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OUR MOST VALUABLE POSSESSION

If you were to ask me what the most valuable possession a human being could have, I would say without hesitation, a deep sense of purpose. With it, a man or woman can bear the greatest of hardships; without it, minor irritants become intolerable; with it, our life acquires richness and depth; without it, our days become increasingly superficial.

If Theosophy tells us anything, it is that there is an underlying purpose to human existence. Yes, there are those who doubt that there is any inherent meaning to life, and some of them are quite well educated, even brilliant. Then there are those who *want* to believe that their life has a purpose, but aren't satisfied with the simple assurance given from the pulpit that "God has a plan for you." Without having some idea of *what* God's plan is or *how* it may unfold, such declarations seem weak and ineffectual. While most people can rise to meet an occasional crisis, dealing with the drudgery and ennui of an unexciting daily routine can be difficult. God may have a plan for me, but how does sweeping floors, flipping hamburgers, or stocking warehouse shelves fit into that plan?

Today, as in times past, there are those for whom the purpose of life may be summed up as getting an education, pursuing a career, raising a family, and achieving some measure of financial security. No doubt these are laudable goals, but their attainment provides only limited satisfaction. There is a part of our soul that craves something more substantial than worldly success. The words of the Roman poet Persius still bear repeating:

Young men and old, seek here a purpose for the soul,
And comfort for the woes that over gray hairs roll.

Although we live in an age dominated by science and technology, it is foolish to go to science for answers to questions that are properly the domain of philosophy. When the faucet is leaking you don't call a plumber. Yet many people accept the notion that life has no inherent purpose simply because the scientific establishment has not been able to adduce it through microscopes or test tubes. In this area of human inquiry, the finely honed intuition of a poet or philosopher would be a much better guide than the cold analysis of empiricists. Tennyson sensed this when he wrote:

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.

Mme. Blavatsky elaborated on this theme in *The Secret Doctrine*. In the preface, she explains that the rationale for writing it was "to show that Nature is not 'a fortuitous concurrence of atoms,' and to assign to man his rightful place in the scheme of the Universe." Although contemporary science is not as materialistic as it was in Blavatsky's day, there are still those apostles of materialism who seek to persuade the public that life is nothing but atoms and molecules. This is one reason why there remains a vital need for the message of Theosophy.

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