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## OUR DIVINE POTENTIAL

It is one thing to assert that human existence has a purpose, but quite another to articulate what that purpose is. Some have said it is to find happiness; others, to live a good life; still others, to glorify God. Beyond the assumption that some divine purpose underlies human existence, there is no consensus as to *what* that might be. Religious sects are at odds over the best way of honoring and praising the Lord; hedonists and philosophers hold radically different views as to what constitutes the good life; those who are motivated by ideals of service and altruism have a far different understanding of “the pursuit of happiness” than those driven by the need for self-gratification and comfort.

Theosophy answers the question of purpose in broad terms: *we are here to discover and realize our divine potential*. It goes without saying that this is a monumental undertaking, not the work of a day or of a lifetime, but of many lifetimes. Throughout this epic journey, the soul garners a wide array of experience, gradually contributing to its spiritual unfoldment on the long path to Self-Realization. And this entire process, which includes hundreds of human incarnations, is governed and regulated by the unwavering law of Karma. As we sow, so shall we reap.

But what can we really know of our ultimate destiny? What can we really know of our unrealized divine potential? If we observe the mass of humanity—both now and throughout history—it appears to be driven not by altruism, but by self-interest; not by compassion, but ordinary passions; not by distant ideals, but by what are perceived to be the needs of the present moment. Yet, if we look closer and observe individuals in action, we may catch glimpses here and there of selfless action—the soldier and firefighter risking their lives as they perform their duties; the teacher and mother tirelessly devoting themselves to the education of the young; the doctor and attorney forgoing a practice based on wealthy clients and instead helping the poor and underprivileged. Examples like this abound if one take the time to look. These are not saints, but ordinary people who have found great meaning and purpose in living for something bigger than the personal self; in discovering that the greatest joy in life is not to take for oneself, but to give to others. This is summed up in *The Voice of the Silence* with beautiful simplicity: “To live to benefit mankind.”

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