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THE RATIONALE FOR UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

In many countries there is a noticeable rising discontent, evidence of a polarization of thought and values regarding religion, culture and political ideologies, which sometimes leads to acts of aggression and mindless violence. We may ask ourselves, "Have we lost our moral compass?" Are high ethics and moral standards no longer upheld by individuals and societal institutions? Are ethics no longer considered the bedrock of justice systems?

All the great religions of the world have at their core teachings: 'do unto your neighbour as you wish them to do unto you'. One could ask "Why should I concern myself about my neighbour? I have enough problems of my own". Fortunately most of us would be prodded by our conscience if we allowed this attitude to dominate our conscious thoughts and actions. But how many of us honestly scrutinize our deep-seated motives underlying our thoughts and actions?

The principle of Universal Brotherhood lies at the foundation of the Theosophical teachings; in fact it is the only requirement for the aspiring member to commit to. Furthermore it deserves to be understood that Universal Brotherhood is the basis of Nature which is fundamental to the progress and functioning of every human being, and indeed all life. To grasp this understanding therefore, could profoundly affect our thoughts and deeds, thereby bringing about resounding change for progress towards benevolent and philanthropic societies across the globe. – *Ed.*

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UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD – A FACT OF NATURE

William Q. Judge

(During the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, the Theosophical Society participated in the first World's Parliament of Religions, held in September 1893. Reprinted in *Echoes of the Orient*, vol.2, p. 143)

I have been requested to speak on the subject of universal brotherhood as a fact in nature; not as a theory, not as a utopian dream which can never be realized; not as a fact in society, not as a fact in government, but as a fact in nature: that is, that universal brotherhood is an actual thing, whether it is recognized or whether it is not. Every nation, every civilization has brought forward this doctrine and the facts of history show us that, more than at any other time, the last eighteen hundred years have seen this doctrine violated in society, in government, and in nations. So that at last men have come to say, "Universal brotherhood is very beautiful; it is something that we all desire, but it is impossible to realize." With one word they declare the noble doctrine, and with the other they deny the possibility of its ever being realized.

Why is this the case? Why is it that although Christianity and other religions have brought forward this doctrine, it has been violated? . . . We have had the theory but not the practice. Now, then, has there not been something wanting? It is a beautiful doctrine. It is the only doctrine of the Theosophical Society, the only thing that anyone is asked by us to subscribe to. What, then, is the matter with it? Why so many who say that it is beautiful, but it is impossible, simply impossible? There are even some branches of the Christian church which say, "There is Jesus; why, the altruistic, noble teachings of Christ are beautiful;

but no state could live three months under such doctrine." The reason that it has not prevailed in practice is that it has been denied in the heart.

The theosophist who knows anything about life insists that universal brotherhood is not a mere theory. It is a fact, a living ever present fact, from which no nation can hope to escape; no man can escape from it, and every man who violates it violates a law, violates the greatest law of nature, which will react upon him and make him suffer. And that is why we have had suffering; that is why you have in Chicago, in London, in New York, in Berlin, in all the great cities of the world, masses of people who are claiming with violence what they call their rights and saying they must have them, and that another class is oppressing them; and danger lurks in every corner because men are insisting on universal brotherhood. This noble doctrine has already become a danger. The reason of all these things is that men have denied the fact. Now, we propose to show you, if we can, that it is a fact.

If you will notice you will find that when it rains over a certain area vast numbers of men are affected similarly. The rain has to fall on the fields in order that the harvest may grow, so that afterwards it may be gathered, and all the farmers are affected together by the rain. If you examine society you will find that at the same hour every day almost all the people are doing exactly the same thing. At a certain hour in the morning thousands of your citizens are going down that railway or rush all together to catch the train, and at another few moments afterwards they are rushing out of the train to get to business, all doing the same thing, one common thought inspiring them. That is one of the proofs -- a small one -- in social and business life that they are affected together, they are all united... That is another proof of universal brotherhood. We are all united, not only with each other here, but with the entire world.

Now, then, go further still materially and you find that all men are alike. We have the same sort of bodies, a little different perhaps in height, weight, and extension, but as human beings we are all alike, all the same color in one country, all the same shape in any country, so that as mere bodies of flesh they are united, they are the same. We know every man and woman has exuding from him or her what is called perspiration. The doctors will tell you there is a finer perspiration you cannot see, the invisible perspiration which goes out a short distance around about us; we know it comes out from every person, and the emanations of each person are affecting every other person, being interchanged always. All those in this room are being affected by these emanations and also by the ideas of each other, and the ideas of the speakers speaking to you. So it is in every direction; wherever you go, wherever you look, we are united; in whatever plane, the plane of mind as well as the plane of the body; in the plane of the emotions, of the spirit, what not, we are all united, and it is a fact from which we cannot escape. Now, then, further: science is beginning to admit what the old theosophists have always said, that there is going on every minute in every person a death, a dissolution, a disappearance. It used to be taught and thought in the West that we could see matter that this table is made of matter. It is admitted today by your best scientific men in every part of western civilization that you do not see matter at all; it is only the phenomena of matter we see; and it is my senses which enable me to perceive these phenomena. It is not matter at all, and so we do not see matter. Now admitting that, they go further and say there is a constant change in matter so called; that is, this table is in motion. This is not a purely theosophical theory.

Go to any doctor of physics and he will admit to you as I have stated it. This table is in motion; every molecule is separate from every other, and there is space between them, and they are moving.

So it is with every man; he is made of atoms and they are in motion. Then how is it we remain the same size and weight nearly always from the moment of maturity until death? We eat tons of meat and vegetables but remain the same. It is not because of the things you have eaten. In addition to that the atoms are alive, constantly moving, coming and going from one person to another; and this is the modern doctrine today as well as it was the doctrine of ancient India. They call it the momentary dissolution of atoms; that is to say, to put it in another way, I am losing, all of you in this room are losing, a certain number of atoms, but they are being replaced by other atoms. Now, where do these other atoms come from? Do they not come from the people in this room? These atoms help to rebuild your body as well as does the food you eat. And we are exuding atoms from our minds, and we are receiving into ourselves the atoms other men have used. For, remember, science teaches you, and theosophy has always insisted, that matter is invisible before it is turned into this combination of the life cycle, which makes it visible, makes it tangible to us. So these atoms leave us in a stream and rush into other people. And therefore the atoms of good men go into bad men, the atoms impressed by bad men go into good men, and vice versa. In that way as well as others we are affecting everybody in this world; and the people in Chicago who are living mean, selfish lives impressing these invisible atoms with mean and selfish characters, and these mean and selfish atoms will be distributed by other men, and by you again to your and their detriment. That is another phase of universal brotherhood. It teaches us to be careful to see

that we use and keep the atoms in our charge in such a condition that they shall benefit others to whom they shall go.

There is another view of universal brotherhood, and . . . that is, that there is in this world an actual universal brotherhood of men and women, of souls, a brotherhood of beings who practice universal brotherhood by always trying to influence the souls of men for their good. I bring to you the message of these men; I bring to you the words of that brotherhood. . . . This actual Brotherhood of living men says, Why, men of the West, why will you so long refuse to believe you are gods? We are your brothers and we are gods with you. Be then as gods! Believe that you are gods, and then, after experience and attainment, you will have a place consciously in the great Brotherhood which governs the entire world, but cannot go against the law. This great Brotherhood of living men, living souls, would, if they could, alter the face of civilization; they would, if they could, come down and make saints of every one of you; but evolution is the law and they cannot violate it; they must wait for you. And why will you so long be satisfied to believe that you are born in original sin and cannot escape? I do not believe in any such doctrine as that. I do not believe I was born in original sin. I believe that I am pretty bad, but that potentially I am a god, and I propose to take the inheritance if it is possible. For what purpose? So that I may help all the rest to do the same thing, for that is the law of universal brotherhood; . . . that we are as gods, and are only prevented from being so in fact by our own insanity, ignorance, and fear to take the position.

So, then, we insist that universal brotherhood is a fact in nature. It is a fact for the lowest part of nature; for the animal kingdom, for the vegetable kingdom, and the mineral kingdom. We are all atoms, obeying the law together. Our denying it does not disprove it. It simply puts off the day of reward and keeps us miserable, poor, and selfish. Why, just think of it! If all in Chicago, in the United States, would act as Jesus has said, as Buddha has said, as Confucius said, as all the great ethical teachers of the world have said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," would there be any necessity for legal measures and policemen with clubs in this park as you had them the other day? No, I think there would be no necessity, and that is what one of this great Brotherhood has said. He said all the troubles of the world would disappear in a moment if men would only do one-quarter of what they could and what they ought. It is not God who is to damn you to death, to misery. It is yourself. And the Theosophical Society desires above all things, not that you should understand spiritualism, not that wonderful occult works should be performed, but to understand the constitution of matter and of life as they are, which we can never understand but by practicing right ethics. Live with each other as brothers; for the misery and the trouble of the world are of more importance than all the scientific progress that may be imagined. I conclude by calling upon you by all that humanity holds dear to remember what I say, and whether Christians, Atheists, Jews, Pagans, Heathen, or Theosophists, try to practice universal brotherhood, which is the universal duty of all men.

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THE HERESY OF SEPARATENESS

Ingrid Van Mater

(*Sunrise* magazine, April/May 1987)

God is in every blade of grass
In every grain of sand,
And in every atom that floats in the sunshine – Giordano Bruno

Brotherhood is the basic structure of the universe, the hub of the wheel of life. It is our very reason for being, since all things are united by divine kinship. Why is it then that, while there is mutual helpfulness in the other kingdoms, we problem children cause so much disharmony in the world when we, too, are a part of nature? We dream of a brotherhood on earth that will unite all peoples, and at the same time we create weapons of destruction. Our human situation has always been a riddle. We are complex beings with immense possibilities, yet often we are unmindful of the broad perspective of our spiritual destiny which involves lifetimes of gradually discovering and seeking to become our real self.

Everything in nature is born and reborn in a continuous cycle of unfoldment, and so are we, returning again and again to earth, with a rest for the soul between lives. With each incarnation the law of action and reaction works impersonally to restore balance where we have upset it through our thinking, feeling, and actions. So the ultimate expression of brotherhood would logically be to live in harmony with all beings.

Brotherhood does not simply happen. We have to work at it. Just as no one can do our physical growing for us, so we cannot be dependent on anyone to do our spiritual maturing for us, to shape our character and thoughts. We are capable of doing our own spade work, and our human duty demands that we do. Because of our duality and our ability to make our own choices we are every moment, according to our view of life and how we live it, either contributing to or preventing the achievement of brotherhood.

The mind is the pivotal point of our humanness, the arena in which our soul-learning is centered. It can be influenced by the higher intuitive impulses and warmth of heart or by lower desires and emotions, so our actions are determined always by dual possibilities. The mind is our passport to greater understanding and also our chief deterrent, for it creates untold illusions. At any point we can perceive life only through whatever lens we have thus far built for ourselves, perfect or imperfect, depending on our degree of *seeing* and *knowing*. Francis Bacon said of our self-created delusions, that "Idolatry is not the worship of false Gods, but the deification of false opinions." Truth in its fullness is always beyond our grasp, but leads us ever onward. We are slow learners, struggling with the "alphabet of reality," and we alone can rend the veils that cloud our vision along the way.

This chronic blindness to truth is known as the "heresy of separateness" in Buddhism which emphasizes the importance of good will toward all and the oneness of life, and recognizes only one enemy – ignorance. It is understandable that ignorance of our innate divinity or what might be called our buddha-nature would be considered a heresy because, without a reverence for all life as a background of thought, serious ills result. Fanaticism emerges in every age and leads to oppression and cruelties through ignorance and rigidity of beliefs. "I'm right and you're wrong" is at the root of unbrotherliness. The Inquisition is an extreme example of the dark illusion of separateness which condemned expounders of universal truths as heretics because of their non-conformity to church doctrine! One of the most noted was Giordano Bruno, an "apostle of the ever new and ever old religion, that of spiritual insight."* Bruno believed that nature should guide human reason, and not that human reason should guide nature.

He was convinced that evil arises when limited ideas are placed "above or apart from the world idea," for this subjugates the welfare of the whole to one's own desires; and further, that good follows when the will of the individual yields to the common good. Today in almost every aspect of our culture we are reaping the harvest of false knowledge, of arbitrary notions devoid of the light of universal wisdom. For centuries our thinking, in the West particularly, has been molded and warped by materialistic and theological dogmas which have caused separation of religion, science, and philosophy; separation of man from nature; man and nature from the divine, birth from death, one religion from another, nation from nation – all of which divisive attitudes have contributed to our ecological crisis, to the threat of nuclear war and to many other problems, individual to global.

But these barriers are beginning to break down. The imperative nature of events is leading many to commit themselves to the furthering of humanitarian and holistic causes. Despite threatening conditions this is a time when the force of truth is touching every area of human thought and cannot be constrained any longer by static views that do not flow and widen with the growing universal outlook.

Those who have a broader vision, and who have risen above the selfish and personal in their thinking, need no reminding of their deeply human obligation. They are motivated by a sense of duty larger than themselves, and a feeling of concern for the whole of humanity. Said Winston Churchill:

The destiny of mankind is not decided by material computation. When great causes are on the move in the world . . . we learn that we are spirits, not animals, and that something is going on in space and time, which, whether we like it or not, spells duty.

Einstein observed:

From the standpoint of daily life, . . . there is one thing we do know: that man is here for the sake of other men . . . for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of my fellow-men, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received. – *Living Philosophies*, p. 3

Einstein was one of the first to recognize that "cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest incitement to scientific research." Today many scientists, particularly in the fields of physics and astrophysics, share this feeling, the spirit of true religion in contra-distinction to religious orthodoxy. Space ventures have expanded our vision to encompass cosmic connections. As one commentator remarked,

* Coulson Turnbull, *Giordano Bruno*, p.7

Science is “drawing us closer to ancient intuitions of the oneness of all species.” And how much more powerful is our inner alliance with all things from atom to galaxy. We *are* the world, as the popular song tells us, and the universe, and the great spaces beyond. We not only are this grandeur, but also we have the consciousness to contemplate it and feel ourselves a part of it.

The ecological crisis is the direct result of a general lack of recognition of our partnership with all beings, and nowhere has nature so unmistakably asserted herself as in the far-reaching effects of various kinds of pollution. Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, awakened global conscience to our thoughtless treatment of our environment which is still posing a threat to all life. But we can be encouraged by the growing concern for our planet's welfare. In the words of John Hay: “The whole point is the human commitment of human experience to universal nature and all its lives. We cannot divide one from the other, or neither will be sustained.”^{*1} Knowledge of our deep bond with nature, and that everything affects everything else, is a beginning. Ecological efforts will bring increased results as more individuals develop a genuine reverence for nature, a feeling of closeness such as Thoreau experienced: “In the midst of gentle rain I was suddenly sensible of such sweet and beneficent society . . . in the very pattering of the drops, an infinite and unaccountable friendliness, like an atmosphere sustaining me.”

Alienation from nature is an indication of alienation from ourselves, from the source of strength and wisdom within. When we become inwardly centered all aspects of life take on a new meaning, and we are conscious of a soul-satisfying relatedness of all experience. How important this one idea is today when many are being misled in their search for self through the lures of psychic and pseudo-occult practices.

Interpersonal relationships are also part of our dilemma. Not only are we unique individuals, but each of us has a different heritage of experience built through many lives. Unity in diversity is the theme throughout nature, and the amazing permutations in human expression are at once the excitement and the difficulty in our associations. Our constant challenge is to appreciate people as they are and allow latitude for their opinions. Strides are being made in this direction: differences are being aired with consideration, not opposition, so that reconciliation can take place through dialogue rather than through heated confrontation.

Significant in this connection is the ecumenical trend today in the field of religion. In September 1984, the TV program, “Firing Line,” taped a symposium in Middlebury, Vermont, which was telecast later by the Public Broadcasting System. The host was William F. Buckley, Jr., and the guests were three distinguished professors of theology and religion, and Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk and student of Buddhism, with a doctorate in experimental psychology, who came to America from Vienna in 1952. Their subject was “Christianity Alongside Other Faiths,” focusing on the Christ and the Bodhisattva.^{*2} In his opening remarks Mr. Buckley read the following from a Middlebury College circular:

The symposium will begin with no presuppositions other than a recognition of the central importance of Christ and the Bodhisattva in their respective traditions and the potential worth of shared exploration.

The endeavour was to examine the relevance of these two ideals to each other, and to everyday life and the larger world problems; also, how they may enhance each other. Brother David struck a keynote:

It is rather the attitude of a person who stands very deeply in a particular religious tradition, as I try to do in my own, and then tries to go so deeply into it that one finds the common source of all the different religious traditions. And so it is a dialogue between people rather than a controversy between ideologies or the ways in which the religious experience has been interpreted.

He added that the biblical saying “Love your neighbor as yourself” should more correctly be “as (being) yourself.” “Your neighbor isn't somebody else. You are one self. . . .we are all of us one self – and everything else is really an illusion because is not the Christ living in all of us? And that is catalysed by our encounter with Buddhism. It isn't that we were waiting for Buddhism to tell us this, but we had not said it in a long time and we had not the means of saying it so explicitly.

Loving one's neighbour as being oneself is where human brotherhood begins. The extension of meaning that Brother Steindl-Rast gives to Christ as the true self – the same in all – raises the belief in Christ from a personal to an impersonal level. Many divisive notions immediately disappear as a result. We and all

^{*1} *In Defence of Nature*, p.209

^{*2} Bodhisattva: (Sanskrit) he whose essence has become intelligence; the state before Buddhahood

things share in the god-self, the God which is "in every atom that floats in the sunshine," as Bruno poetically expresses it. Each of us becomes a center of light, the Christ- or Buddha-light, shedding radiance on others as love compassion illumine our lives. The practicing of brotherhood cannot be effected externally; it must start from within the heart of each one as an inner commitment to the highest in ourselves and to the benefit of all.

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BROTHERHOOD AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Mark Davidson

(*Sunrise* magazine, April/May 1987)

I have put off this quest, recognizing in it the most hazardous of journeys. To wage war on oneself is never a comfortable thing.

Many of us classify brotherhood as a utopian fantasy having very little to do with everyday life. It is felt as a much wanted dream by most, but one that is too impractical for the world as we know it today, requiring some kind of monk-like existence, passionless, and disinterested in the affairs of man. It is something for tomorrow, for our children and our children's children. As long as our minds persist along these lines it will be impossible to see that the call for brotherhood is a very real and down-to-earth plea. Not only would brotherhood in practice alleviate many of our worldly sufferings, it would also accelerate our understanding and knowledge about the purposes and truths of nature.

The requirements we must fulfill in order to achieve this state of mind can be very simply laid before us. We need to live actively by moral and ethical principles: charity and forgiveness, patience and compassion, honesty and responsibility, to name but a few. These virtues, so easily mentioned, are among the most difficult and greatest of human achievements. And yet, for ages we have challenged the notion that such altruistic attributes could ever effectively lessen the world's problems. Instead it would seem we have tried every possible selfish motivation for living. Greed and hate, power and revenge, jealousy and lust have served only to create a world full of physical and mental poverty. Realizing now, if we can, what havoc these pursuits have wrought in our souls, can we not attempt to redirect our motivations and endeavors toward a more humanitarian cause?

While individual ideas of implementing brotherhood may be misconstrued at times, innate responsiveness to the ideal is universally felt among mankind. Each of us, from our own personal perspective, will understand this concept uniquely. From the reservoir of these thoughts will emerge themes common to all: a tolerance and acceptance of the differences implicit in our species, and an understanding of the oneness or inner connectedness of ourselves and all living things. Our emphasis will be shifted from the good of the one to the good of the whole because we will realize that we are brothers and, therefore, must grow up through life's experiences together as a collective humanity.

Paradoxically, however, none of this wholeness and oneness can be realized until every single person undergoes a transformation in his own soul. Nobody can legislate personal salvation. To know brotherhood and be a member of its company requires a self-knowledge which can only be born out of our own suffering and experience. If we look to others to satisfy our notion of what the world should be, we inevitably tread a disappointing path — looking without for the peace we desire within. Depression, pessimism, skepticism, and negativity become our "dear friends." We forget what we've told ourselves, that brotherhood begins at home, with us. We also forget that this means not to look for results or the fruits of our actions but to keep steadfast to those convictions we know to be true. Unless we do so, brotherhood stands outside of us, distant, chaste, and unapproachable. At some point we have to look at the person we dislike through different eyes, with a different kind of insight: look at him and examine ourselves; look at him and feel the discomfort, trace its roots — they lead in but one direction. If we can see that the source of this discomfort, and what it is that triggers our lesser natures into action, resides in ourselves, then we will have won a measure of self-knowledge. The battle thus being waged, let us not falter. Rather let us discover the satisfaction that comes from consciously trying to live up to the challenge, a fuel of sorts for the fire that burns within us. For there is a fire, a vitality in these passions of ours. This vitality in essence is what moves us through time and space along our evolutionary journey. Therefore we do not want to lose or pacify this energy, but we need to discipline and refocus it into more enlightened behavior patterns which serve a better end.

We slowly come to know by these self-examinations that much of what we attribute to another's actions are really the result of our own reactions, the outcome of what we have chosen to feel emotionally, or to

think intellectually. The ability to learn and comprehend the true nature of things is a faculty which we alone control. At no time are we without the opportunity to make the changes in our life that can fundamentally alter our perceptions of the world around us. This is possible because we carry as our human burden — a burden of salvation, however — the responsibility of choice. Never are we without the power to choose the course of our actions. This is a potent tool we own, one not yielded by the gods to any kingdom below that of man. The changes we need to bring about in our lives are within our means to achieve. Our free will gives us the capacity to make decisions and therefore to plot our destinies. Just as the choices we make over the duration of any one life mold us into what we become, so it works analogously for many lifetimes. Our choices have for so long been equivocal, some positive and others negative, lacking direction or commitment. Blinded by selfish motivations we have not developed the insight to understand that it is the very decisions we make on a day-today level that go into the making or breaking of human brotherhood. As simple as all this may seem it is nevertheless tremendously difficult to implement in our lives.

There is a maxim which goes as follows: In order to help another we must help ourself, and in order to help ourself we must help another. The meaning of this and the answer it affords can be understood only by one whose quest is that of brotherhood.

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OUR BROTHERS' KEEPERS?

Sally Dougherty

(Theosophy Northwest View, May2007)

"Be lamps unto yourselves, and work out your own salvation," instructed the Buddha. It's so tempting to follow someone else's lamp or to try to get others to follow ours. Do we have a responsibility to others to be their keeper -- their shepherd, warden, supervisor, or watchdog? Certainly we have a responsibility to control our own actions and attitudes, to do no harm, to be helpful and humane. We might think of bodhisattvas, compassionate renouncers of nirvana, who vow to remain in the world until even the least being achieves freedom from suffering. Some images show them with one hand reaching up to more advanced beings and the other reaching down to terrestrial beings like us who trail behind. But bodhisattvas don't aid us by compelling or herding us forward, by making rules or asserting authority. They aren't shepherds of us ordinary human sheep. Rather, they encourage, educate, and embody compassion, while bathing the world in unconditional love and goodwill.

Most of us have a strong urge to control others or to have them be controlled. Many people feel at sea without religiously imposed "norms," just as children feel insecure unless grownups make and enforce rules. But life teaches us that we can't control others, even those closest to us, if they really don't want us to. Anyone dealing with a family member's addiction is forced to learn this hard lesson. Like the bodhisattva, it isn't our responsibility to control others by infringing on their freedom of thought or action, except insofar as they are actively injuring others.

Of course, ideas of what's appropriate have changed over the last few centuries. In the West the male head of household is no longer the rightful "keeper" of his wife, children, servants, and slaves. "Inalienable" human rights have been extended more and more as we recognize people's humanity as a claim to self-determination, liberty of thought, and equality of opportunity. These ideals are not yet practical realities, but are widely acknowledged despite fierce attempts to return to earlier thinking or to restrict rights to "us" at the expense of "them," whether it be the mentally ill, prisoners, the poor, immigrants, foreigners, various religious and racial groups, etc. In time we may catch up with Jesus, whose fellowship with those considered socially unacceptable marked them as being among those we should love as ourselves.

Just as the apostles asked Jesus to define who was our neighbor, we may wonder who is our brother? St. Francis spoke of the sun, moon, rain, wind, birds, animals, and plants as our brothers and sisters. Native Americans do likewise. Respect, a feeling of kinship, a sense of equality that goes to the very root of each and all lies behind such language. The interconnection among all life is widely accepted today, often pictured as a webwork rather than an aristocracy or hierarchy organized by beings' ascending worth or excellence. Yet the equal beinghood of other life forms is still largely discounted. What is a fitting attitude toward those who share the earth with us? Are we natural or divinely-appointed rulers or

stewards of our non-human sisters and brothers and of the lakes and rivers, mountains and prairies, oceans and deserts? Or are we children of the earth, siblings of all our co-inhabitants, living spiritual beings in a living spiritual cosmos?

Psalms 121 tells us that "The Lord is your keeper." To me this implies that we are directly connected to the divine forces behind the universe, including the divinity at the heart of our own being. This brings to mind a simple prayer:

I am the place where God shines through
for he and I are one, not two.
He wants me where, and as I am,
I need not fret, nor fear, nor plan.
If I will be relaxed and free
He'll carry out his work through me.

Every being is the expression of a divinity, and each is protected by its own deepest self, which we may picture as a guardian spirit or angel if we like to use a human image. The Quakers, so often at the forefront of humanitarian causes, hold that every person has a spark of God within. Therefore God communicates with all people directly, and each must be free to discover and travel his or her own spiritual path. The Jains also hold that every being is the manifestation of a divine life-spark. Hence their emphasis on *ahimsa*, "harmlessness" or "non-violence," and their respect for all views, each of which contains some truth but none all the truth.

We are one humanity, one life. As reflections of our own inner divinity, we can find ways to be caring and supportive while respecting that all others are also self-directed facets of the inexpressible unity that underlies everything.

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THE SCIENTIFIC REASON FOR NOT JUDGING OTHERS

G. de Purucker

(*Studies in Occult Philosophy*, p. 423)

Could you give us, so that we shall never forget it, the really Theosophical scientific reason why we should not judge others? It is not the sentimental reason I am asking for, but the real scientific, technical reason.

There are many reasons — more than one. There is the ethical reason. It is wrong to judge others, because what right have I to judge my brother? I am not wise enough. I think I see that he is doing right and I judge him, and I say he is a good man. Well, that is all right because I do him no harm. But I see my brother, I think he is doing wrong, and I judge him, and I say that he is a bad man. Now that is not right. I am not wise enough. If I see him doing an act which I know is wrong, *it is right to judge the act, but not to judge the man*, because we do not know what the motive was. We have no right to sit in judgment on our brothers.

The scientific reason is that the man who judges others warps, shrivels, distorts, twists, his own mind; because usually when we judge our brothers, adversely that is, unkindly, we imprint on our own souls a mark of unkindness, and distort the fabric of our consciousness equivalently. We are playing with fire which burns us. Do not judge others, for by your own judgment you will be judged, because you are imprinting on your soul memories of your judgments, and distorting your character which thereafter will act in a distorted way; and the same thing you will become. If, for instance, I judge my brother as being a dishonest man — I will use this as an example — then on my own soul I leave a print of dishonesty because I had this thought so strongly in my mind it prints itself in my own mind, in my own soul; and my own mind becomes dishonest because I think so much about it, and because it automatically follows the psychic twist that I have given to it. I warp, distort, twist, my own soul. And if you do this repeatedly and continuously and do not do other noble acts, kindly acts, that at least will balance or neutralize, Nature's own judgment-balance will lean down and you will thus be weighed in your own scales of judgment, and found wanting.

By your own acts you will be judged. Karma will find in the mind which has misjudged others continuously, a distorted, warped, twisted, weakened character. Thoughts of love make us beautiful. Thoughts of hatred make us ugly. Consequently, when we judge others unkindly, because these are thoughts of evil and hatred, we become ugly inside. Therefore the rule is: judge not others. Be very severe with yourself, but forgive others their trespasses against yourself as you hope others will forgive you. Learn to love and learn to forgive. This brings about a beautiful, symmetrically shaped character.

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THE KEY TO PEACE

Katherine Tingley

Every lover of justice is making an appeal to the conscience of the world because war (and conflict in general— *Ed*) is a deathly curse to civilization. War is a symptom having its sole origin in human selfishness or fear, or both. Hence its cure and abolishment lie in a radical regeneration of the human heart – a change of spirit.

Only when people's minds are inflamed and angered by injustice – real and imaginary – does the demoniac war fever arise with its attendant train of shameful charges and counter-charges, misrepresentations and slander, hate and horrors of many kinds. Unbrotherliness menaces in no small degree the progress of our civilization. Its power cannot be broken or destroyed until man has had ingrained into his heart and mind the fact that he is divine in nature, until he realizes that he possess the immortal potentiality of good.

Universal brotherhood – the keen realization of the spiritual and natural oneness of humankind – is the only key to a peace that will last. If we would have permanent peace, we should create the international spirit and sustain it; otherwise we cultivate that which is contrary to the spirit of true brotherhood and justice. Let us determine to abolish from our hearts all moral trickery, all selfish grasping and advantages, all fear of our fellowmen, and war, will dissolve away as do the mists before the morning sun. War will become impossible, for war is merely the effect, the symptom, of inner moral weaknesses.

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The chief point is to uproot that most fertile source of all crime and immorality – the belief that it is possible for men to escape the consequences of their own actions. Once teach them the greatest of all laws, *Karma* and *Reincarnation*, and besides feeling in themselves the true dignity of human nature, they will turn from evil and eschew it as they would a physical danger. – H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 243-4.

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Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye.

But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain, not ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed. – H. P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*, p, 13

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There is a hierarchy of compassion which extends from the furthest reaches of mind and beyond, down through and including mankind. Always the sacred effort has been kept alive. Never abandoning their post, open to all deserving human souls, the great ones persist until that day when light pours from heart to heart, mind to mind, soul to soul: till all of us may also actualize in our lives the god within and, inspired by compassion, take our post and turn to assist our younger brethren in the evolution of all sentient beings. Each and every one of us is responsible to the living universe, each man and woman is a teacher and a student of universal law. No one is alone or unaided, but all have within the gift of the gods to realize and share. – Alan E. Donant

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THEOSOPHICAL LITERATURE

The Theosophical University Press offers an extensive selection of theosophical literature available online, E-books and audio books. Books are listed according to author. Further information can be found at the website of the International Headquarters: www.theosociety.org

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INTERNATIONAL WEBSITES & CONTACTS

- **International Headquarters:** The Theosophical Society, Pasadena, has a comprehensive website, www.theosociety.org General information regarding the basic concepts, objectives and history of the society can be viewed, including literature.
- **American Section:** All editions of the quarterly circular, *The Spiral Path*, are listed at the website www.theosocietyamsec.org
- **Northwest (USA):** A wide range of articles and all editions of the *Theosophy Northwest View* newsletter are listed at: www.theosophy-nw.org
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- From **Australia:** For the latest issue of newsletter for June 2026, *The Ancient Wisdom Downunder*, go to andrewrooke@hotmail.com , as well as any back issues of *Theosophy Downunder*.
- **Exploring Theosophy: the Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy:** This website, maintained by David Pratt, features a wide range of topics relating to theosophy: <http://davidpratt.info>

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