

# THE GREAT HERESY OF SEPARATENESS

A concentration of thought upon the personal individual, seeking personal rather than spiritual freedom, is the way which leads downward. The pathway of self is the pathway to ever deeper realms and spheres of matter, until finally annihilation comes at the end of the cosmic cycle, when matter itself dissolves: Mâyâ, as matter, is illusion.

Aspire; cultivate your higher faculties. Beware of the glamorous lights of the lower nature, and particularly of the lower inter-mediate nature which is called the psychical. There is nothing so deceptive as the false lights of Mâyâ. Often Hine-looking flowers contain deadly poison either in bud or in thorn or in both. The honey thereof is death-dealing, bringing death to the human soul. Seek first your own spiritual and intellectual powers; bathe in the light of your own spiritual nature so that you shall have vision and will-power; and then these other faculties will grow in you naturally, evenly, properly, easily.

The Law of Laws of the universe is self-forgetfulness, not concentration of attention upon one's personal freedom, not even upon your individuality. The primal law of the universe is living unto all things, not the doctrine that each must live for himself in order to develop for himself the spiritual powers within. The latter is true enough as a bald and imperfect statement; but it is also misleading, dangerous, unwise, and therefore unholy as a statement of esoteric training, unless properly qualified—always qualified with the accompanying doctrine: Give up thy life if thou wouldst Hind it. Live to benefit mankind, for this is the first step. If you will have the sun, then leave the earth and its clouds.

The Great Heresy and the only real heresy is the idea that anything is separate, distinct, and different essentially from other things. That is a wandering from natural fact and law, for Nature is nothing but co-ordination, co-operation, mutual helpfulness; and the rule of fundamental unity is perfectly universal: everything in the Universe lives for everything else.

It is this sense of separateness that is the cause and root of all evil. It brings forth the craving for *Me: I want, I am, Mine*. And it is the sense of personal separateness, imagining that one is utterly separate from all others, utterly different, that prevents one from becoming that inner god within. For by becoming that inner god you become consciously at one with the Universe of which you are a child, an inseparable part; and that means drawing upon strength inexhaustible, wisdom without compass, drinking at the fountains of inspiration which flow from the Heart of the Universe. Every one is rooted in the common fountain of the Cosmic Life-Intelligence-Substance.

Selfishness is restrictive; it is the foundation of all degeneration, of all moral decay, of all mental and physical weakness; it is crippling; it binds you in, and leaves you no room to expand and to grow. Selfishness is the root of all evil, and therefore of weakness of mind, of lack of faculty, of lack of power, of lack of judgment, of lack of discrimination, of lack of a feeling heart. Selfishness is therefore the fertile cause of all misfortune and pain. Everything that cripples the native faculties of the human constitution arises out of selfishness. It brings about a deplorable and evil-working view restricted to your own little circle of thought. You are then a prisoner,

imprisoned in your own selfishness, and therefore are you fearfully crippled in life's noblest battles. Selfishness makes you a prisoner—and your prison is your lower self!

Oh! the feeling of freedom, of true manhood, when one leaves the prison of the lower selfhood and feels one's oneness with the All; for in very truth you are that All in the mystic arcana of your own inmost being.

It is selfishness and ignorance that cause men to differ and quarrel among themselves; for in self-seeking, men use the forces of Nature for personal and selfish ends—sometimes deliberately, sometimes half-consciously. This is done by our free will, which is in itself, nevertheless, a divine power or quality.

We have wills; they are free. We are part of the energies of the Universe, for we are inseparable from it. We use our wills sometimes aright and sometimes awry; and when we use them aright we see the wondrous mysteries in the hearts and faces of our fellows and recognize greatness in their innermost being; for greatness is also in us, and greatness always recognizes greatness. And when we use these forces wrongly, unrightly, or awry, we employ the colorless forces of the Universe, but do it evilly, seeking profit for self. Having free wills we use these energies; and we do it in ignorance of the law—the law of Nature.

Ignorance is a bane to man. If we knew what we were doing; if we knew that we were throwing into disarray the forces of the Universe, arousing evil passions in ourselves and in other men; could we but realize this fundamental truth of Nature—that all things have a common root in ceaseless peace and harmony—no sane man would then tolerate discord and evil in himself but would work to enlighten and aid his brothers.

Ignorance is the greatest foe of man. And the fruits of ignorance are unhappiness, sorrow, pain, disease, and suffering.

Selfishness is ignoble. It is also very unwise, because there is nothing like selfishness to cripple you and to mire your feet in the slough of the lower selfhood. The road to success is the quenching of personality, the becoming impersonal, so that your feet are not mired by the mud, by the clinging dirt, of material existence. The Law is the same for all: Be impersonal, be self-forgetful!

A man who thinks of naught but self, *Me, my plans, my property, my wishes, my thoughts*, makes a perfect cocoon of imperfect and ugly selfhood around himself, through which nothing can shine, and which is like an adamant wall around him more hard and durable than steel.

Indeed, we are surrounded by barriers of our own making, of our own construction of our own thought-fabric, and our worst barriers are within us. As man's consciousness grows, it bursts the bonds hemming it in, breaks down the barriers preventing its expression, and the inner splendor shines forth.

Rigidity of thought, rigidity of opinions, are barriers to true spiritual progress, because they signify dogmatism, they signify the blinds of self-satisfaction; they actually mean, to change the metaphor, the closing of the doors of the mind to the entrance of a new truth, because men are never rigid and inelastic, so to say, in their souls: they are never rigid and inelastic in their minds: *unless they are self-satisfied*;

and there is nothing that blinds one's inner vision so greatly to truth as does self-satisfaction. Remember also that most human beings are self-satisfied for a little while, but not for long.

On the contrary, an open mind, an eager intellect, the desire to have an unveiled spiritual perception, a readiness to receive truth and to give it to others from the full-flowing sympathy of one's own heart—all these insure true spiritual progress and are thus the answering signs of some advancement along the pathway of spiritual evolution.

Avoid, therefore, rigidity. Let your mind be open; let your intellect be eager to seize any new aspect of truth that may present itself to you. An unveiled spiritual perception is merely the loss of personality in opinions, in views, and of self-satisfaction. Seeing the impersonal: that is having an unveiled spiritual perception.

The main thing that closes the doors against the entrance of Light is the feeling that may be expressed in the words: "I have all that I need to know." Egoism! This feeling arises out of pure egoism. The opposite of egoism is impersonal vision of spiritual truths working in your soul and thus molding it to receive impersonal, universal impressions.

Anything will aid you in your spiritual growth that will take you away from your animal-self, that will cause you to forget your personal being and take you out into the great breadth of Nature and give you thoughts of compassionate, impersonal service. What comfort, what hope, what solace, what peace, in forgetting oneself!

Anything that takes you away from yourself with its small circle of personal limitations, of selfish ideas and idiosyncrasies, egoistic thoughts and emotions, into impersonal service, into tending something, 'mothering' something if you like, in self-forgetful work for others, greatly helps you spiritually. Tending a tree, tending a flower, looking after the interests of some human being, busy with your book, with your writing, with your machine, with your tools, whatever it may be: anything that will cause you to forget the personal self: helps you in spiritual growth—self-forgetfulness. What reward comes to the man or woman who does this! That is the secret of the call of the religions. It enables a man or a woman to forget the lower personal self. And you can achieve exactly the same results by giving full field to the spiritual powers within your breast in any kind of impersonal work.

Sweet are the fruits of self-forgetfulness—the complete oblivion of your personality in something so beautiful and impersonal that human tongue cannot describe it! For self-forgetfulness, pity, compassion, and peace are the fruits of the Cosmic Harmony, which is the very heart of the Universe. When you begin to realize this fact, then within your soul there begins the growth of something which is indescribable, which cannot be expressed in words, but which is at once light, and life, and peace, and wisdom, and almighty Love—impersonal universal; so that everything that is, everywhere, has a fascination for you, for you love it.

And yet the whole exterior universe is but the garment or shadow of something invisible, of the inner Life, of which each human being, and indeed every entity, is an inseparable part; for all entities and things are rooted in this inner Life, and therefore whatever any one of us may do reacts with corresponding force upon all other entities

and things.

Each one is his brother's keeper, being as we are inseparably bound together by unbreakable bonds of origin and of destiny. Fundamentally we are all one. Every son of man is the keeper of his brothers, in the sense that he acts upon them, and their minds and hearts react against what he says to them. And his responsibility becomes consciously, self-consciously, the heavier just in proportion as his own evolution is the more advanced.

We make ourselves to be exactly what we are; and we are, at the same time, our brothers' keepers, because each one of us, *each one of us*, is responsible for an aeonic chain of causation. There is law in this Universe; things are not ruled by chance; and a man cannot think or speak or act without affecting other beings, to their weal or to their woe.

Sow an act, and you will reap a habit. Sow a habit, and you will reap a destiny, because habits build character. This is the sequence: an act, a habit, a character, and a destiny. You are the creator of yourself. What you make yourself to be now, you will be in the future. What you are now, is precisely what you have made yourself to be in the past. What you sow, you shall reap.

If you sow for yourself, for purely selfish ends only, you will reap accordingly. The man who has such small love for the intrinsic beauty of right action as to say to himself: I am going to be good merely in order that I shall get something: a better fortune, a better future, a better body: has his good sowing already spoiled with a whole handful of tares—his selfish desire. There is nothing so belittling as personality, nothing will so diminish your soul in its strength as concentration on your own selfish personal affairs and a forgetting of the welfare of others.

The man who thinks of others before himself is already great. The man who gives up his life that others may live is already great. The man who forgets himself in impersonal service to humanity is the greatest of all; and such a man reaps a destiny—because he has builded a corresponding character—which is godlike.

Nature demands of all human beings co-operation, brotherhood, kindly feeling, love, self-forgetfulness, working for others. The selfish man or woman always, sooner or later, goes to the wall. The wicked may flourish like the green bay-tree for a little while, but not for long. Selfishness is shriveling; it means cold; it means the opposite of the expansive, warm power of love.

Nature will not tolerate for long persistent self-preferment to the detriment of others: for the very heart of Nature is harmony, the very fabric and structure of the Universe is co-ordination and co-operation, spiritual union; and the human being who seeks self-preferment unremittingly, without surcease, ends in that far-distant country of the "Mystic West," the Land of Forgotten Hopes, the land of spiritual decay; for Nature will have none of him for long. He has set his puny, undeveloped will against the mighty currents of the Cosmos, and sooner or later he is washed on to some sand-bank of the River of Life, where he decays. Nature will not tolerate persistent and inveterate selfishness.

Look at a tree. Look at our bodies. Each is builded up of hosts of minor things, of

minor entities, all working together, and composing one thing, in which they all live and move and have their being, and therein they partake of the common life.

When a man acts harmoniously, he acts in accordance with the universal scheme and law; and harmony in consciousness and thought and therefore in action is what men understand by the term ethics. Ethics are not a convention; morals are not a convention; they are rooted in the harmony, in the central laws, of Being; they are based on the very structural harmony of the Universe.

This instinct of ethics thus springs from within your inner constitution. It comes forth from your spiritual being recognizing harmony, order, the stateliness and majesty of beauty—beauty in thought, beauty in aspiration and feeling, beauty in action.

Knowledge is of loving deeds the child—this is one of the sublimest truths. Of the mysteries, of the higher mysteries, you cannot have knowledge unless your heart is filled with love, and overflowing with it; and knowledge comes from the exercise of the spiritual powers within you. This exercise is most easily achieved in doing deeds of loving kindness, in feeling and practicing brotherhood, in helping and sharing with others, in helping others and sharing with them the blessings that you have.

Oh, how noble it is, how grand it is, for men to feel their common kinship with each other, to feel almighty Love stirring in the heart, to sense the feeling of our common brotherhood, and to live to benefit mankind!  
All this is sublime!

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