural life. Strength comes only through energy well applied, and in the work of the will is our peace.

The true intention of our life is, that the senses should serve the will, not that will should serve the senses. In right living, each sense leading the will to work is strengthened by that work, and by this better way is ready for a stronger sensation; thus the interposition of the will annuls the law of deadening and destruction which hangs over sensation, and leads each sense on a steadily upward path. We can watch this law in two fields. First, in the primal world of instinct, we see that every sense was thus led to perfection, by work and will; by the inherent energy of the will toward life bursting outwards through the living world. Again, under inspiration every sense grows finer. The musician and the painter, while they are faithful to the inner light, may develop their sense of hearing and colour to a degree that is magical; through the divine alchemy of the will; following sensation never for sensation's sake, but always as the guide and material of the will.

Yet in face of this simple truth, the ideal of whole nations esteemed the foremost in the modern world is not will but sensation. For the desire of wealth is the lust of sensation, of command over sensual things. Therefore at the very outset we violate the law, reading life's riddle upside down. This universal and corrupt lust, not for one sensation but for all, this craving for a ceaseless ministry of excitement, brings out the greed and graspingness in man, causing endless misery of struggle, and putting vultures and jackals to shame, for the weakness of their claws.

## II.

Nine-tenths of human power is used in mere strife, force neutralizing force, as in a tug of war. Yet the remaining tenth suffices for our bodily needs. Imagine then what splendid excess of power, what universal wealth of will is before us, once we learn the law.

Our sensual tragedy is not untouched with grim humour and palpable retribution. Of the formative sex, a part finds its whole purpose in ministering to sensation, and for this good gift demands luxurious living and immunity from work. The vassals go forth in the chill dawn, returning only in the twilight; dwarfing their powers in hireling tasks of mere repetition, they grow daily duller and more akin to earth, till even the senses they worship can give them no more joy. Their enthroned sovereigns pay penalty also in the infinite futility of their lives, which even conceit cannot gild to any brightness; they are punished too in the growing dullness of their mates. Then for both that mound beneath the cypresses, and infinitely merciful death.

Happily for us, much of our lives is still within the realm of pure animal instinct, like the love of family, and the ideal of bodily strength and beauty. For instinct is the voice of revelation to the natural world. It is more; it is our sole evidence of outward reality. Reason can never give this sense of reality; for reason, the natural world is but a web of dreams. But instinct expressed through muscular effort gives us our true hold on natural life. We are held in place among the stars and worlds by a web of natural forces coordinated with our wills, with our instinctive powers. Reason can only generalize on these. Reason can never explain or guide.

All of our work is blest which flows from instinct, carried on without reasoning or calculated motive, but arising from an inward enthusiasm and necessity. Such is the work of all true artists, inventors, builders in every realm; they draw their instant inspiration from the ideal world, and work joyfully, resting in creative will. But so stringent is the law, that the moment men or nations fall below the inspiration of the will, and fix their eyes upon wealth and possessions, their power ebbs; all access to new regions of nature, all new command of force is impossible for them, and they are presently outstripped in the race by some other man or nation whose vision is still in the ideal world. Even of organized murder is this true; victory belongs to the men of ideas, never to the materialists. So wholly does power flow from inspiration.

Thus far the natural history of man, most discreditable of animals. But our interest begins only where that chapter ends, and we enter human life. And human life is a history of ideas altogether, of thoughts and passions, of longings and desires, even of visions and dreams; but never a history of material facts. When we leave animal instinct and muscular effort, we leave matter also, and enter the psychic world. No bodily eye has ever beheld the things of man, whether it be power or wealth or pleasure, sorrow or ambition or love.

Yet it cannot be pretended that the tale is all brightness. We are hardly less wrong-hearted in the psychic than in the natural world. We manage to defeat our destiny also here. We are sent forth into this human world to live through intuition, the clear sense of each other's souls. As instinct, the revelation of the divine in animal life, impels us to master the natural world, to replenish the earth and subdue it; so intuition, which is the revelation in man, compels us to enter into the being of each other, that thereby we may infinitely enlarge our own. Nothing is needed for perfect moral health but a clear sense of each other's souls. All our human life, debased and draggled in the dust as it too often is, has yet this golden thread running through it everywhere. It is to the human soul in each other we appeal, even in sin and crime, the black shadows of our humanity. We do not lust after trees and stones; nor do we hate and envy rocks. We do not seek food for vanity from cloud and ocean. Only human souls will serve our turn.

If we are true to this one intuition, we hold the key to boundless

life. For the soul is everywhere in all men; it is everywhere different and divine. And our clear intuition, our sense of the gleaming soul in others, makes us freeholders of all their powers. All they have and know and do belongs to us, if we have the strength to take possession. The instinct is in us all; we only need to make it effective. It is the inherent quality of souls to share each other's being; to add each to its own life the life of all others, until every individual is heir to the consciousness and power of all mankind.

But having the intuition of the soul, we straightway fall from our revelation into corrupt imaginings. Instead of aiding the soul to do its perfect work in all, to bring forth such fruits as befit our immortality, we instantly try to wrest the law awry to the ends of our lusts. We would have all these souls bow down before us, ministering to our vanity; we fix our eyes on that longed for tribute instead of fixing it on the other soul; therefore instead of strength, we bring forth weakness, and presently our intuition of the soul is overcast and dimmed. Thus we fall into solitude and desolation.

We forget that all our real strength comes through union, and aspire to be separate and supreme. We set up within our hearts a crowned Caesar in the purple, inviting all mankind to do him homage. But they are doing the like within themselves; there are too many Caesars; the tribute will not go round. Therefore much sorrow and many heart-burnings are the only revenue of our kingdoms. Throughout all high heaven and the wide fields of stellar space there is no law declaring that we are to be worshipped; that homage is due to us. Yet we are miserable for want of it, and go down sorrowing to our graves. The longing to be envied is an even stronger incentive of wealth than the mere desire of sensations; but here also we defeat our end, for the riches are coveted, but their owner inherits only hate and fear.

Every one of us is born with a different nature, different fancy, different desires. Yet it has always been the insanity of men to try to compel each other into a common path, and to suffer the agony of thwarted ambition that inevitable failure brings. Hardly one of us but is cursed with this malady even now, and suffers from its fruitful crop of sorrows. Instead of demanding that others should obey me, should find their purpose in my mind, should follow a pathway traced out for

them by my thought and vanity and desire, let me at last learn to take the better way, and admit that each must live for himself, must live from his own genius, following his law, his mine. If I do this, trusting his life to the soul I feel within him, I am instantly conscious of a release of force within myself, an inheritance of power, an inward luminousness, making me certain I have taken the true way. I have inherited the soul I recognized in him.

If we begin by so small a thing as mere forbearance, tolerating each others' souls, admitting that they also may have a light and life-impulse of their own, we shall soon grow interested and involved in their creative work, finding it a revelation of something new, something beyond ourselves, yet akin to us; before long, instead of hindering the soul in each other, we shall learn to help it, and each will grow rich and rejoice in the gain of every other; for all real gain is for us all. The sense of each others' souls is the first revelation of peace. It was this that the Galilean came to teach, this and no other was the light shining in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not.

We may come to understand the matter in this way: the greatest of all poets has created and put on record for us a thousand men and women, great and gifted, wise or witty, sorrowful or sublime. We can each of us read ourselves into the life of all of them, understanding every thought and emotion of them all, entering perfectly into their inmost hearts until we become one with them. We grow and add new powers to our souls with each added understanding; yet after we have assimilated all, all remains quite unimpaired for all that shall come after us; and, finally, we do not try to dictate to Hamlet, to lay down the law for Lear, to reason with Romeo or Macbeth; we are satisfied that each should be himself, and follow his own genius.

Something like this we should do in life, but with the immense advantage that we are dealing with living souls, touching them direct, entering into them by intuition. Only tolerance and good-will are needed to make us infinitely rich in immediate spiritual power, gained thus from the exhaustless treasure-house of man. Thus we learn that intuition, the impulse of the will which leads us to each others' souls, is the real guide of human life, an immediate divine revelation. Reason is as powerless to teach us human truth as it was to teach us the reality of

the world. We are in the hands of a wiser power than reason, if we would only follow its leading. We are in the hands of the creative will.

### III.

Thus we learn wisdom's first lessons, and set up two milestones on the path of our immortality. We need only substitute our inherent energy for the lust of sensation, to inherit all the primal power of the natural world, and all its beauty. We may knit our wills into the powers that hold the world in place, and share the freshness of the forests, the freedom of the human world; instead of living for vanity and bitter pride, we may cast all barriers down, opening our souls to the souls of men, and instantly inherit the treasure of endless life which gleams and glows in every heart of man.

Nor is our work then ended. Say rather that it now begins. For having reached this double liberation, we have won the power to pierce the secret of all secrets, the splendid and majestic mystery which rests at the heart of all life. For learning to stand upright and to feel our strength, we are soon touched with a dawning inspiration that there is vastly more of us than we dreamed; that we are far greater than even in golden moments we dared to hope; that the personal part of us we know and live in is but the antechamber, the outer court of the temple, while the true lord dwells within.

The divine web of instincts which holds us in the bosom of the natural world, gives no account of itself, nor can assign to itself any purpose; nor even does our human intuition show a definite end in view, a final purpose whereto all union and illumination tend. We must look elsewhere for the final goal, for the everlasting purposes which have had so great preparation, which hold such magical powers of creative instinct and unveiled intuition in their sway. The instinct in us urges us forth into the outer world by a revelation of life outside ourselves in every natural realm. The intuition of our hearts urges us beyond ourselves in another and more divine direction, impelling us to go forth from ourselves into the hearts of others like ourselves, to knock and enter every human door, till all be realized and possessed. There is something higher than instinct or intuition: there is inspiration, urging us to go forth from our personal selves, to rise

above them to our immortal life; to inherit here and now celestial potencies; to make true for man the dreams we have dreamed of God.

It is for this that man has lived and toiled so many weary ages; it is for this that human hearts have struggled through millenniums of sorrow and hate: that they might learn the law. If we have greatly gone astray, this proves at least that we are free even to err; that our wills are master over destiny, even to our own destruction. If we have hated and deceived and lied, tyrannized and lusted and defamed, it proves at least that we are heirs of liberty in dealing with human souls, even to their infinite sorrow and to ours. If we have the right of wantonness, we have the right of strength; if we are free to injure, we are free to heal; and setting ourselves right at last with nature and with man, we hold in our hands the key to open the door whence our freedom came, to enter the deathless shrine where was woven the web of our stormy destiny.

Let us consider that the will in us, manifest as instinct and energy in our bodily selves, is akin to every force in the natural world, and can at the last bring every natural force within the hollow of our hands; let us also consider that the will in our human hearts is akin to every will of man, that the same divinity runs through all, impelling us all to oneness, to enter each other's lives, to raze all barriers between our own and other's souls; if we understand these two truths, we shall fully understand that our life is not contained and confined within this mere limited casket of our personal selves; that we are but the open doorways to the infinite divine; that for each mortal there is an immortal brother, strong and serene above the cloud-land of our life, bending this life to everlasting purposes, leading our outcast pilgrim souls through rough and devious ways to the halls of peace, the dwelling-places of everlasting power.

This much is easily understood of every simplest mind: that he who would inherit bodily well-being, the young joy of the morning in his natural self, needs only to follow the revelation of instinct, to turn back from sensation and sensuality, to find cleanness and health in energy and power, and not in desire. It is a transformation of the whole animal life, through the will, easily understood and bringing instant evidence of rightness in the release of power within our natural selves.

This too is not hard to understand: that we do ourselves much human wrong when we try to live through vanity and bitter pride; when we find each other's souls only to tyrannize and overreach them; when we try to thwart the free life and genius in each other, instead of helping it to the flower of its perfect life. Here again, it needs only a conversion of the will to bring us infinite peace, to set us right with all human souls; and this conversion of the will, so readily appealing to our understanding, will instantly justify itself by its first-fruits of love, joy, peace, and, even more than these traditional blessings, by an immense access of human power and light.

Grasping this, we shall more readily understand the greater matter, for which these two steps are but the preparation and first outline: the tremendous truth that we are to go through one more conversion of the will, changing from mortal to immortal purposes, to inherit our real selves. We have through the desert of our human history a few examples of what may be done by those who are true to their immortal part; in creative genius, divine valour, heroic sacrifice. Not the basest human heart that beats, but throbs in harmony with these better deeds, testifying its own inmost certainty that here our true destiny lies. Every pulse that exults with the hero slain in battle, bears witness of the soul's immortality; every glow of wonder and delight at the beauty and wisdom recorded of the seers is a foreshadowing of our own omniscience; our joy in all heroic deeds is the first gleam of our infinite power.

There stands above us, therefore, for each one of us, a present immortal; easily the equal of the highest life and power our human history records; and it is our destiny, through the inspiration of the will, to enter into the life of this immortal, to draw the everlasting power into ourselves, that even here and now we may inherit divinity. Nor does this mighty task depend solely on our personal selves; nor are we wholly responsible for its success, as we are not answerable for the shining of the sun. Yet we of ourselves must come forth into the sunlight.

There will come a time when the immortal brother shall interpose on our behalf, and we shall be drawn forth from the mortal world and rapt into paradise, hearing words not lawful for mortal lips to utter, for

only those lips can speak of them that are already divine. No longer dimly overshadowed by the Soul, we enter through the silence into the very being of the Soul itself. We know that we have found our treasure and inherited our immortality. With undimmed and boundless vision we behold the shining ocean of life. We enter the radiance and the realm. We are filled with infinite power, infinite peace. No longer heirs to the Power, we are the Power itself, in all its immeasurable divinity; the Power which was from the beginning, which shall outlive all ends.

As we rise to the vision of the immortal, there is silence, yet a silence full of song. There is darkness, yet darkness more radiant than light. There is loneliness, yet a loneliness full of living souls. The souls of the young-eyed immortals are there, who have passed over, and the souls of mortals yet unseeing, who shall follow after. We have entered the All, the sea of life whose foam and bubbles are the world.

Then the gloom closes upon us and we return from our illumination, descending again to the waking world. As we draw near, the whole landscape of life opens before us in scenery of shadow and sunshine. Sky meets earth on the horizon where we entered. Earth draws up again to sky before us, where we shall depart. We see spread forth the country we shall traverse, with hills and valleys levelled, as we view them from above. All the road is clear, nor do any formidable dangers threaten to overwhelm us, ere we enter into rest. For one long moment of our return, nought is hidden from us of all things that are to come.

When we unseal the inner fountain, its waters will never more cease to flow into our hearts, bringing life and light and everlasting youth. Many old well-guarded secrets will come to us and reveal themselves in the twilight stillness. Gradually the mists will lift from the infinite army of years we have lived of old, and from the long days that are to come. This one life of our mortality will take its true place in the undivided life, ranged with days vanished yet still here, with days that are not, yet already are. We shall unravel our tangled skein of fate, clearly seeing where and why we failed. The sins and sorrows of our life will take their true colour, in the awful light of the all-seeing soul.

What each man's genius is, will be whispered to him in the silence,

when he has found his way back to the immortal life. Thenceforward the genius will work in him, handling all the material of life in a new and masterly way. The perfect poet and artist, the hero, saint and sage differ in this only from other men: that they obey the genius of valour and beauty who stands above them, yielding up the reins to their divinity, and offering their wills as workers for the light. As there is something creative and unprecedented in the life of every hero, in the work of every master of power and beauty, so should it be with us all. Our lives should be every moment creative, bearing always the power and light that are the sign-manual of our divinity.

To discover by subtlest intuition the word of the genius to our other selves, and in all dealings with them to second the will of the immortal even against their immortal selves, is our second task; and we need no longer go abroad to find our other selves. They come to us, pressing closely round our souls in vision or in blindness, in sadness or mirth, in love or hate, as doves and hawks tap at our windows, to be admitted from the winter's storms. But above love or hate or sorrow is the immemorial essence of our common soul, the holy presence of the everlasting life. We must bow to it in all things, dealing with the immortal in mortals, answering the needs of souls alone. Mortals are at strife, but the immortals in them never. All move in the one Life.

Yet when the last word is said, we are finally concerned, not with the works of our wills, nor with our other selves, but with the immortal Life that gives them life. Our lives and other selves concern us because they are of the Soul. But there is somewhat greater and more august than the Soul's sunbeams, however radiant and full of beauty. There is the infinite Soul itself, the perfect undivided Life. Thither at last shall all our footsteps tend. Thither when our works are ended, when we have reached oneness with our other selves, shall we come to rest, losing ourselves and them and all things to find them again in the immortal Life.



## **The Genius of the New Era**

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There is first the intuition of the Soul; that haunting vision of might and joy that has been hovering over us through the ages. We have sought that joy through the natural world; through long lives of thirsty desire, and ever, as our hands seemed to be closing upon the treasure, it has vanished away, leaving our hearts desolate, longing for the immortal. We have sought the Soul through long ages of human life, following it in hope and fear, in desire and hate, in pleasure and sorrow, and again we have thought to surprise the eternal secret, and capture that alluring joy of the immortals. But we are seeking still, and ever within our hearts is that immortal longing, haunting, importunate, which leaves us never, and will not be stilled, but whispers to us in the silence, with a fascinating sweetness that makes dull all the voices of the world.

That restless thirst of joy is the longing for the Soul, for our immortal selves, the heirs of the everlasting; and we shall hear those haunting whispers till they break forth into the song of the Eternal.

In a lull of weariness and fever, when we cease for a while from our desires and dreams, will come clear vision of the Soul, a taste of immortal valour, of imperious power, of triumphant joy. And thenceforth, for ever, we shall know that the Soul is; even when the clouds and darkness are heavy upon us, and our vision is gone, we shall endure to the end, remembering that there is the Soul.

With that memory comes a sense of life, strong, exultant, that

desires not the cloying, weakening sweetness of sensuous life; for it thirsts no more, after the first taste of the immortal waters; or thirsts for these alone. Nor will the soul cast forward any more hopes or fears into the future, either for this world, or the next, or any future life; for with the sense of the immortal treasure close at hand what shall a man need to hope for, or what shall he fear? Therefore the soul of man will stand upright, thirsting not for the feasts of the world, hoping no more, neither fearing any more.

Then shall follow peace. The heart's pains shall be stilled; softly, slowly shall the quiet of immortal might descend upon the soul from the greater Soul, and we shall understand how the gods can work for ever, yet not grow weary. There shall be peace from all imaginings, hopes shall no longer beckon us away from where our treasure is; for with possession comes the payment of hope. Fear shall no longer lash us with the unpitying scourge that drives us to all cruelty and injustice, for where fear is, there is cruelty; where cruelty is, there is fear. We shall desire no more, for the fullness of life leaves nothing to be desired; nor shall we hate any more, for seeing ourselves in all things, how can we hate ourselves? The soul cannot hate its own exultant life. So shall come peace, the quiet of the heart, and glad heart's-ease.

And from heart's-ease shall follow peace through all the powers, that have so long been shaken by the fever of the world. And there shall come a recovery from all earthly pain, and the vigour of life restored to health like the young-eyed gods. Every power of man is now ready for the great work; but before he can undertake it, he must cease from the idols of the world, and their false worship. He must no longer follow the hot dusty ways of the men of desire, that they are driven along by fear and thirst for the banquets of the world. Nor will he desire these ways or endure them, for he knows the quiet pathway of the Eternal, where there is peace.

Ceasing from false idols, he begins to follow his Genius; and genius will set the immortal imprint on all he does. For its way is a divine way, a yoke that is easy, and a burden that is light. And the secret of genius, of the Genius in every man, is easily told. In the heart of every man, after he has caught the vision, and knows that the Soul is; after he has reached peace, heart's-ease, and quietude of all his powers; after

he has ceased from idols, and drawn back from the hot pathways of desire; in his clean heart there shall yet dwell one desire, one longing, one imperious and haunting wish; and it shall seem to him that nothing in life could be sweeter than to carry that wish out; he shall have for it all enthusiasm, and the willingness of a freeman's service. And that secret desire of the heart is his life's work, the one thing he can do supremely well; the private revelation whispered to him alone, that not even the gods can overhear; not even the sages can foretell.

And his life's work a man will perform with such ready joy, with such enthusiasm and winning power, that all men shall be fascinated, and won by it; and will offer him all they possess for some share of it. Whether it be some new and excellent way of dealing with the natural world, or with the souls of men, there is this secret for everyone. For a statue is only a stone transformed by the power of the Soul, and the greatest picture is a thin layer of pigments stretched over canvas threads; but the Soul's touch makes these mean things divine. And so is it with all its works. Taking the common words that fall from all men's lips, the common dreams that dwell in all men's hearts, the Genius weaves them into a song that shall last for ages, and outwear the hills, ringing in men's hearts and awakening their longing for the song everlasting. So too the twanging of wires may be transformed by the Soul into a magical enchantment, that shall make men forget all the heart's pains, if only the Genius be in it.

And there is nothing in all this mortal world that may not be likewise transformed; even common things and mean are awaiting their poet, their artist, their musician. For all men are inwardly creative and full of genius; and some day each shall bring his gift to life.

And if there be this divine way for the rocks and ores of the natural world, so that they shall breathe with living beauty, what divinity may not come into our meeting with human souls. They indeed can be enkindled with immortal fire, set ringing with a diviner music, lit with colours that never sunrise nor the flowers nor the hills in their purple garments dreamed of; become resonant with a music that shall dull the long chant of the seraphim.

Here is the great work for every man: to express that secret vision which the gods whisper to him alone; in his dealings with the natural

world; in his ways with the souls about him. And for each man, the guide is, the secret desire of his clean heart. That is what he came into the world to do; that is what he will do better than all living, past or to come. That is what all men will be ready to reward him for doing, as emperors have vied with each other in heaping reward on painters of things beautiful.

Yet a man who follows his path shall need steadfast endurance, and firm faith; nor shall the way be too smooth or easy for his feet; for he has a bad past behind him, and a world yet unclean round about him. So shall he keep steadfastness in his heart.

Faith too must go with him, a glow of fire, a surplus power to which all tasks are easy; for what is most admirable in the world has been done almost without effort, with a divine ease; yet great effort has gone to the preparation for it.

Last comes intentness; the bending of a steady will upon the task; for a statue is dreamed by the soul, yet it is carved by firm hands and steady blows, and only the greatest artists can draw a perfect line. And in like manner only a valiant soul can deal fairly with another, even with a little child.