

The Origins of Optimism and Confidence in Life

A compilation from the writings of William Q. Judge

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Theosophy teaches that humanity possesses infinite perfectibility and that the Mahatmas, Sages, Adepts of history are living proof of this.

Relying on the Law, the wise live in harmony with it.

Reading from *THE DHAMMAPADA*, the sayings of Gautama Buddha

CHAPTER FIFTEEN HAPPINESS

1. Let us, then, free from hate, live happily among those who hate; among men who hate let us dwell free from hate. (197)
2. Let us, then, free from the disease of longing, live happily among those who suffer that disease; among men with disease of longing let us dwell free from that disease. (198)
3. Let us, then, free from anxiety, live happily among those who are careworn; among the anxious, let us dwell free from anxiety. (199)
4. Let us, then, live happily, we who possess nothing. Let us live like the Shining Ones nourished on joy. (200)
5. Victory breeds hatred; the vanquished dwell in suffering; but the tranquil man disregarding both victory and defeat lives happily. (201)
6. There is no fire like lust; no ill like hatred; there is no sorrow like personal existence; there is no peace higher than tranquility. (202)
7. Hunger is the worst of diseases, personal existence the worst of sufferings. To him who has known this truly, Nirvana is the highest bliss. (203)
8. Health is the greatest of gifts; contentment is the greatest wealth; trust is the best of relationships; Nirvana is the highest happiness. (204)
9. He who has tasted the sweetness of solitude and the flavour of tranquility, he becomes free from sin and fearless, and enjoys the ambrosia of the Good Law. (205)
10. Beneficent it is to catch sight of the Noble Ones; to live with them is continuous happiness. A man is happy if luckily he escapes the sight of fools. (206)
11. He who consorts with fools experiences great grief. The company of fools is like company of enemies—productive of pain. Company of the wise is like meeting of real kinsfolk—it brings happiness. (207)
12. Therefore, even as the Moon follows its path among the stars, so should one follow the wise, the discerning, the learned, the steadfast one, the dutiful, the noble. One should follow such. (208)

Letters That Have Helped Me (LTHHM) Book I Letter V p 6:

Dear Jasper: I wish I could answer your letter as you ought to have it done. But I feel my inability. However, our duty is to never consider our ability, but to do what comes to be done in whatever way we can, no matter how inadequate the work appears to others. When we stop to consider our weakness, we think, by comparison, of how another would do it. Our only right is in the act itself. The consequences are in the great Brahm. So I will just say what comes.

I feel the sadness in your letter, but know that you will rebound from that. Do not let the sadness of knowledge create despair; that sadness is less than the joy of Truth. Abstract Truth, even, has necessarily in it all the mercy there is in the whole. Its sternness is only a reflection from our own imperfections, which make us recognize the stern aspect alone. We

are not the only ones to suffer upon the Path. Like ourselves, Masters have wept, though They do not now weep. One of them wrote some years ago: “Do you suppose we have not passed through many times worse trials than you now think you are in?” The Master often seems to reject and to hide his (spiritual) face, in order that the disciple may try. On the doors and walls of the temple the word “Try” is written. (“The Brothers” is a better designation than Mahâtmās or Masters.)

Along the path of the true student is sadness, but also there is great joy and hope. Sadness comes from a more just appreciation of the difficulties in one’s way, and of the great wickedness of the individual and collective heart of man. But look at the great fountain of hope and of joy in the consideration that the Brothers exist, that They were men too; They had to fight the fight; They triumphed, and They work for those left after Them. Then beyond Them are “the Fathers,” that is, the spirits of “just men made perfect,” those Who lived and worked for humanity ages ago and Who are now out of our sphere, but Who nevertheless still influence us in that Their spiritual forces flow down upon this earth for all pure souls. Their immediate influence is felt by Masters, and by us through the latter.

Now, as you say, it is all Faith; but what is Faith? It is the intuitional feeling—“that is true.” So, formulate to yourself certain things as true that you feel to be true, and then increase your faith in them.

Don’t be anxious. Don’t get “maddened.” Because in the fact that you are “maddened” (of course in the metaphorical sense) is found the proof that you are anxious. In a worldly sense it is perhaps well to be anxious about a highly important matter, but in occultism it is different, for the Law takes no account of our projects and objects, or our desire to be ahead or behind. So, if we are anxious, we raise a barrier against progress, by perturbation, and straining harshly. You wrote to B. that what is his, is his. Then the converse is true; what is not, is not. Why don’t you take your own medicine?

Yours, Z

LTHHM Book I Letter VIII p 17:

Dear Jasper:

I seize a few moments to acknowledge your letter. This is a period of waiting, of silence. Nothing seems alive. All oracles are silent. But the great clock of the Universe still goes on, unheeding. On Sunday I engaged in Meditation and received some benefit. I wished I could see you to speak of it. Yet these things are too high for words, and when we approach the subjects we are not able to give expression to our thoughts. We do not live up to our highest soul possibilities. All that prevents our reaching up to the high thoughts of the far past is our own weakness, and not the work of any other. How petty seem the cares of this earth when we indulge in deep reflection; they are then seen for what they are, and later on they are obliterated. It is true that the road to the gods is dark and difficult, and as you say, we get nothing from them at first call; we have to call often. But we can on the way stop to look

ahead, for no matter how sombre or howsoever weak our-selves, the Spectator sees it all and beckons to us, and whispers, “Be of good courage, for I have prepared a place for you where you will be with me forever.” He is the Great Self; He is ourselves.

The Leaders of the world are always trying to help us. May we pass the clouds and see them ever. We must be patient. All our obstructions are of our own making. All our power is the storage of the past. That store we all must have; who in this life feels it near is he who has in this life directed his thoughts to the proper channel. That others do not feel it is because they have lived but blindly. That you do not feel it and see it more is because you have not yet directed all your mental energies to it. This great root of Karmic energy can be drawn upon by directing to it the fire of our minds. Towards Love of course is the right way— the Love of the Divine and of all beings. If we feel that after all we are not yet “Great Souls” who participate in the totality of those “Souls who wait upon the gods,” it need not cast us down: we are waiting our hour in hope. Let us wait patiently, in the silence which follows all effort, knowing that thus Nature works, for in her periods of obsuration she does naught where that obsuration lies, while doubtless she and we, too, are then at work on other spheres.

That described by you is not the soul; it is only a partial experience. Did you know the Soul, then could you yourself reply to all those questions, for all knowledge is there. In the soul is every creature and every thought alike. That sinking down of your thoughts to the center is practice. It can be done and we cannot explain it; we can only say “do it.” Still, do not hunger to do these things. The first step in becoming is Resignation. Resignation is the sure, true, and royal road. Our subtle motives, ever changing, elude us when we seek it. You are near to it; it needs a great care. But while the body may be requiring time to feel its full results, we can instantly change the attitude of the mind. After Resignation, follow (in their own order) Satisfaction, Contentment, Knowledge. Anxiety to do these things is an obscurant and deterrent. So, try to acquire patient Resignation. The lesson intended by the Karma of your present life is the higher patience. I can tell you nothing on this head; it is a matter for self and practice. Throw away every wish to get the power, and seek only for understanding of thyself. Insist on carelessness. Assert to yourself that it is not of the slightest consequence what you were yesterday, but in every moment strive for that moment; the results will follow of themselves.

The Past! What is it? Nothing. Gone! Dismiss it. You are the past of yourself. Therefore it concerns you not as such. It only concerns you as you now are. In you, as you now exist, lies all the past. So follow the Hindu maxim: “Regret nothing; never be sorry; and cut all doubts with the sword of spiritual knowledge.” Regret is productive only of error. I care not what I was, or what any one was. I only look for what I am each moment. For as each moment is and at once is not, it must follow that if we think of the past we forget the present, and while we forget, the moments fly by us, making more past. Then regret nothing, not even the greatest follies of your life, for they are gone, and you are to work in the present which is both past and future at once. So then, with the absolute knowledge that all your limitations are due to Karma, past or in this life, and with a firm reliance ever upon Karma as the only judge, which will be good or bad as you make it, yourself, you can stand anything that may happen and feel serene, despite the occasional despondencies which all feel, but which the light of Truth always dispels. This verse always settles everything:

“In him who knows that all spiritual beings are the same in kind with the Supreme Being, what room can there be for delusion and what room for sorrow when he reflects upon the unity of spirit?”

In all these inner experiences there are tides, as well as in the ocean. We rise and fall. Anon the gods descend, and then they return to heaven. Do not think of getting them to descend, but strive to raise yourself higher on the road down which they periodically return, and thus get nearer to them, so that you shall in fact receive their influences sooner than before.

Adios. May you ever feel the surge of the vast deeps that lie beyond the heart's small ebb. Perhaps our comrades are coming nearer. Who knows? But even if not, then we will wait; the sun must burst some day from the clouds. This will keep us strong, as, in the company of the Dweller of the Threshold, we have perforce to stare and sham awhile. Z.

LTHHM Book II Letter 1 p67

(...) You are all on the road to Masters, but as we are now, with the weak and hereditarily diseased bodies we have, we could not live an hour with Masters did we suddenly jump past space to Them. Some, too, have doubt and darkness—the doubt mostly as to themselves. This should not be harboured, for it is a while of the lower man striving to keep you back among the mediocre of the race. When you have lifted yourself up over that level of the race, the enemy of man strikes, and strives at all times to bring clouds of doubt and despair. You should know that all, everyone, down to the most obscure, who are working steadily, are as steadily creeping on to a change. and yet on and on to other changes, and all steps to the Master. Do not allow discouragement to come in. Time is needed for all growth, and all change, and all development. Let time have her perfect work and do not stop it.

How may it be stopped? How many have thought of this I do not know, but here is a fact. As a sincere student works on, his work makes him come every day nearer to a step, and, if it be an advance, then it is certain there is a sort of silence or loneliness all around in the forest of his nature. Then he may stop all by allowing despair to come in with various reasons and pretexts; he may thus throw himself back to where he began. This is not arbitrary law but Nature's. It is a law of mind, and the enemies of man take advantage of it for the undoing of the unwary disciple. I would never let the least fear or despair come before me, but if I cannot see the road, nor the goal, for the fog, I would simply sit down and wait; I would not allow the fog to make me think no road was there, and that I was not to pass it. The fogs must lift.

What, then, is the panacea, finally—the royal talisman? It is DUTY, Selflessness. Duty persistently followed is the highest yoga, and is better than mantrams or any posture, or any other thing. If you can do no more than duty it will bring you to the goal, And, my dear friends, I can swear it, the Masters are watching us all, and, without fail, when we come to

the right point and really deserve, They manifest to us. At all times I know They help and try to aid us as far as we will let Them.

Why, the Masters are anxious (to use a word of our own) that as many as possible may reach to the state of power and love They are in. Why, then, suppose They help not? As They are Atman and therefore the very law of Karma itself, They are in everything in life, and in every phase of our changing days and years. If you will arouse your faith on this line you come nearer to help from Them than you will recognize.

I send you my love and hope, and best thoughts that you may all find the great light shining around you every day. It is there.

Your brother, WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

LTHHM, Preface p vii by Jasper Niemand

IN the Path for May, 1886, we find these words: "We need a literature, not solely for highly intellectual persons, but of a more simple character, which attempts to appeal to ordinary common-sense minds who are really fainting for such moral and mental assistance as is not reached by the more pretentious works." The experience of one student is, on the whole, the experience of all. Details differ, however. Some are made more instantly rich than others: they are those who put forth more vigorous and generous effort; or they have a Karmic store which brings aid. What Theosophists know as Karma, or the law of spiritual action and reaction, decides this, as it works on all the planes, physical, moral, mental, psychical, and spiritual alike. Our Karma may be worked out on any one of these planes when our life is chiefly concentrated upon it, no matter upon what other plane any special initiative impulse or branch of it originated.

The writer, when first he became a Theosophical student, had the aid of an advanced occultist in his studies. This friend sent him, among others, the letters which, in the hope that they may assist others as they have the original recipient, are here published. They are not exhaustive treatises; they are hints given by one who knew that the first need of a student is to learn how to think. The true direction is pointed out, and the student is left to clarify his own perceptions, to draw upon and enlarge his own intuitions, and to develop, as every created thing must at last develop, by his own inward exertions. Such students have passed the point where their external environment can affect their growth favorably. They may learn from it, but the time has also come to resist it and turn to the internal adjustment to higher relations only. The brevity of these letters should not mislead the reader. Every statement in them is a statement of law. They point to causes of which life is in effect; that life arising from the action of Spirit in Nature, and which we must understand as it is manifested within us before we can advance on the Path. There is a scientific meaning within all these devotional or ethical injunctions, for the Wisdom-Religion never relaxes her hold upon Science nor attempts to dissever an effect from its cause. Most of these admonitions have their base in the constitution of the Archæus or World Soul, and the correlation of its energies; others, still, adhere in the Eternal. Yet having realized the real issues so forcibly

that his whole strength was at the start directed towards self-knowledge and the right use of Thought, the writer offers a part of his first instructions to those of his comrades who, singlehearted and of royal Faith, hold Truth to be dearer than all material life and seek it on the hidden way. There is no tie in the universe equal to that which binds such comrades together. It has been forged in the fires of unspeakable anguish; it has been rivetted by a dauntless purpose and a unique, because Divine, Love. The fierce hatred of seen and unseen worlds cannot tamper with it so long as a man remains true to himself, for this larger life is himself, and as he grows towards it his self-imposed fetters fall away and he stands, at last, a free soul, in the celestial Light which is Freedom itself, obedient only to the Law of its own divine Being. To reach it, let us obey the law of our own Being, for, truly, Being is One.

My comrades, wherever you are, I salute you.

JASPER NIEMAND, F. T. S.
(a student of W. Q. Judge)

