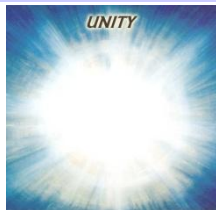


Introductory Study Paper 3: THE UNITY OF ALL THINGS



'Earth, and moon, and sun,
All that is, that has been, and that ever time shall reap
is but moving home again, with mighty labours done,
The Many to the Everlasting One.'

Clifford Bax, *The Meaning of Man*

Theosophical literature presents a rich variety of themes, some of which will be outlined in subsequent papers. Beneath this variety lie a few basic principles which in turn are seen to be aspects of one fundamental truth, the unity of all life.

ALL EXISTENCE IS ONE THING

The daily experience of our senses seems to tell us that the world around us is made up of an almost infinite number of separate things, from grains of sand to stars, from lowly mosses to giant trees, from microbes to men.

The esoteric philosophy, however, teaches that ONE LIFE pervades the whole of visible Nature; more than that, it affirms that the total universe includes invisible modes of being which are similarly animated by the ONE LIFE.

In one of the oldest Scriptures of the world, the *Rig Veda*, the ONE LIFE is recognized as transcending all human categories and hence is designated by such impersonal terms as IT or THAT. The Scripture declares:

Other than IT there nothing since has been.

This statement is the affirmation of a fact; there never has been anything other than the ONE, by whatever terms human language has sought to name IT. This is the rock foundation of the theosophical philosophy.



In *The Perennial Philosophy*, Aldous Huxley has collected together many statements that show the universality of the Wisdom tradition.

The Chinese sage Chuang Tzu wrote: **Do not ask whether the Principle is in this or in that; it is in all beings**; and in the writings of Yung-chia Ta-shih there occurs the identical teaching; **One Nature, perfect and pervading, circulates in all natures; One Reality, all comprehensive, contains within itself all realities.**

In the *Bhagavad Gita* the Lord Krishna, identifying himself with the One Supreme, declares: **I am the source of the forth-going of the whole universe and likewise the place of its dissolving. I am the SELF seated in the heart of all beings, nor is there aught, moving or unmoving, that may exist bereft of Me.**

In similar terms the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross writes of the union **between God and all His creatures**, without which these creatures **would immediately cease to be and would fall back into nothingness.**

ONE FUNDAMENTAL LAW

Many more similar statements can be found throughout the literature of the Wisdom tradition, and modern theosophical writings do but restate the same underlying truth of existence. In *The Secret Doctrine* Mme Blavatsky insists that the essential oneness of everything, visible and invisible, throughout Nature, is **the one fundamental law in Occult Science.**

One of her Teachers emphasised the standpoint of occult science: **We recognise but ONE element in Nature (whether spiritual or physical) outside which there can be no Nature since it is Nature itself.** (Note: In this literature Nature means far more than the visible universe: **it is the sum total of everything visible and invisible, of forms and minds, the aggregate of the known [and unknown] causes and effects.**)

When once the full significance of this fundamental principle is grasped - that ALL THINGS are but the ONE, appearing under the limitations of time and form - certain further principles, corollaries of the first, will become self-evident. Here some of them are briefly stated; the booklist at the end suggests sources for their further study.

- 1) There is no ultimate duality in Nature, no ultimate distinction between spirit and matter, no ultimate separateness of any unit from the whole, for all things in the essence of their being are the originating ONE for which our language has no name. (It is this truth that underlines the First Object of The Theosophical Society.)
- 2) As the indwelling Life in all things is ONE only, the spirit in man is identical with the Universal Spirit: hence the affirmation, **THAT ART THOU**.
- 3) There is no dead matter, no empty space, for Life is everywhere, in every atom and molecule, in every entity, visible and invisible, physical and non-physical. Life is, quite literally, **omnipresent**.
- 4) The One Life is indestructible, without beginning or end; only the multitude of forms through which it finds expression are subject to birth and death; they are temporary; passing appearances. The forms perish, the Life is imperishable.
- 5) Death is a change of state, affecting only the temporary dwelling of the Life that used it.

OCCULT SCIENCE IS KNOWLEDGE

In various forms, under the guise of myths and symbols, as well as in explicit teaching to their disciples, the Wise Men of all cultures have handed down from the most ancient times their discoveries of the truths of Nature. In the theosophical tradition, such truths are not imposed for blind acceptance but are offered for investigation, study and personal corroboration by those who are willing to undertake the task.

For it remains true that **knowledge is a function of being**, and that the ability to know depends, as in all sciences, on the willingness of the student to fulfil the necessary conditions. Hence the companion teaching which everywhere accompanies the Wisdom tradition: **direct knowledge of Truth is attainable by man**.

A NOTE ON THEOSOPHICAL STUDY

To her students in London, shortly before her death Blavatsky said: **See in study a means of exercising and developing the mind** never touched by other studies. She was here referring to the study of The Secret Doctrine, which requires for its understanding the constant recollection of the inner Reality within all things, the One Life. This means that the information given in theosophical books has to be approached in a meditative attitude, with reflection on each sentence so that its significance and implications can be fully appreciated and its truth absorbed.

In this paper, for example, there are a number of statements that could well be meditated upon not once only but day after day, and throughout the day, even while we go about our normal business. The truths that are set before us should not remain mere words on a printed page; they apply to us, here and now, and to the world in which we live. For this reason these papers are kept short, to allow for pondering, for reading again and again many times, for the gradual assimilation of the teaching.

In theosophical study we may need to change our reading habits, to check the tendency to go on and on, page after page. Let us profit by the advice given by Mme Blavatsky to some of her students: If you read for ten minutes, she said, you should think for ten hours. If that seems too demanding, let us at least spend as much time thinking as we do reading. Let us pause frequently in our reading, holding the thought clearly in mind, reflecting on it before passing on to the next passage. The aim of the study is not the superficial acquisition of information but the absorption of the teaching so that our lives are transformed thereby.

Indeed, in *The Key to Theosophy* the purpose of The Theosophical Society is given in the words placed at the beginning of Paper 1 and repeated here for their further consideration.

It was formed to assist in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities.

URTHER READING LIST FOR STUDENTS

The Secret Doctrine - H. P. Blavatsky

Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy (from the writings of H. P. Blavatsky) - ed. Ianthe H. Hoskins

The Bhagavad Gita (various translations)

The Manifold and the One - Agnes Arber

The Perennial Philosophy - Aldous Huxley

The Teachings of the Mystics - compiled by Walter T. Stace

The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse - D. H. S. Nicholson and A. H. E. Lee