



Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the world, that face of the true Sun, which is now hidden by a vase of golden light ! so that we may see the truth and know our whole duty.

# THE ARYAN PATH

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VOL. II

AUGUST 1931

No. 8

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## ALCHEMY OF SOUL

LUCIFER—the spirit of Intellectual Enlightenment and Freedom of Thought—is metaphorically the guiding beacon, which helps man to find his way through the rocks and sandbanks of Life, for Lucifer is the LOGOS in his highest, and the “Adversary” in his lowest aspect—both of which are reflected in our *Ego*.—*The Secret Doctrine*. II. 162.

During this month falls the centenary of H. P. Blavatsky's birth. This Journal has, among its main objects, that of drawing the pertinent attention of the modern world to the teachings recorded in the writings of the greatest Theosophist of 19th-20th century. With the advance of knowledge, many of her ideas rejected by her own generation have been filling important positions in modern thought. Many superstitions, especially the religious ones, for attacking which she was abused, are being now attacked by the pillars of every religious creed. And still there remains a vast body of her instructions waiting their turn for

acceptance, first by the most advanced thinkers and then by the general public. Our pages have already shown how Madame Blavatsky has views and precepts, suggestions and advice, to offer on a vast range of topics, philosophical, religious and scientific.

We can hardly find a better way to celebrate the Centenary than by presenting to our readers a suitable piece of instruction from her voluminous message. We have selected, with a purpose, her article entitled “The Science of Life” from *Lucifer* for November 1887. It deals with a problem of Science, which remains unsolved now as then ; it has a practical, ethical



bearing and embodies truths which all earnest minds will recognize and welcome; lastly, it fulfils another object of THE ARYAN PATH: H. P. Blavatsky was ever keen to show that Theosophy was not her special personal possession or invention; that her teachings were but reverberating echoes of Words of Power chanted by the Fathers of the human race, when it was young; and moreover, that there were other faithful echoes. In this article she trans-

lates the ideas of the great Tolstoi and says how they express facts of pure and genuine Theosophy. It is the duty of every real student of the ancient Wisdom-Religion to look out for and welcome Theosophical echoes in current pronouncements, just as H. P. B. did. To the student of science, of religion, of philosophy it brings a message; those who yearn to live the Higher Life will find in it much food for thought and many hints of a practical nature.

### THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

What is Life? Hundreds of the most philosophical minds, scores of learned well-skilled physicians, have asked themselves the question, but to little purpose. The veil thrown over primordial Kosmos and the mysterious beginnings of life upon it, has never been withdrawn to the satisfaction of earnest, honest science. The more the men of official learning try to penetrate through its dark folds, the more intense becomes that darkness, and the less they see, for they are like the treasure-hunter, who went across the wide seas to look for that which lay buried in his own garden.

What is then this Science? Is it biology, or the study of life in its general aspect? No. Is it physiology, or the science of organic function? Neither; for the former leaves the problem as much the riddle of the Sphinx as ever; and the latter is the science of death far more than that of life. Physiology is based upon the study of the different organic

functions and the organs necessary to the manifestations of life, but that which science calls living matter, is, in sober truth, *dead matter*. Every molecule of the living organs contains the germ of death in itself, and begins dying as soon as born, in order that its successor-molecule should live only to die in its turn. An organ, a natural part of every living being, is but the medium for some special function in life, and is a combination of such molecules. The vital organ, the *whole*, puts the mask of life on, and thus conceals the constant decay and death of its parts. Thus, neither biology nor physiology are the science, nor even branches of the *Science of Life*, but only that of the *appearances* of life. While true philosophy stands Œdipus-like before the Sphinx of life, hardly daring to utter the paradox contained in the answer to the riddle propounded, materialistic science, as arrogant as ever, never doubting its own wisdom for one mo-



ment, biologises itself and many others into the belief that it has solved the awful problem of existence. In truth, however, has it even so much as approached its threshold? It is not, surely, by attempting to deceive itself and the unwary in saying that life is but the result of molecular complexity, that it can ever hope to promote the truth. Is vital force, indeed, only a "phantom," as Du-Bois Reymond calls it? For his taunt that "life," as something independent, is but the *asylum ignorantiae* of those who seek refuge in abstractions, when direct explanation is impossible, applies with far more force and justice to those materialists who would blind people to the reality of facts, by substituting bombast and jaw-breaking words in their place. Have any of the five divisions of the functions of life, so pretentiously named—Archebiosis, Biocrosis, Biodiæresis, Biocænosis and Bioparodosis,\* ever helped a Huxley or a Hæckel to probe more fully the mystery of the generations of the humblest ant—let alone of man? Most certainly not. For life, and everything pertaining to it, belongs to the lawful domain of the *metaphysician* and psychologist, and physical science has no claim upon it. "That which hath been, is that which shall be; and that which hath been is named already—and it is known that it is MAN"—is the answer to the riddle of the Sphinx. But "man" here, does not refer to *physical* man—not in its esoteric meaning, at any

rate. Scalpels and microscopes may solve the mystery of the material parts of *the shell of man*: they can never cut a window into his soul to open the smallest vista on any of the wider horizons of being.

It is those thinkers alone, who, following the Delphic injunction, have cognized life in their *inner* selves, those who have studied it thoroughly in themselves, before attempting to trace and analyze its reflection in their outer shells, who are the only ones rewarded with some measure of success. Like the fire-philosophers of the Middle Ages, they have skipped over the *appearances* of light and fire in the world of effects, and centred their whole attention upon the producing arcane agencies. Thence, tracing these to the one abstract cause, they have attempted to fathom the MYSTERY, each as far as his intellectual capacities permitted him. Thus they have ascertained that (1) the *seemingly* living mechanism called physical man, is but the fuel, the material, upon which life feeds, in order to manifest itself; and (2) that thereby the inner man receives as his wage and reward the possibility of accumulating additional experiences of the terrestrial illusions called lives.

One of such philosophers is now undeniably the great Russian novelist and reformer, Count Lef N. Tolstoi. How near his views are to the esoteric and philosophical teachings of higher Theosophy, will be found on the perusal of a few fragments from a lecture

\* Or Life-origination, Life-fusion, Life-division, Life-renewal and Life-transmission.



delivered by him at Moscow before the local Psychological Society.

Discussing the problem of life,

the Count asks his audience to admit, for the sake of argument, *an impossibility*. Says the lecturer:—

## A LECTURE AT MOSCOW

BY

L. N. TOLSTOI

Let us grant for a moment that all that which modern science longs to learn of life, it has learnt, and now knows; that the problem has become as clear as day; that it is clear how organic matter has, by simple adaptation, come to be originated from inorganic material; that it is as clear how natural forces may be transformed into feelings, will, thought, and that finally, all this is known, not only to the city student, but to every village schoolboy, as well.

I am aware, then, that such and such thoughts and feelings originate from such and such motions. Well, and what then? Can I, or cannot I, produce and guide such motions, in order to excite within my brain corresponding thoughts? The question—what are the thoughts and feelings I ought to generate in myself and others, remains still, not only unsolved, but even untouched.

Yet it is precisely this question which is the *one* fundamental question of the central idea of life.

Science has chosen as its object a few manifestations that accompany life; and *mistaking*\* the part for the whole, called these mani-

festations the integral total of life. . . .

The question inseparable from the idea of life is not *whence* life, but *how one should live* that life: and it is only by first starting with this question that one can hope to approach some solution in the problem of existence.

The answer to the query "How are we to live?" appears so simple to man that he esteems it hardly worth his while to touch upon it.

. . . . One must live the best way one can—that's all. This seems at first sight very simple and well known to all, but it is by far neither as simple nor as well known as one may imagine.

The idea of life appears to man in the beginning as a most simple and self-evident business. First of all, it seems to him that life is in himself, in his own body. No sooner, however, does one commence his search after that life, in any one given spot of the said body, than one meets with difficulties. Life is not in the hair, nor in the nails; neither is it in the foot nor the arm, which may both be amputated; it is not in

\* "Mistaking" is an erroneous term to use. The men of science know but too well that what they teach concerning life is a materialistic fiction contradicted at every step by logic and fact. In this particular question science is abused, and made to serve personal hobbies and a determined policy of crushing in humanity every spiritual aspiration and thought. "Pretending to mistake" would be more correct.—H. P. B.



the blood, it is not in the heart, and it is not in the brain. It is everywhere and it is nowhere. It comes to this: life cannot be found in any of its dwelling-places. Then man begins to look for life in Time; and that, too, appears at first a very easy matter. . . . Yet again, no sooner has he started on his chase than he perceives that here also the business is more complicated than he had thought. Now, I have *lived* fifty-eight years, so says my baptismal church record. But I know that out of these fifty-eight years I slept over twenty. How then? have I lived all these years, or have I not? Deduct the months of my gestation, and those I passed in the arms of my nurse, and shall we call this life, also? Again, out of the remaining thirty-eight years, I know that a good half of that time I slept while moving about; and thus, I could no more say in this case, whether I lived during that time or not. I may have lived a little, and vegetated a little. Here again, one finds that in time, as in the body, life is everywhere, yet nowhere. And now the question naturally arises, whence, then, that life which I can trace to nowhere? Now—will I learn. . . . But it so happens that in this direction also, what seemed to me so easy at first, now seems impossible. I must have been searching for something else, not for my life, assuredly. Therefore, once we have to go in search of the whereabouts of life—if search we have to—then it should be neither in space nor in

time, neither as cause nor effect, but as a something which I cognize within myself as quite independent from Space, time and causality.

That which remains to do now is to study *self*. But how do I cognize life in myself?

This is how I cognize it. I know, to begin with, that I live; and that I live wishing for myself everything that is good, wishing this since I can remember myself, to this day, and from morn till night. All that lives outside of myself is important in my eyes, but only in so far as it co-operates with the creation of that which is productive of *my* welfare. The Universe is important in my sight only because it can give *me*, pleasure.

Meanwhile, something else is bound up with this knowledge in me of my existence. Inseparable from the life I feel, is another cognition allied to it; namely, that besides myself, I am surrounded with a whole world of living creatures, possessed, as I am myself, of the same instinctive realization of their exclusive lives; that all these creatures live for their own objects, which objects are foreign to me; that those creatures do not know, nor do they care to know, anything of my pretensions to an exclusive life, and that all these creatures, in order to achieve success in their objects, are ready to annihilate me at any moment. But this is not all. While watching the destruction of creatures similar in all to myself, I also know that for me too, for that precious ME in whom alone life



is represented, a very speedy and inevitable destruction is lying in wait.

It is as if there were two "I's" in man; it is as if they could never live in peace together; it is as if they were eternally struggling, and ever trying to expel each other.

One "I" says, "I alone am living as one should live, all the rest only seems to live. Therefore, the whole *raison d'être* for the universe is in that I may be made comfortable.

The other "I" replies, "The universe is not for thee at all, but for its own aims and purposes, and it cares little to know whether thou art happy or unhappy."

Life becomes a dreadful thing after this!

One "I" says, "I only want the gratification of all my wants and desires, and that is why I need the universe."

The other "I" replies, "All animal life lives only for the gratification of its wants and desires. It is the wants and desires of animals alone that are gratified at the expense and detriment of other animals; hence the ceaseless struggle between the animal species. Thou art an animal, and therefore thou hast to struggle. Yet, however successful in thy struggle, the rest of the struggling creatures must sooner or later crush thee."

Still worse! life becomes still more dreadful. . . .

But the most terrible of all, that which includes in itself the whole of the foregoing, is that:—

One "I" says, "I want to live, to live for ever."

And that the other "I" replies, "Thou shalt surely, perhaps in a few minutes, die; as also shall die all those thou lovest, for thou and they are destroying with every motion your lives, and thus approaching ever nearer suffering, death, all that which thou so hatest, and which thou fearest above everything else."

This is the worst of all. . . .

To change this condition is impossible. . . . One can avoid moving, sleeping, eating, even breathing, but one cannot escape from thinking. One thinks, and that thought, *my* thought, is poisoning every step in my life, as a personality.

No sooner has man commenced a conscious life than that consciousness repeats to him incessantly without respite, over and over the same thing again. "To live such life as you feel and see in your past, the life lived by animals and many men too, lived in *that* way, which made you become what you are now—is no longer possible. Were you to attempt doing so, you could never escape thereby the struggle with all the world of creatures which live as you do—for their personal objects; and then those creatures will inevitably destroy you." . . .

To change this situation is impossible. There remains but one thing to do, and that is always done by him who, beginning to live, transfers his objects in life outside of himself, and aims to reach them. . . . But, however far



he places them outside his personality, as his mind gets clearer, none of these objects will satisfy him.

Bismarck, having united Germany, and now ruling Europe—if his reason has only thrown any light upon the results of his activity—must perceive, as much as his own cook does who prepares a dinner that will be devoured in an hour's time, the same unsolved contradiction between the vanity and foolishness of all he has done, and the eternity and reasonableness of that which exists for ever. If they only think of it, each will see as clearly as the other; *firstly*, that the preservation of the integrity of Prince Bismarck's dinner, as well as that of powerful Germany, is solely due: the preservation of the former—to the police, and the preservation of the latter—to the army; and that, so long only as both keep a good watch. Because there are famished people who would willingly eat the dinner, and nations which would fain be as powerful as Germany. Secondly, that neither Prince Bismarck's dinner, nor the might of the German Empire, coincide with the aims and purposes of universal life, but that they are in flagrant contradiction with them. And thirdly, that as he who cooked the dinner, so also the might of Germany, will both very soon die, and that so shall perish, and as soon, both the dinner and Germany. That which shall survive alone is the Universe, which will never give one thought to either dinner or Germany, least of all

to those who have cooked them.

As the intellectual condition of man increases, he comes to the idea that no happiness connected with his personality is an achievement, but only a necessity. Personality is only that incipient state from which begins life, and the ultimate limit of life. . .

Where, then, does life begin, and where does it end, I may be asked? Where ends the night, and where does day commence? Where, on the shore, ends the domain of the sea, and where does the domain of land begin?

There is day and there is night; there is land and there is sea; there is life and there is *no* life.

Our life, ever since we became conscious of it, is a pendulum-like motion between two limits.

One limit is, an absolute unconcern for the life of the infinite Universe, an energy directed only toward the gratification of one's own personality.

The other limit is a complete renunciation of that personality, the greatest concern with the life of the infinite Universe, in full accord with it, the transfer of all our desires and good will from one's self, to that infinite Universe and all the creatures outside of us.\*

The nearer to the first limit, the less life and bliss, the closer to the second, the more life and bliss. Therefore, man is ever moving from one end to the other; *i. e.* he lives. THIS MOTION IS LIFE ITSELF.

And when I speak of life, know

\* This is what the Theosophists call "living *the* life"—in a nut-shell,—H. P. B.



that the idea of it is indissolubly connected in my conceptions with that of *conscious* life. No other life is known to me except conscious life, nor can it be known to anyone else.

We call life, the life of animals, organic life. But this is no life at all, only a certain state or condition of life manifesting to us.

But what is this consciousness or mind, the exigencies of which exclude personality and transfer the energy of man outside of him and into that state which is conceived by us as the blissful state of love?

What is conscious mind? Whatsoever we may be defining, we have to define it with our conscious mind. Therefore, with what shall we define mind? . . . .

If we have to define all with our mind, it follows that conscious mind cannot be defined. Yet all of us, we not only know it, but it is the only thing which is given to us to know undeniably. . . .

It is the same law as the law of life, of everything organic, animal or vegetable, with that one difference that we *see* the consummation of an intelligent law in the life of a plant. But the law of conscious mind, to which we are subjected as the tree is subjected to its law, we *see* it not, but fulfil it. . . .

We have settled that life is that which is not our life. It is herein that lies hidden the root of error. Instead of studying that life of which we are conscious within ourselves, absolutely and exclusively—since we can know

of nothing else—in order to study it, we observe that which is devoid of the most important factor and faculty of our life, namely, intelligent consciousness. By so doing, we act as a man who attempts to study an object by its shadow or reflection does.

If we know that substantial particles are subjected during their transformations to the activity of the organism; we know it not because we have observed or studied it, but simply because we possess a certain familiar organism united to us, namely the organism of our animal, which is but too well known to us as the material of our life; *i. e.* that upon which we are called to work and to rule by subjecting it to the law of reason. . . . No sooner has man lost faith in life, no sooner has he transferred that life into that which is no life, than he becomes wretched, and sees death. . . . A man who conceives life such as he finds it in his consciousness, knows neither misery, nor death; for all the good in life for him is in the subjection of his animal to the law of reason, to do which is not only in his power, but takes place unavoidably in him. The death of particles in the animal being, we know. The death of animals and of man, as an animal, we know; but we know nought about the death of conscious mind, nor can we know anything of it, *just because that conscious mind is the very life itself.* And *Life can never be Death.* . . .

The animal lives an existence of bliss, neither seeing nor know-



ing death, and dies without cognizing it. Why then should man have received the gift of seeing and knowing it, and why should death be so terrible to him that it actually tortures his soul, often forcing him to kill himself out of sheer fear of death? Why should it be so? Because the man who sees death is a sick man, one who has broken the law of his life, and lives no longer a conscious exist-

tence. He has become an animal himself, an animal which also has broken the law of life.

The life of man is an aspiration to bliss, and that which he aspires to is given to him. The light lit in the soul of man is bliss and life, and that light can never be darkness, as there exists—verily there exists for man—only this solitary light which burns within his soul.

We have translated this rather lengthy fragment from the Report of Count Tolstoi's superb lecture, because it reads like the echo of the finest teachings of the universal ethics of true theosophy. His definition of life in its abstract sense, and of the life every earnest theosophist ought to follow, each according to, and in the measure of, his *natural* capacities—is the summary and the Alpha and the Omega of practical psychic, if not spiritual life. There are sentences in the lecture which, to the average theosophist will seem too hazy, and perhaps incomplete. Not one will he find, however, which could be objected to by the most exacting, practical occultist. It may be called a treatise on the Alchemy of Soul. For that "solitary" light in man, which burns for ever, and can never be darkness in its intrinsic nature, though the "animal" outside us may remain blind to it—is that "Light" upon which the Neo Platonists of the Alexandrian school, and after them the Rose-croix and especially the Alche-

mists, have written volumes, though to the present day their true meaning is a dark mystery to most men.

True, Count Tolstoi is neither an Alexandrian nor a modern theosophist; still less is he a Rose-croix or an Alchemist. But that which the latter have concealed under the peculiar phraseology of the Fire-philosophers, purposely confusing cosmic transmutations with Spiritual Alchemy, all that is transferred by the great Russian thinker from the realm of the metaphysical unto the field of practical life. That which Schelling would define as a realisation of the identity of subject and object in the man's inner Ego, that which unites and blends the latter with the universal Soul—which is but the identity of subject and object on a higher plane, or the unknown Deity—all that Count Tolstoi has blended together without quitting the terrestrial plane. He is one of those few *elect* who begin with intuition and end with *quasi*-omniscience. It is the transmutations of the



baser metals—the *animal mass*—into gold and silver, or the philosopher's stone, the development and manifestation of man's higher SELF, which the Count has achieved. The *alcahest* of the inferior Alchemist is the *All-geist*, the all-pervading Divine Spirit of the higher Initiate; for Alchemy was, and is, as very few know to this day, as much a spiritual philosophy as it is a physical science. He who knows nought of one, will never know much of the other. Aristotle told it in so many words to his pupil, Alexander: "It is not a stone," he said, of the philosopher's stone. "*It is in every man and in every place*, and at all seasons, and is called the *end* of of all philosophers," as the *Vedanta* is the *end* of all philosophies.

To wind up this essay *on the Science of Life*, a few words may be said of the eternal riddle propounded to mortals by the Sphinx. To fail to solve the problem contained in it, was to be doomed to sure death, as the

Sphinx of life devoured the un-intuitional, who would live only in their "animal." He who lives for Self, and only for *Self*, will surely die, as the higher "I" tells the lower "animal" in the Lecture. The riddle has seven keys to it, and the Count opens the mystery with one of the highest. For, as the author on "Hermetic Philosophy" beautifully expressed it: "The real mystery most familiar and, at the same time, most unfamiliar to every man, *into which he must be initiated or perish as an atheist, is himself*. For him is the elixir of life, to quaff which, before the discovery of the philosopher's stone, is to drink the beverage of death, while it confers on the adept and the *epopt*, the true immortality. He may know truth as it really is—*Aletheia*, the breath of God, or Life, the conscious mind in man."

This is "the Alcahest which dissolves all things," and Count Tolstoi has well understood the riddle.

H. P. B.

"The MIGHTY ONES perform their great works, and leave behind them everlasting monuments to commemorate their visit, every time they penetrate within our mayavic veil (atmosphere)," says a Commentary.



## THE PATH OF THE LOVER IN POETRY AND RELIGION

[Prof. D. S. Sarma, M. A., of the Presidency College, Madras, is the author of *A Primer of Hinduism*, *Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita* and *The Gita and Spiritual Life*. His article raises more than one issue, not only of literary interest but of psychological value. It presents an eastern point of view, in making poetry give place to Religion through a natural unfoldment of human love into that rare realization which Bhakti or Devotion vouchsafes.—EDS.]

In the journey of life we generally pass by two luminous landmarks which indicate to us the distance we have traversed.

In our youth the experience of love awakens in us the sleeping sense of beauty. It transfigures our lives and gives us new values. We walk the earth for a time as in a glorious dream seeing one beloved face everywhere. A surprising tenderness takes possession of the heart. And the dull world around us suddenly leaps into a radiant life, shedding all its ugliness and cruelties. No one who has had that vision can ever be disloyal to it. The heart throbs even in one's old age when the memory dwells on this luminous landmark in the distant past. The old fire is burnt out, but it has left an ineffaceable mark on the soul. It is impossible to forget how on a day, when our spirit was young, the scales fell from our eyes and we suddenly became alive to the poetry in life, which gave a new meaning to the poetry in books. It is impossible to forget how once we lay sleepless at nights tracing the features of a radiant face in the silent darkness and how during the day we became a puzzle to our friends. The thousand foolish

things we did then are indelibly imprinted on our memories, while the sober acts of wisdom of other days have apparently left no trace. Love of man or woman penetrates into every crevice of the soul, vivifies every detail of life, and often by the very intensity of its light strikes us blind. Undoubtedly it is the first great landmark of life. But it proves inconstant, for it has put faith in the things of time. The romance of life soon comes to an end, and the dream fades into the light of common day. The eye of the heart is gradually closed amidst routine and hum-drum. The dull world once again rears its head with its uglinesses and cruelties, and we walk through long stretches of our desert way, content with the small things of life, dreary, cynical, unashamed. We begin to laugh at the follies of youth and the dreams of the idealist. We are content to draw around us a few rags of protection against the blasts of life.

It were a tragedy indeed if our journey should end thus and we should mount the funeral pyre, having found no clue to life. It were a tragedy indeed if in our middle age we should not once



again experience a different kind of love and perceive the second great landmark of life. It is only when the sense of religion is awakened in us that all things fall properly into their places and life becomes an ordered whole. Just as, without the experience of the poetry of life, the poetry that we read in books is a meaningless verbiage, so without the experience of religion in the heart, the religion which the church or the temple teaches us, is a meaningless doctrine or ceremonial. Till the Eternal Lover comes into the heart and leaves His footprint there, we wander aimlessly in the world at the mercy of chance and circumstance and the thousand vicissitudes of life. True religion transfigures the world for us, making it a bright and limitless canvas on which we trace the lineaments of the Lord of souls. It brings back to memory all the old experiences of love—but with what a difference, what a consciousness of health and strength and what a sense of coming into our own! It is no longer the make-believe of romance and moonshine, but the certitude of a great experience; no longer the feeling of glorified egotism, but of endless humility and self-surrender. The second experience is not, like the first, of the nature of a fever of the soul, but is its coming of age. It does not ignore, as love does, as poetry too often does, more than half the lot of human life—the dull, drab regions which refuse to be idealised. It takes in the plain as well as the beautiful, the insipid as well

as the sweet. It has no need to throw the facts of life into piquant forms of good and evil. Nor is it content with a passive state of enjoyment. On the other hand, the sense of religion is a silent force calling forth all the activities of the soul and making it adjust itself in pain and suffering to the new light. We may even say that religion starts where poetry leaves off, for its goal is something other than humanity.

Poetry is nothing if it is not human. Its subject-matter is human experience. Its standard of reference is human feeling. From a drinking song to a tragic drama, poetry is the art of expression of any experience of man. A perfect lyric is a perfect expression of any human feeling. It may be a poem of love or of hate. It may express sorrow or joy, jealousy or sympathy. Any genuine unsophisticated feeling of the human heart is a fit theme for lyric poetry. But there are gradations in the kinds of feeling. At one end of the scale we have the feeling that follows the gratification of an appetite, and at the other we have the feeling that follows an act of self-sacrifice. Naturally therefore a song of self-sacrifice has a greater appeal than a song of animal gratification, other things being equal. Similarly a song of love is better poetry than a song of hate, other things being equal. No doubt a perfect hymn of hate is a better work of art than a feeble love poem. But, expression being perfect in both cases, a poem that expresses ex-



alted feelings possessing moral and spiritual values, is superior to a poem that expresses debased feelings.

At the same time there are limits beyond which poetry cannot go with impunity. The purely sub-human and the purely super-human, as they are in themselves without any human reference, are beyond the province of poetry. Poets no doubt explore the animal world and give us beast epics or tales of jungle life. But the animals in these works are either conventional symbols of satire and instruction or are creatures thoroughly humanised and brought up to the level of human sympathy. So also on the other side a poet may create supernatural figures, but he cannot help thoroughly humanising them, if he wants to rouse our interest in them. The sea-nymphs of classical mythology were beautiful women, though they lived in water. They would not live in poetry if they were mere fishy creatures. Similarly angels and spirits in poetry become live figures only when they embody some human trait or feeling. Tears such as angels weep have an irresistible appeal in an epic, only because tears are human and the angel who weeps is after all only the proud human spirit. The want of human interest in Milton's *Paradise* is eloquently pointed out by the late Professor Raleigh.

There are no villages and farms in Eden, no smell of hay, no sheaves of corn, no cottages, no roads, and no trace of that most human of symbols, the thin blue

scarf of smoke rising from a wayside encampment . . .

Not all the dignity of Adam, nor all the beauty of Eve, can make us forget that they are nut-eaters, that they have not the art of cooking, and do not ferment the juice of the grape . . .

We cannot settle down in the midst of this enormous bliss, we wander through the place, open-mouthed with wonder, like country visitors admiring crown-jewels, and then—we long to be at home.

Milton thought that his religious epic had a higher argument than the national epics of Homer and Virgil. He little realised that a poem based on any particular theology could not have the same universal appeal as a poem based on life. His poem interests us precisely when he leaves religious doctrine for the truth of human feeling and experience. When he expatiates on the motives of God in allowing free play to Satan or in creating mankind as a set-off against the losses in heaven, his poem is dull, if not ridiculous. But when he describes Satan rallying his forces to resist once again the will of the Omnipotent tyrant or bursting into tears when he saw the tragic change that had come over his followers, his poem becomes profoundly interesting, for here we have no fanciful doctrine but a page torn from life.

Thus poetry is an expression of human experience. It is a criticism of life. When it is the expression of the poet's individual experience, it is lyrical in character; when it gives the experience of the general humanity through the poet's mind, it is epic in character; and when it gives the



experience of several individuals without any reference to the mind of their creator, it is dramatic in character. As humanity is thus the pith and marrow of all poetry, any poem that moves away from the human position is untrue to itself. That is why hymns are not always the best specimens of poetry. They are either based on a particular theology or they attempt to express an experience which is beyond the categories of thought. They succeed best only when they translate religious experience into one of human feeling and relationship and employ the language of human love or praise. Mysticism, which is the very core of religion, is generally a defect in poetry as it makes the appeal less universal. Poetry is rather of the earth, though not earthy. It may sing of heaven, but that heaven is only a glorified earth, and not the kingdom of God that lies within us.

Therefore let us be clear as to what pure poetry can do for us and has done for us. She has been the great educator of races and nations. She has lifted the human race from the mire of animal appetites and made man come unto his own. She has set ideals of righteousness, beauty and love before infant humanity and made them conscious of their souls. She has made them enjoy the earth, glory in life and take delight in the possessions of the mind. What she has done for the race she does for the individual every day

in the school room or in the lecture hall.

But can poetry save the soul? Can poetry become a substitute for religion? If the aim of life lay within the limits of humanity, if the human spirit could be satisfied with the ideal of a cultured man, we should require no greater teacher than the poet. But we have values higher than the æsthetic, visions more comprehensive than the poetic, and glimpses of a personality infinitely greater than the human. Religion would not be the great force that it is, if it did not minister to a fundamental spiritual need of our nature. It is only those who have a false conception of religion that make it subordinate to poetry. Matthew Arnold wrote:—

There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialised itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything, the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea *is* the fact. The strongest part of our religion is its unconscious poetry.

This great critic does not seem to have realised that for true religion also the idea is everything, the rest is a world, not indeed of illusion, but of evolution. Religion also should attach its emotion to the idea. The idea *is* the fact. And, what is more to the purpose, it is a divine idea and not simply a human idea. We should take particular care to recognise clearly the centre of religion and focus



our attention on that and not be diverted by its various appendages. Religion, for instance, is not merely a matter of ritual and ceremony though these may be living symbols of its idea. It is not merely a matter of doctrine and creed, though these are the logical interpretations of its original experience. It is not even merely a matter of conduct and morality, though these are the partial manifestations of its spirit. If we strip religion of all its outer wrappings of history, theology and ethics, we find at the centre a unique spiritual experience of what the western mystics call "self-naughting," what the Buddhist calls Nirvana and what the *Bhagavad-Gita* simply calls Yoga.

That in which the mind is at rest restrained by the practice of concentration, that in which he beholds the spirit through the mind and rejoices in the spirit;

That in which he knows the boundless joy beyond the reach of the senses and grasped only by the understanding, and that in which when he is established, he never departs from truth;

That on gaining which he feels there is no greater gain, and that in which he abides and is not moved even by the heaviest of afflictions—

Let that be known as Yoga.

The centre of religion is nothing less than the expansion of consciousness beyond the limits of the individual mind so as to embrace that universal consciousness and bliss which we call Deity. It will be observed at once that the core of religion is in a way the very antithesis of the core of poetry. For it is the complete surrender of a separate self, the

repudiation of the human standpoint. And to act thus is obviously to move away from the human position of laughter and tears, of joy and sorrow, of love and hate. It is an attempt to reach a state in which man ceases to be man, and therefore poetry cannot follow him there without ceasing to be poetry. For poetry revels in the antinomies of emotion, while religion tries to transcend them. Poetry conserves all individual values, while religion surrenders them all. Poetry loves the rainbow colours of creation, while religion seeks the pure white radiance of eternity. Poetry lives and moves and has its being amid the many, while religion ascends to the One. Therefore, as an English mystic poet has said, poetry cannot save the soul, but it makes it worth saving. Poetry enriches the treasures of the heart of man, and religion offers them at the feet of God.

There is no real opposition, however, between poetry and religion. In fact there is a wide region common to both, as is shown by the great religious poetry of the world. The lower altitudes of religion afford vast materials for the purposes of the poet. And true religion is only a fulfilment of poetry. The former is the fruit, the latter is the flower. It has been truly said that all art and poetry aspire to the condition of prayer. Already in romantic art we have breaking of barriers between the subject and the object. When the opposition is completely overcome, and when the expand-



ing self becomes one with what it contemplates, the conditions of art are transcended and the heights of religion are reached. The saint in rapt prayer is on a higher level than even the mystic poet who tries in vain to translate his vision of the spiritual world into the language of men.

But poetry is only one of the chambers leading to the central shrine of religion. The secret sanctuary is surrounded on all sides by chambers of various kinds—science, art, scholarship, ethics and philosophy. Every one of these has a door leading to the shrine. When that door is shut, the air in the chamber becomes stifling, the inmates become dazed and their heads become swollen. The latter is a disease which the Renaissance brought in its train in Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. And it has been imported into our country during the last fifty or sixty years. It is a disease from which men of the middle ages with all their faults were singularly free. For to them religion was the goal of all kinds of human endeavour. It exerted its influence over all fields of human activity. Their arts and crafts, their sciences and social institutions had an ultimate religious purpose in that they led to the subordination of the self

and not to its glorification. They may have erred in not properly enriching the self before offering it to God. Their religion may have been crudely based on mere authority, but it served as a unifying force to all their activities. Their instinct was profoundly right when they recognised that the ultimate object of life is to surrender it. Hence their civilization was not aimless or chaotic, however thin it may have been. Whereas we in modern times have enriched and glorified the self, but think it too precious to be surrendered. We have gathered the flowers, but, instead of offering them at the shrine of God, have begun to decorate ourselves with them. Hence the civilization of our times is only a heap of glittering fragments with no unity of design or purpose. We have improved our sciences, we have reformed our institutions, we have increased the comforts of life and we have gained swiftness and power. We have also questioned authority, we have compared religions and we have discovered that the true basis of religion is mystic experience. But till we are able to make our expanded religion an abiding influence in all our other separate activities we shall miss the purpose of life.

D. S. SARMA



## THE CONCEPT OF IMMORTALITY AS AN ISSUE FOR MODERN PHILOSOPHY

[ "**Cratylus**" is the pen name of a distinguished scholar who has wielded his pen effectively since he graduated with honours from Oxford. Our readers' attention may be drawn to an excellent article on "Greek Philosophy as an Antidote to Materialism" which he wrote in our pages in June 1930.

We append a few appropriate extracts which give the Theosophical bearing on the subject generally and on the special points raised in this thought-provoking article.—EDS.]

There is a vital sense in which it may be said that the ultimate question forming the background of every religious, ethical and metaphysical methodology is simply and solely the query whether the human personality is extinguished "like a candle" at death or whether after all, this and all such inconclusive metaphors may be dismissed, and the question of the persistence of spirit discussed upon a plane on which the images offered by the phenomenology of the material universe play no prominent part.

A belief in the paramount importance of the problem of immortality detracts no whit from the force of the fundamental intuition of Plato and Kant as to the unique status of the moral law and the ethical consciousness, or of the application of that intuition in the hands of such a thinker as F. W. Robertson, whose deepest vein of insight lies in the re-affirmation of the Platonic contention that virtue has an irrefragable and prescriptive claim to be chosen in preference to vice irrespectively alike of consequences in this world and of the existence of another.

It merely throws the emphasis and stress of such inferences as can be drawn from the entire argument of these philosophers—and indeed of most other philosophers of the first rank—upon the significant fact that they, starting from the indemonstrable but irresistible fact of the immediacy and ultimacy of the moral judgment, arrived at the conclusion that "life was ashes at the core" unless the spirits of men were in some way to be made perfect and unless our human ignorance of the standard of value inherent in the Idea of the Good was not so absolute as to preclude us from ruling out the idea of extinction as a morally untenable hypothesis.

In other words, the idea of immortality, so far from being in the eyes of these men an intuition parallel to and independent of the fundamental ethical law, became a tenet which had in some wise to be embraced in order to rebut the conception, if not of a "Deus deceptor," at least of a universe in which the potencies of the good were frustrated of their full and effectual realisation. It is by according to this



general consensus of view amongst the men who represent the peaks of human thought the weight which their united authority merits that we obtain the best leverage for the effort to raise our own spirits to the height of the greatest argument with which they can concern themselves. And yet this consideration can justify no facile predisposition to assent to extraneous testimony on however exalted a level. We may yield to authority on the issues of logic and of epistemology,—even in some degree on those of morals: but *every soul that desires to convince itself in very truth as to the basis of its eternal hope must ultimately tread the winepress alone. Alone—though not without assistance*: and it can gauge the measure of its isolation as well as the value of its succedanea by remembering that earth's greatest sons passed through dark rooms in erecting the frail bridge between moral and metaphysical faith. The Platonic Socrates of the *Phaedo*, otherwise serene in the article of death, wrestled powerfully in spirit over the argument of Cebes; Kant, maintaining wistfully that man as he is could not have been made for happiness, laboured long and painfully to bring the concept of eventual blessedness into a consistent relation of ultimate re-union with moral obligation: Robertson himself, the convinced believer, knew long periods of aridity when the metaphysical hope receded and left him clinging desperately to the austere anchorage of the moral

law. Such precedents should suffice to prove, if proof be needed, that the sure and certain hope won so hardly by "the loveliest and the best" can never be *tou tuchontos harpasai*.

"When men the fiend do fight, they conquer not upon such easy terms." It is unprofitable if natural for those who have arrived thus far to ask why the heirs of all the ages should thus have branded upon their consciousness the fact of the gloomy power of the spectres that still have to be laid by the philosopher who would fain believe himself, and others, to be in some sense imperishable. "Haec data poena diu viventibus," and there may be consolation in the thought that the struggle, if it has not lost its agonies, was yet as hard for Plato as for ourselves. We may derive comfort, too, from the fact that the idea of immortality in its essence is still the heritage of simple faith and is attested by a great cloud of such witnesses—a fact that we can appreciate in all its force if we enter into the nature of Kant's tribute to his Mother's memory or into the implications of the beautiful story of Spinoza's reassuring words to his pious landlady "that her faith was a good one and that she should not seek to change it". "Weakness never can be falseness," and the beauty and truth of the conceptions of the humble is not fundamentally impaired by the adventitious admixture of the fickle and the frail. Yet if for us the concepts of picture-thinking have become



impossible, it remains for us to take up the cross in the form in which it is laid upon us; and for those who have advanced to this point the prime necessity is that they should endeavour to clarify their ideas on the central issue of the special sense in which they can conceive of an immortality which saves the concept of the abiding personality. There are infinite gradations, ranging from the idea of the circle of re-birth to be terminated only in absorption in the world-soul to the conception of the instantaneous passage of each individual to timeless existence at bodily death. If it be admitted that the one idea surrenders the concept of personality too utterly and that the other involves too sheer a dichotomy in the categories of spiritual being, it must be regarded as an obligation upon that essence in man which transcends the discursive reason to seek some faith, personal if provisional, which will guide it, so far as guidance may persist, through the blind mazes of this sightless realm. "The way is dim, the current unperceived," but for those who hold with trembling to the central faith of Plato that that which has the essence of Being is essentially informed by intuitive Reason there can be no turning back.

Concerning that element of personal groping after the eternal Idea of Good which must always predominate in such a quest, it would be worse than impertinence for any man to speak save out of the content of his own mystical

experience in so far as it may prove communicable; but in the realm of speculation which these thoughts suggest there is an aspect, subsidiary perhaps but vital in its degree, which entrenches upon the sphere of philosophy properly so denominated. There is, that is to say, inherent in the conception of personal immortality an issue of the first order of importance, ancient, unsolved, and in a sense insoluble, which can nevertheless be frankly canvassed without any profane meddling with inviolable sanctities and which ought, if only in the interests of clear thinking, to receive a greater measure of outspoken and explicit examination than it has yet met with. There is surely no reason to-day, at a time when philosophers of repute can propound theories of negation whose ultimate implications they often seem to realise imperfectly, why others whose radical faith in the spirituality of the universe remains should not deal frankly with the general idea of what is known as palingenesis. The present state of affairs, in which an eschatological conception approved by Plato and Origen is sidetracked in a society that does not hesitate to impugn the very basis of Christian ethics, is no more creditable to our rationality than to our Christianity; and while no attempt can be made here to marshal the arguments for the idea, still less to balance and evaluate them, it is nevertheless not out of place to suggest that the issue is one which the modern world will do well to



envisage faithfully and to discuss with whatever it may possess of metaphysical acumen if it means to enhance or even to preserve its spiritual heritage.

It is only fair to observe that the reasons for diffidence on the part of those best qualified to treat this most difficult of all themes are often creditable to themselves as well as intrinsically cogent. Any attempt to speak out on such a matter is bound to be disturbing to some advanced souls as well as to many persons of simple piety, and in the hands of the superficial or the dogmatic the question is not insusceptible of an arid or quasi-statistical formulation which tends to bring the dignity of the issue into contempt. But difficulties such as these have always proved, and rightly proved, powerless to fetter the march of speculation; and there is no compelling reason why the question of personal immortality should not be handled as reverently in this particular as in any other. The main nerve of the argument has of recent years been exposed by none so boldly as by the famous 'Platonist' Lutoslawski, who has not hesitated to refer to "the monstrous absurdity of the idea that the union of two bodies should create a new soul". No doubt this language, even in its own appropriate setting, may be taken as evidence of the ease with which argument on this theme declines from the requisite altitudes; but it is better to see in Lutoslawski's polemic nothing but a sincere recognition of the

need for presenting frankly a vital and neglected issue. This issue—the question whether the number of monadic existences that theism and philosophy speak of as finite selves is in effect a number increased each moment by the birth of every babe, or whether it represents the infinitely smaller number which a belief in palingenesis would suggest—is one which philosophy has to reckon with. And it has to be said, emphatically, that it is an issue on which the finest thinkers of British philosophy are for the most part mute. It is, indeed, Lutoslawski's contention that there is a conspiracy of silence on this matter based largely on class and professional interests; and, although the doctrine has been treated with great respect by Rashdall and other theologians who do not themselves subscribe to it, the idea cannot be wholly scouted. In any case the fact remains that this conception itself is not canvassed so frankly as its vital importance demands, and that it is not in the interests of philosophy or of the race that so vital an issue should be shelved. Those for whom "simple faith" has become impossible and who yet shrink from materialism "look up and are not fed," so far as the hope of immortality is concerned, by the philosophies of Bradley, McTaggart and Alexander; and they can only be pardoned and pitied if they find no anchorage for their souls. There are, perhaps, three paths only to the summit of the mount of vision—the feeling of personal



union with the dead emphasised by Prince André in *War and Peace*, the belief in ethical teleology, and, thirdly, a study of that concept of the individuality subsisting through each dissolution of the empirical ego which constitutes the philosophic substrate of the doctrine of re-birth. *Behind this conception of re-birth the wisdom of the East is enthroned and Western philosophy can only disregard it to its own detriment.* For Plato, at least in his moments of deepest insight, epistemology, æsthetics and ethics were rooted and grounded in the concept and the cycle of re-birth—as the speculations of the *Meno* and the *Phaedrus* bear witness; and, at the hither end of the time-process,

the conclusions of modern psychology suggest powerfully that the unity of self-consciousness which is the bond between the phenomenal and the transcendental in experience may best be viewed as the abiding individuality persisting and developing through incarnational succession. The problem is that of the *Phaedo*, but in “larger letters”. In that dialogue the soul is maintained to be something more than an analogue of the body which outwears many garments only to perish itself in the end. To palingenesis, the individuality is something divinely more than the personality which outwears many soul-body associations.

CRATYLUS

[Extracts referred to in our introductory note are taken from the writings of H. P. Blavatsky.—EDS.]

Questions with regard to *Karma* and *re-births* are constantly offered, and a great confusion seems to exist upon this subject. Those who are born and bred in the Christian faith, and have been trained in the idea that a new soul is created by God for every newly-born infant, are among the most perplexed. They ask whether in such case the number of incarnating Monads on earth is limited; to which they are answered in the affirmative. For, however countless, in our conceptions, the number of the incarnating monads . . . . still, there must be a limit. It was stated that Karma-Nemesis, whose bond-maid is Nature, adjusted everything in the most harmonious manner. . . .

It is only the knowledge of the constant re-births of one and the same individuality throughout the life-cycle; the assurance that the same MONADS . . . . have to pass through the “Circle of Necessity,” rewarded or punished by such rebirth for the suffering endured or crimes committed in the former life . . . . it is only this doctrine, we say, that can explain to us the mysterious problem of Good and Evil, and reconcile man to the terrible and *apparent* injustice of life. Nothing but such certainty can quiet our revolted sense of justice. For, when one unacquainted with the noble doctrine looks around him, and observes the inequalities of birth and fortune, of intellect and capacities; when one sees honour paid fools and profligates, on whom fortune has heaped her favours by mere privilege of birth, and their nearest neighbour, with all his intellect and noble virtues—far more deserving in every way—perishing of want and for lack of sympathy; when one sees all this and has to turn away, helpless to relieve the undeserved suffering, one’s ears ringing and heart



aching with the cries of pain around him—that blessed knowledge of Karma alone prevents him from cursing life and men, as well as their supposed Creator.

Of all the terrible blasphemies and accusations virtually thrown on their God by the Monotheists, none is greater or more unpardonable than that (almost always) false humility which makes the presumably "pious" Christian assert, in connection with every evil and undeserved blow, that "*such is the will of God.*"

Dolts and hypocrites! Blasphemers and impious Pharisees, who speak in the same breath of the endless merciful love and care of their God and creator for helpless man, and of that God *scourging the good, the very best of his creatures, bleeding them to death like an insatiable Moloch!* Shall we be answered to this, in Congreve's words:—

"But who shall dare to tax Eternal Justice?" *Logic and simple common sense*, we answer: if we are made to believe in the "original Sin," in *one* life, on this Earth only, for every Soul, and in an anthropomorphic Deity, who seems to have created some men only for the pleasure of condemning them to eternal hell-fire (and this whether they are good or bad, says the Predestinarian), why should not every man endowed with reasoning powers condemn in his turn such a villainous Deity? Life would become unbearable, if one had to believe in the God created by man's unclean fancy. Luckily he exists only in human dogmas, and in the unhealthy imagination of some poets, who believe they have solved the problem by addressing him as—

"Thou great Mysterious Power, who hast *involved*  
The pride of human wisdom, to *confound*  
The *daring scrutiny* and prove the *faith*  
Of thy *presuming* creatures! . . . "

Truly a robust "faith" is required to believe that it is "presumption" to question the justice of one, who creates helpless little man but to "perplex" him, and to test a "faith" with which that "Power," moreover, may have forgotten, if not neglected, to endow him, as happens sometimes.

Compare this blind faith with the philosophical belief, based on every reasonable evidence and life-experience, in Karma-Nemesis, or the Law of Retribution. . . .

Intimately, or rather indissolubly, connected with Karma, then, is the law of re-birth, or of the re-incarnation of the same spiritual individuality in a long, almost interminable, series of personalities.

—*The Secret Doctrine* II. 302-306.

If we had to judge of the Deity, and the world of spirits, by its human interpreters, now that philology proceeds with giant-strides on the fields of comparative religions, belief in God and the soul's immortality could not withstand the attacks of *reason* for one century more. That which supports the faith of man in God and a spiritual life to come is *intuition*; that divine outcome of our inner-self, which defies the mummeries of the Roman Catholic priest, and his ridiculous idols; the thousand and one ceremonies of the Brahman and his idols; and the Jeremiads of the Protestant preacher, and his desolate and arid creed, with no idols, but a boundless hell and damnation hooked on at the end. Were it not for this intuition, undying though often wavering because so clogged with matter, human life would be a parody and humanity a fraud. This ineradicable feeling of the presence of some one *outside* and *inside* ourselves is one that no dogmatic contradictions, nor external form of worship can destroy in humanity, let scientists and clergy do what they may.

—*Isis Unveiled* I. 435.



When, years ago, we first travelled over the East, exploring the penetralia of its deserted sanctuaries, two saddening and ever-recurring questions oppressed our thoughts: *Where, WHO, WHAT is GOD? Who ever saw the IMMORTAL SPIRIT of man, so as to be able to assure himself of man's immortality?*

It was while most anxious to solve these perplexing problems that we came into contact with certain men, endowed with such mysterious powers and such profound knowledge that we may truly designate them as the sages of the Orient. To their instructions we lent a ready ear. They showed us that by combining science with religion, the existence of God and immortality of man's spirit may be demonstrated like a problem of Euclid. For the first time we received the assurance that the Oriental philosophy has room for no other faith than an absolute and immovable faith in the omnipotence of man's own immortal self. We were taught that this omnipotence comes from the kinship of man's spirit with the Universal Soul—God! The latter, they said, can never be demonstrated but by the former. Man-spirit proves God-spirit, as the one drop of water proves a source from which it must have come. Tell one who had never seen water, that there is an ocean of water, and he must accept it on faith or reject it altogether. But let one drop fall upon his hand, and he then has the fact from which all the rest may be inferred. After that he could by degrees understand that a boundless and fathomless ocean of water existed. Blind faith would no longer be necessary; he would have supplanted it with KNOWLEDGE. When one sees mortal man displaying tremendous capabilities, controlling the forces of nature and opening up to view the world of spirit, the reflective mind is overwhelmed with the conviction that if one man's spiritual *Ego* can do this much, the capabilities of the FATHER SPIRIT must be relatively as much vaster as the whole ocean surpasses the single drop in volume and potency. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; prove the soul of man by its wondrous powers—you have proved God!

In our studies, mysteries were shown to be no mysteries. Names and places that to the Western mind have only a significance derived from Eastern fable, were shown to be realities. Reverently we stepped in spirit within the temple of Isis; to lift aside the veil of "the one that is and was and shall be" at Saïs; to look through the rent curtain of the Sanctum Sanctorum at Jerusalem; and even to interrogate within the crypts which once existed beneath the sacred edifice, the mysterious Bath-Kol. The *Filia Vocis*—the daughter of the divine voice—responded from the mercy-seat within the veil, and science, theology, every human hypothesis and conception born of imperfect knowledge, lost forever their authoritative character in our sight. The one-living God had spoken through his oracle—man, and we were satisfied. Such knowledge is priceless; and it has been hidden only from those who overlooked it, derided it, or denied its existence.

—*Isis Unveiled*. I. vi-vii.

We Theosophists, therefore, distinguish between this bundle of "experiences," which we call the *false* (because so finite and evanescent) *personality*, and that element in man to which the feeling of "I am I" is due. It is this "I am I" which we call the *true* individuality; and we say that this "Ego" or individuality plays, like an actor, many parts on the stage of life. Let us call every new life on earth of the same *Ego* a *night* on the stage of a theatre. One night the actor, or "Ego," appears as "Macbeth," the next as "Shylock," the third as "Romeo," the fourth as "Hamlet" or "King Lear," and so on, until he has run through the whole cycle of incarnations. The Ego begins his life-pilgrimage as a sprite, an "Ariel," or a "Puck"; he plays the part of a *super*, is a soldier, a servant, one of the chorus; rises then to "speaking parts," plays leading rôles, interspersed with insignificant parts, till he finally retires from the stage as "Prospero," the *magician*.

—*The Key to Theosophy* (Indian Ed., pp. 28-29; American Ed., p. 34)



## TWO CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

### WITHOUT OR WITHIN?

[Edmond Holmes concludes his scholarly survey by presenting the ancient Upanishadic view of Deity—the only logical as well as inspiring concept of God.—EDS.]

We have already seen the unsatisfactory conception of God given by Aristotle. It cannot satisfy either the heart or the head.

It cannot satisfy the heart.

It presents God as the recipient of love and desire from all quarters of the universe and from all the levels of being, and yet as one who, far from returning the love that He receives, is entirely absorbed in self-contemplation. It presents Him, in other words, as the very apotheosis of egoism. The heart, which turns towards God with love and desire, instinctively rejects the theology which presents Him, not as the supreme lover but as the supreme egoist,

As alien, passionless, alone,  
Blind to all being but His own.

One of the penalties that man has to pay for looking for God outside himself, is that the whole range of his normal experience interposes itself between him and God, and therefore drives God (so to speak) into an exile from which there is no return.

It cannot satisfy the head.

Its premises are necessarily unsound. It is based on incorrect and inadequate knowledge of the physical world. If you look for ultimate reality in the outward and visible world, you can never,

in your quest of it, get beyond the high-water mark of the physical science of your day; and each fresh advance of science is liable to sweep away the metaphysical sand-castles that you have built. If Aristotle had known as much about "the universe around us" as we know to-day, his metaphysics in general, and his theology in particular, would have been widely different from what they were.

Its method is unsound. Deductive reasoning from arbitrary, not to say fantastic, assumptions is not the way to interpret the universe. When Aristotle passed beyond the range of his own observation of nature, and of the experiences which he collected and collated, he was apt to theorize recklessly and to draw conclusions from his theories for which there was no foundation in fact.

Its philosophy is unsound. Even when examined in the light of its own first principles it is found wanting. God is wholly immaterial. If He were not, He would not be eternal. So Aristotle tells us. But where is pure immateriality to be found? Not in the world of matter and form. Where, then, but in a world of its



own, a world of pure immateriality, a world of *pure form*.<sup>\*</sup> We have seen that for Aristotle there are three orders of being which are wholly immaterial—God, the “intelligences,” and the “active reason” which is somehow or other added to the body and soul of man. These belong to the world of pure form. But is there such a world? Surely not. On Aristotle’s own showing, matter and form are correlative terms. It follows that form which is wholly divorced from matter is as unreal as matter which is wholly divorced from form. Aristotle expressly denies the existence of pure or “prime” matter. The four “elements” are ultimates beyond which the analysis of matter cannot be carried. What right, then, has he to postulate the existence of pure form? To pass from the *antithesis*, the *correlated opposition*, of matter and form to the *dualism* of the world of matter-and-form and a world of pure form is an illogical procedure which involves a complete dislocation of thought. Like all other correlated opposites matter and form vary together in inverse proportion. The purer the form the less material is the matter; but it is by perpetual self-transcendence, not by abrupt abstraction from matter, that form rises towards the level of its own ideal purity; and if it could attain to that level, if it could finally dissociate itself from matter, it would be form no longer. The cancellation of either term in a true

antithesis involves the disappearance of the other. The world of form and matter would have been transcended. *Pure formlessness* would have taken the place of pure form. A world of pure form is as unreal as a mirage or a dream.

As unreal; and as *unsubstantial*. Is Aristotle justified in thinking of pure form as *substance*? No; he is precluded from doing so by his own definition of “substance”. For what is substance? “That which is not asserted of a subject, but of which everything else is asserted.” Now form, whether as “sensible appearance” or as “intelligible structure” is always used predicatively. There must be *something* which appears to our senses; *something* the structure of which we can understand. That something may fitly be spoken of as substance. To speak of either the appearance or the structure as substance is a misuse of language. “Form,” says Dr. Ross when expounding Aristotle’s analysis of becoming, “indicates a such, never a this; a characteristic, never the concrete thing that bears it.” How, then, can form be identified with substance? “The substance is the whole thing, including the qualities, relations, etc. which form its essence.” The “whole thing” is, surely a “this”. The “qualities relations, etc.” constitutes its “such”. It is true that Aristotle “sometimes thinks of substance, not as the concrete individual thing but as the essential nature”

<sup>\*</sup>There is, as we shall presently see, another answer to this question; but it is not one which Aristotle ever thought of giving.



and that "this double meaning pervades his whole treatment of substance". But this is confused thinking. The two meanings are incompatible with one another; and of the two it is the former which conforms to Aristotle's definition of substance and also to reason and common sense. Pure form, then, is not the same as pure substance. If God is pure form we must not think of Him as substance. But if God is not substantially real, what is He?

If God transcends the world of matter and form He must do so as *pure formlessness*, not as pure form. But where is pure formlessness to be found? Where, but in one's own *self*. Pure form cannot be abstracted from the world of matter and form; and the world of matter and form is not the whole of reality. The antithesis of matter and form covers the outward and visible world only. It does not cover the inner world, the formless world, the world of self or spirit. *The supreme antithesis is that of matter and spirit, not of matter and form.* Through the antithesis of matter and spirit, the two worlds, the outer and the inner, come together and become one.

I have said that pure formlessness is to be found in one's own self. Is it not so? Face your own self steadily, and contemplate it for as long as you, who are it, can bear your own gaze. What do you see? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Not even the ghost of anything. Not even a blank or a void. And what do you *feel* about this no-

thing, this formless object of your contemplation? That it is *real* in the fullest sense of the word, real in a sense which is all its own, real in that it shines by its own light (so to speak) and throws that light on all the other objects of your perception and your thought. The formlessness of what is Real, the Reality of what is formless, is no mere inference from plausible premises. Experience, as unique as it is convincing, bears it out. Form, however near may be its approach to purity, implies limitation—in and through the ensoulment of matter, which is of its essence—and therefore falls short of intrinsic reality. It is not in pure form, but in pure formlessness that there is a final escape from limitation and therefore at last an opening into the world which is real in its own right. And pure formlessness is the differential attribute of the spirit of man. The self which self-consciousness reveals is *seen* to be purely formless and is *felt* to be truly real.

This conclusion opens up a vista to speculative thought, which the Rishis, the sages of Ancient India, to whom we owe the Upanishads, were the first to explore. *The Rishis were not "intellectuals". They were seers, mystics, poets.* They did not reason about God. They had a different way of approach to Him. If you seek for God outside yourself, in the world of matter and form, you must reason about Him. And as verification of your conclusions, of the kind that intellect demands, is obviously impossible, your reason-



ing must depend for its conclusiveness on its logical correctness; in a word, it must be *deductive*. But if deductive reasoning is to be effective you must be quite sure of your premises. In other words, if you are to discover God by deductive reasoning you must deduce Him, as it were, from your own assumptions, which you regard as self-evident truths. The futility of such a procedure does not need to be exposed. If the Rishis did not formally reject it as futile, the reason was that they never thought of it as a possibility. The idea of finding God (as Aristotle did) as the conclusion to an elaborate chain of deductive reasoning, was foreign to their whole outlook on life. In the seclusion of their forests they had mastered, by assiduous practice, an art which is far more difficult than that of the syllogistic logician, the art of meditation, the art of self-exploration, of communing with the mysteries of one's own inner life, of living into one's own depths.

It was there, in their own depths, in the formless immensities of self, that they found the Reality which men call God.

What that subtle being is, of which the whole universe is composed, that is the real, that is the soul, that art thou O Svetaketa!

The light which shines there beyond the heaven, behind all, behind each, in the highest worlds, the highest of all, that is assuredly this light which is here within men.

These are two of many passages in which the sages of the Upanishads express their conviction that the highest reality is within

us, not without. What they say is, in effect, that the real self of the universe is the real (or ideal) self of man; that Brahman and the Atman are one.

But the range of the real self, as this philosophy conceives of it, immeasurably transcends the normal man's normal experience of self. For self is not an "individual concrete thing," but a world, the world of the inner life, the world of formless reality, the world of *spirit*.

John Stuart Mill once said that Bishop Berkeley made "three first rate metaphysical discoveries". The phrase "metaphysical discoveries" has always seemed to me to involve a grotesque misconception of the real meaning and purpose of metaphysics, or at least of philosophy. But if there has ever been such a thing as a "first rate metaphysical discovery," I think we may credit the sages of the Upanishads with having made it when they transformed the quest of ultimate reality from the outer world to the inner life. Not that, in doing so, they wronged or undervalued the outer world. They took nothing away from it. They left it as real as they found it. Deussen, who has nothing but praise for the central conception of the Upanishads, but holds that because they deified the inner life, they regarded the outer world as "pure illusion," has fallen a victim to the current dualistic confusion between the unreal and the non-existent. In the philosophy of the Upanishads the outer world is a real world, but it is not real in its



own right. It owes its reality to spirit, which, formless itself, clothes itself in ever changing form, and which reveals itself to itself, however faintly and fitfully, in the self-conscious spirit of man. Under the guarantee of the percipient self, the material world has its own kind and its own degrees of reality. What is illusory in it is the air of intrinsic reality which it wears and by which we are so readily imposed upon.

This conception of reality has been borne out by the experiences of the great mystics in all ages and of all creeds. These, however much they differ from one another in their professed beliefs, are all agreed, when they find words for their innermost convictions, in holding—often in defiance of the creeds to which they are consciously loyal—that God is the real, and therefore the unattainably ideal, self of man. Among the many utterances in which the faith of their hearts has found tentative expression, there is one which seems to me to go to the very root of the whole matter. "My Me," says St. Catherine of Genoa, "is God, not by mere participation, but by a true transformation of my being." In this brief sentence there is implicit a philosophy, a theology, a vision of an ideal, and a scheme of life.

I have said that the supreme antithesis is that of matter and *spirit*, not of matter and *form*. Spirit and matter—what is ultimate in synthesis and what is ultimate in analysis—are the posi-

tive and the negative poles of existence. Each implies the other. Each exists in and through its contrast with the other. They are correlatives, not alternatives. Wherever there is spirit there is matter. Wherever there is matter there is spirit. Pure spirit has pure matter as its anti-pole. But what is pure spirit, and what is pure matter? The great physicists have not yet arrived at what is ultimate in matter, but they seem to be resolving it, at any rate from one point of view, into radiation, into light. The great mystics, in their seasons of divinest inspiration, have resolved spirit into *love*. Can it be that what light is to the outer reality of the universe, love is to the inner reality? And can it be that love for ever generates light and for ever draws it back to itself? The spatial universe is said to bend back upon itself at long last. May it not be the same with the universe in its totality, the universe as such?

These are questions which flash upon the mind and are content to remain unanswered. There is, however, a point of view from which it is possible to make out a stronger, or at least a more prosaic, case for the ideal coalescence of the two poles of existence. Let us go back to the antithesis of spirit and matter. This antithesis transcends that of form and matter *at both ends*. We have seen that form cannot be thought of as *substance* except through a misinterpretation of the idea and a misuse of the word. Spirit, on



the other hand, through its transcendence of form and its consequent release from limitation, is substantial, in the full and final sense of the word, is in fact the one substance which underlies all appearances on all the levels of being. Matter, as the antithesis of form, does not admit of being analyzed beyond a certain point. There are always *ultimates* in it,—the four elements for Aristotle, atoms for the Epicureans, fiery ether for the Stoics. If there were not such ultimates in matter, it could not be correlated with form. But there is no ultimate element, either as demanded by logic or as yet known to science, in matter as the antithesis of spirit. It is impossible to think of any, even the most tenuous and luminous, even the most purely potential, kind of matter which could not be correlated with spirit; or, in other words, which spirit could not use for purposes of its own. That being so, it is at least permissible to entertain the idea of a circle of being,\* in which matter is ever emanating from spirit and returning, through aeons of evolution, to the source whence it came.

In any case, the Indian idea of a God who is the real self of man—immanent, as the life of man's life; transcendent, as his unattainable ideal—is more satisfactory, to say the least, than Aristotle's idea of a God who is separated from us by the whole world of matter and form, and who dwells beyond that world, indifferent to the cosmic life of which He is the mainspring, indifferent to us and our doings, indifferent to our love and desire, absorbed for all eternity in contemplation of Himself.

"Canst thou by searching find out God?" The answer to this question depends on where and how we search. If we search for God outside ourselves, in the world of matter and form, or in some imaginary world or worlds beyond its horizon, we shall never find Him. If we search for Him in ourselves, in the formless and limitless world of self or spirit, we shall find that "we are that which we seek," and that to become what we are is the whole business of life. "My Me is God, not by mere participation but by a true transformation of my being."

EDMOND HOLMES

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\*If there is such a thing as a circle of being, the antithesis of matter and spirit may be said to cover the whole of it; the antithesis of matter and form, no more than an arc of the circle. The "extremes" of matter and form do *not* "meet".



## THE GREEK SKEPTICS

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This article refers to the eastern and especially the Indian influence brought to bear on Greek thought by scholars who had returned with the army of Alexander the Great. Our learned author has not mentioned, however, the influence exerted in the same era by Buddhist missionaries who had travelled westward as far as the shores of the Dead Sea.

The Greek Skeptics were the western heirs of the Indian Charvakas about whom we append a Note from our learned friend "Asiatic".—EDS.]

Greek skepticism has much in common with modern trends of thought.

The Greeks as a nation were much given to discussion. One reason for this was that their religion encouraged freedom of thought more than was the case in other ancient nations. There were no dogmas to confuse the mind and there was no hierarchy, and as long as those who questioned all things, joined occasionally in the public sacrifices to the Gods all was well. There were even temples erected to the Muses which were devoted to discussion. We find therefore a strong tendency to doubt in the earliest period of Greek Philosophy. This habit increased in the time of the Sophists in the latter part of the fifth century B. C. and was emphasized by Socrates himself, the greatest of all Sophists.

Doubt did not however form the platform of a distinct school until the time of Pyrrho of Elis in the fourth century B. C. but subsequently developed in two lines, Pyrrhonism and Academic Skepticism. The latter form had its birth in Plato's Academy in

the third century B. C. The first of these movements may be characterized as Empirical and the second as Speculative Skepticism.

Systematized methods of doubt thus developed strong philosophical tendencies among the ancient Greeks, based on the difficulty of obtaining knowledge of reality, or the nature of things. Greek Skepticism was not denial of any philosophical theory or religious creed, but expressed the spirit of questioning that precedes and inspires all search for knowledge. Definite denial even of the possibility of finding final truth was not included in the skeptical platform, but a spirit of progress was advocated—in the search for ultimate reality. The relative character of the ideas which are accepted as the measure of knowledge was recognized, and in fact relativity of knowledge itself, as thus far found, was accepted.

Pyrrho—the founder of Greek Skepticism was one of the remarkable characters of history. The circumstances of his life greatly promoted his unusual development, for he enjoyed a background of the most extraordinary



period of human endeavour. When Pyrrho first opened his eyes on the Greek world, only a quarter of a century had elapsed since Plato had founded his Academy in a beautiful garden six stadia from Athens, in the romantic spot which still bears his name—a place easy of access from Plato's time, even to the present. Other schools of philosophy were coming into existence. Aristotle opened the Lyceum, when Pyrrho was about thirty years of age, and somewhat later Zeno founded the school of the Stoics in the Painted Porch. It was in those days that Epicurus bought his garden and established his school outside the walls of Athens on the way from the city to the Academy.

Pyrrho, however, did not begin life as a philosopher—far from it. As a young man he was a painter, for it was a period of great bloom in painting as well as in philosophy. In the city of Sicyon, not very far from Elis, there was a school of painting carried on by noted artists, where Pyrrho probably studied, and we are told by a visitor to Elis in the second century A. D. that one of his paintings hung for many years in the gymnasium of his native town.

It was during the lifetime of Pyrrho that the entire Greek world was overturned, and even the thinking of the people changed by Alexander the Great. That remarkable man had a strong influence on Pyrrho himself for, in the army of Alexander, Pyrrho had a friend named Anaxarchus, a man of great popularity and

appealing personality. At his suggestion, probably, Pyrrho was invited to join the band of distinguished men found in the court of Alexander. He sailed away from the Piraeus therefore to join the conqueror on his journey to the East. Far out at sea, glimpses of the new erections of Phidias on the acropolis at Athens must have seemed like a message of farewell, and on his return, the first view of this wonderful vision was his welcome home. In the entourage of Alexander, Pyrrho the young painter, met some of the learned men of his time, and enjoyed as well the use of the library which was always provided for the court.

During the two years that elapsed before the conqueror returned from the far East, Pyrrho changed his life interest from painting to philosophy. Anaxarchus, his close friend, had studied with a follower of Democritus—perhaps the greatest of Greek philosophers—and from him had gained the basic principle of Greek Skepticism, namely, that proof of the nature of reality is not found either through sense perception or through reasoning.

In studying the development of Pyrrho's philosophy the problem also arises of the effect of Indian learning on his theories, for in Pyrrho's teachings we find the earliest well attested instance of Indian influence on Greek philosophy. We are told that in Persia and India Pyrrho associated with Gymnosophists and Magi. It is true that there was much in the



dialectic of early Buddhism to lead to skeptical discussion, for the agnosticism of Buddhism is very strong, yet the agnosticism taught in Buddhism was more positive in character than in the foundation of Pyrrhonism. The latter form was far more closely allied to the teachings of Democritus, than to those of Buddha—however, there was a whole field of Buddhistic teaching that had a strong influence in shaping the philosophy of Pyrrho. For instance Pyrrho taught that happiness is found through emancipation of thought. Unlike the Greeks in general he was indifferent to discussion as well as to earthly goods. Pyrrho taught that truth is silent, and that neither affirmation nor denial leads to certainty. While we cannot therefore deny that the thinking of the far East affected the general character of Pyrrhonism, yet attitudes of mind peculiar to the East were not the chief result of Pyrrho's sojourn in the Court of Alexander: The close companionship of Anaxarchus fixed the fundamental truth of Pyrrhonism in the mind of Pyrrho—namely that absolute knowledge has not yet been found.

The result was the beginning of a tendency in philosophical thinking of startling originality—

In order to be happy one should consider three things—

I. What is the origin of things?

II. What should be our attitude toward things?

III. What would be the result of this attitude?

The reason itself is thus challenged to deal with the problem. The investigation demanded of the Pyrrhonist included research in all lines of thinking—and in later times under new and strange conditions in Athens, Alexandria, Rome and other places their investigation extended to many fields of knowledge including Mathematics, Physics, Medical and Moral Science.

We are not sure that Pyrrho established a separate school, yet the movement started by him was so strong that it never really died out: more than a century later it revived in Alexandria, Athens, Rome, and other parts of the East. This particular form of skeptical teaching was always called Pyrrhonism, and bore the name of its founder till its final downfall in the beginning of the third century A. D. The influence of Pyrrhonism was definitely scientific, for the open-mindedness that was its aim prepared the way for scientific research.

While Pyrrhonism was in abeyance the Academy, the leading school of Philosophy in the history of the world, announced a skeptical platform. This was in the third century B. C., under Arcesilaus, the fifth president after Plato. Although the trend of the skeptical teaching of the Academy was speculative rather than empirical yet in other respects the skepticism of Arcesilaus and his followers was practically identical with that taught by Pyrrho, although the method of approach was different. Academic Skepticism like Pyrrho-



nism maintained that a criterion of truth is impossible but advocated continued search for knowledge. In practical life Arcesilaus recommended seeking "the perfect action," or that which appeals to the reason, as a guiding principle of life.

The second important skeptical leader of the Academy was Carneades, of the second century B. C. He was the greatest orator in the history of the Academy and was appointed leader of the distinguished embassy sent from Athens to Rome on the well-known political mission in 156 B. C. His oration in the Roman Forum had a world-wide significance and the visit of this leading Greek philosopher was the beginning of the interest of the Romans in philosophy. The Greeks, then under the Roman Empire, were suffering from a sense of injustice in regard to a certain Roman mandate. Carneades in his lecture in the Forum at which all the leading Romans of his time were present, Cato the elder at their head, spoke so eloquently on the general theme of justice, that he was urged to speak again the following day. This he did, this time on the theme of abstract justice. He is reported to have said: "If you Romans were just, you would restore to others all that you have taken from them and would yourselves return to your huts."

Carneades, like Arcesilaus, denied that a criterion of truth could be formed, but in practical affairs, he proposed, as the law of life, the

three degrees of probability upon which research in many lines has since been based. He was not definitely interested in science, but the last statement attributed to him before he died has a scientific significance. He said: "Nature which put me together can take me apart again."

Skepticism in the Academy gradually lost its power in the first century B.C. about the time that Pyrrhonism again came into prominence. There was a man in Alexandria named Aenesidemus, in the first century B. C., who formed the bridge between the old and the new Pyrrhonism. He was originally an Academic Skeptic, but when the Academy renounced its skeptical standpoint he turned to Pyrrhonism, then becoming very strong especially in Alexandria. He may be called the prophet of later skepticism, and we find the sources of his authority in the teachings of the Academy, in early Pyrrhonism, and in the Empiric School of Medicine, which had its seat in Alexandria. It is to Aenesidemus that we owe much of our knowledge of skepticism for he was a voluminous writer. He formulated the "Ten Tropes of (Epoche) or suspension of judgment," some of which date back to Pyrrho himself. His greatest work however was "The Eight Arguments against Causality" which have quite a modern ring. He taught that while there is a logical connection between cause and effect in nature as we know it, the idea of causality is after all only a



psychical conception, for science reveals no final truth and no cause in itself.

The leading characteristic of later Pyrrhonism was its connection with medicine and early in our era its influence was far extended, as it was represented in Alexandria, Athens, Rome, Rhodes and other places.

The next to the last leader of this school is perhaps better known to posterity than were the others of the latter part of the second century B. C. His name was Sextus Empiricus, and he lectured on skepticism in many leading centres and wrote voluminous works on the subject. We owe to him much of our knowledge of the history of the Skeptical Movement. His books have not been

without influence on posterity for although he wrote in Greek, his writings were translated into Latin at some period of the Middle Ages, and are found in both Greek and Latin in all European collections of books. He had a strong influence on the awakening in philosophy which took place during the Italian and French Renaissance, and Montaigne in the sixteenth century A. D. inscribed numerous quotations from Sextus Empiricus on the walls of his wonderful study in the tower in his home.

There was but one president of the Pyrrhonic school after Sextus Empiricus, for the skeptical movement was soon after submerged in the rapid rise of positive systems of thinking.

MARY MILLS PATRICK

## CHARVAKAS

### A NOTE ON THE ABOVE

The Skeptics are the Lokayatas of Greece. These latter are better known as the Charvakas. Charvaka was a Rakshasha—an Atlantean. His school began with logic, arguing for the sake of clearing minds so that true perceptions might be obtained; it ended by becoming an institute of Nastikas—Nihilists, Negators of everything. Its members preached a far-reaching Materialism, compared to which your modern genus is weak. They were more

thorough-going in their practice of their doctrines.

Philosophical Nihilism is the shadow of Theo-Sophia, Divine Wisdom. The well known six schools posit the Reality behind illusion of Spirit-Matter. There is the seventh, not so well-known, to which Esotericists or Occultists belong (the true Gultas) who *know* the Principle of Reality. Those who fall away from this Inner School naturally argue non-existence as Reality. Such are the



thorough-going Charvakas who ultimately become the media of the dark side of Nature.

There is however one good aspect in the work of the Charvakas or Skeptics. Just as one learning the art of White Magic also familiarizes himself with the dangers and perfidy of Black Magic, so also he who is learning metaphysical and philosophical principles, looking at the Real from one point of view and then another, is taught to adopt the Nāstika view merely as an argument so that its strength may be discerned.

Ancient Indians were most tolerant about *mental* viewpoints; they allowed freedom of thought, but there they stopped. They took care to proscribe practices or

exercises other than those which were definitely prescribed as rules of conduct, rituals of caste, and ceremonies of religion. A man might think as he pleased and speculate for improving and sharpening his mind; but not act as he pleased. Thus a balance was maintained.

But as thought affects conduct, especially when those thoughts become words, uttered and heard, often men became practitioners of materialism while they were learning about the power which Maya exerts over senses and mind. And as this phenomenon is universal, Skeptics were born in Greece as Lokayatas or Charvakas were born in India, and prior in Atlantis.

ASIATIC

From the remotest antiquity *mankind* as a whole *have always been convinced of the existence of a personal spiritual entity within the personal physical man*. This inner entity was more or less divine, according to its proximity to the crown—Chrestos. The closer the union the more serene man's destiny, the less dangerous the external conditions. This belief is neither bigotry nor superstition, only an ever-present, instinctive feeling of the proximity of another spiritual and invisible world, which, though it be subjective to the senses of the outward man, is perfectly objective to the inner ego. Furthermore, they believed that *there are external and internal conditions which affect the determination of our will upon our actions*.—H. P. BLAVATSKY (*Isis Unveiled*. II. 593.)



## ABŪ SA'ID B. ABĪ AL-KHAYR

### THE ORNAMENT OF THE MYSTIC PATH

[Dr. Margaret Smith is already known to our readers, as indeed to all those who are interested in Sufi lore. Two further studies, to appear in subsequent numbers, will complete a fine series, the previous instalments of which were published in our issues of December 1930—"Al-Hujwiri," and April 1931—"Al-Hallaj".

Students of Theosophy will recognize several of their own teachings given by this Sufi-Sannyasi. No mystic worthy of the name ever taught the doctrine of grace and forgiveness of sins, and so Abū Sa'id emphasizes that "man is responsible for his sins of both omission and commission"; atonement for such sins lies "in humility, repentance and a true desire to amend".—EDS.]

Abū Sa'id Faḍlallah b. Abī al-Khayr was born at Mayhana in Khurāsān in A.D. 967. His father was a druggist, an upright and pious man, well versed in the sacred law of Islam and acquainted with the Path of the Ṣūfīs. He was accustomed to meet together with the Ṣūfīs, and so from his youth up Abū Sa'id was in close touch with Ṣūfism and its votaries.

Abū Sa'id was given a good education, which included the study of the Qur'ān, the Arabic language, and Islamic poetry, under the best teachers available; he went to Abū al-Qāsim Bishr-i Yāsīn to study theology and from him received teaching in the mystical doctrines of the Ṣūfīs. Abū al-Qāsim encouraged him to seek constant communion with God and bade him whenever he found himself alone to repeat these lines:

Without Thee, I can find no rest,  
Thy favours to me, I cannot count  
Though every hair upon me were a tongue,  
Yet could I utter not a thousandth part  
Of all the thanksgiving I owe to Thee \*

So, as Abū Sa'id said of himself at a later period, the Way was opened to him in childhood.

He went to Merv and was there for ten years, studying theology under al-Ḥuṣṛi and al-Qaffāl and from there went to Sarakhs, where he continued to study Qur'ānic theology and the Traditions. Here he entered a convent of the Ṣūfīs and placed himself under the spiritual direction of Abū al-Faḍl Ḥasan, and there it was that he was converted and realised that the knowledge of God, the true gnosis, came, not through the intellectual studies on which he had spent so many years of his life, but by the direct revelation of God to the heart. Abū al-Faḍl bade him return to Mayhana and he went back and spent seven years there, according to his biographer, in solitude and meditation. He visited Sarakhs again and was sent by Abū al-Faḍl to receive the patched garment (khirqa), which was the sign of the adept Ṣūfī, from 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣulamī.†

\* *Asrār al-Tawḥīd*, p. 16.

† Author of the *Ṭabaqāt al-Sufiyya*, a biography of the early Sūfī leaders.



On his return Abū Fadl informed him that his state was now completed, he had attained to saintship and he ought to return to Mayhana and call the people there to God. He is said to have spent another period of years in the deserts and mountains of Mayhana, until by much purification and the practice of great austerities, he reached spiritual perfection. He learned in his retirement, that self must be completely abandoned if the soul is to live its life in God. He says:—

If "thou" dost exist, and "He" exists, then two exist and that is polytheism. It is necessary to put away self altogether. I had a cell, and sitting therein, I became desirous of "fanā" (passing away from self). A light shone upon me, which completely annihilated the darkness of my being. God Most Glorious revealed to me that I was neither this nor that; that was His favour to us, and this was His grace to us, and I said:

"All Thy Beauty I behold,  
when mine eyes are opened wide,  
All my body becomes soul,  
when my secret I impart,  
'Tis unlawful, to my mind,  
when with others I converse,  
But when with Thee I talk,  
then my converse knows no end."

God said to me then, "All these tests, which I put in thy way, whether they be good, are sent as a test, or whether they be evil, are sent as a test. Do not allow thyself to be brought down to the level of good or evil." And after that it happened again that my self passed away and His grace became all in all.\*

Abū Sa'id had passed beyond the Purgative Way, and now entered upon the Illuminative Life, in which self had ceased to exist

for him, and his will was one with the Eternal Will. In one of his quatrains he writes of this state:

My heart never treads any path;  
save the path of Thy love alone,  
And for nothing else does it seek;  
save to suffer for Thee alone,  
Thy love has transformed my heart;  
and has made it a barren waste,  
So that no love shall flourish there;  
save the love of Thyself alone.

It was about 1009 A. D. that he entered upon this phase of his life and began to develop his theosophic doctrine. Leaving Mayhana he went on a journey to Tūs, Nishāpūr and Kharāqān, and everywhere preached to large numbers, making many converts. At Nishāpūr he received a warm welcome from the Sūfis there and with his disciples was lodged in the monastery of Abū 'Alī Ṭarāsūsī, which remained his home, while he stayed in Nishāpūr. During his stay he seems to have met Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī.†

The last years of Abū Sa'id's life were spent in retirement in his native town of Mayhana, where he died, at the age of eighty-two, in 1049 A.D. He wrote his own epitaph in Arabic, which was placed on the tomb in the mosque, near his house, in which he was buried. It ran thus:

I ask thee, nay adjure thee, when I die,  
that thou shouldst write  
These words upon my tombstone;  
that this man was Love's bondsman.  
It may be that some one  
who knows the laws of love aright,  
Will greeting give, what time  
he passes, by a stranger's grave.‡

A modern writer§ has noted

\* *Asrār al-Tawhīd*, p. 37.

† Author of the "Risāla fī al-'ilm al-taṣawwuf" (=Treatise on the Sūfī doctrine).

‡ *Asrār al-Tawhīd*, p. 445.

§ Prof. E. G. Browne.



that Abū Sa'id's life was in the main uneventful, because his experiences lay rather in the "World of Souls" than in the "World of Horizons"; yet he was of pre-eminent importance in the history of Persian mysticism, because in his writings and especially in his poetry, we find all the characteristics of Persian mystical thought and its expression brought together in a form which has become a type for succeeding Sūfī poets, not only of Persia, but of India and Turkey.

The chief source for the life and teachings of Abū Sa'id is the "Asrār al-Tawhīd fī maqāmāt al-Shaykh Abī Sa'id" (The Secrets of the Unity according to the teaching of Shaykh Abū Sa'id), compiled by Muḥammad b. al-Munawwar, great-great-grandson of Abū Sa'id, and based on an earlier biography. We have also collections of the mystical quatrains of Abū Sa'id, though not all which bear his name can be assigned to him with certainty. He was greatly revered by his contemporaries for the sanctity of his life as well as for his inspiring teaching. al-Hujwīrī says of him that he was the "Sultan of his age," and the "Adornment of the Sūfī Path," and that his contemporaries accepted his authority, some by means of their reason, some by faith, and some through the strength of their spiritual feeling. Men realised the depth of the saint's own religious experience, and his power of reading their own thoughts, and Jāmi calls him the "Examiner of

hearts". 'Aṭṭār describes him as one completely passed away from self, and abiding in God, the beloved of God, a lover consumed with his longing for the Divine, so that nothing remained of Abū Sa'id himself, he was one with the God he loved.

To Abū Sa'id, as to all the mystics, God was One, and he gave much of his time to teaching the unity of all existence. God was the sole source of Being and the One Real Being "in whom is submerged whatever becomes non-apparent, and by whose light whatever is apparent is made manifest". The self and the creatures had no existence apart from God, and to regard them as existent in themselves was to his mind polytheism or rather dualism. He says, speaking to the would-be saint,

All the members of thy body are filled with doubt and polytheism. Thou must cast out this polytheism from thy heart, so that thou mayst have peace—thou canst not believe in God until thou dost deny thyself, that self which keeps thee far from God Most High, and which says, "So and So has done thee an injury and such a one has treated thee well." All this leads to dependence on creatures and all this is polytheism. The creatures are nothing, the Friend is everything. When thou hast said, "One" thou must not again say "Two," and the creature and the Creator are two. The right faith is to say "God," and therein to stand fast. And to stand fast means that when thou hast said "God" thou shouldst no more speak of the creatures nor think upon them in thine heart, so that it is as if the creatures were not. Whatever thou dost see or say, see and say from what is existent, which will never cease to be. Love that One, who, when thou shalt



cease to be, will not Himself cease to be, that thou, too, mayst become one who will never cease to be.\*

Again he says that whatever does not belong to God is nothing, and whoever does not belong to Him is no-one. God is Almighty and All-Good, and He is also the All-Beautiful, being indeed the One Beauty, as He is also the Friend and the Beloved. It is on this conception of God as Beauty and the Beloved that Abū Sa'id, as a poet, loves to dwell, and it appears again and again in his mystical verses. So he writes:—

Said I, "To whom belongs Thy Beauty?" He  
Replied, "Since I alone exist, to Me!  
Lover, Beloved and Love am I in one  
Beauty and Mirror and the Eyes which see."

And again,

That Moon in Beauty rich, and Constancy,  
Beauty's high Zenith, is His least Degree;  
Gaze on His Sun-bright Face, or canst thou not,  
On those dark curls which bear it company.†

Abū Sa'id was one of the first among the Persians to make full use of the mystically symbolic language by which the Ṣūfīs expressed themselves in verse and prose, and in which they veiled their esoteric teaching from those who were unfitted to receive it. To Abū Sa'id, "Wine" and "Intoxication" represent the ecstasy produced by meditation upon God. When God reveals Himself to the mystic, He shews His "Face," and He veils Himself in the "night-black Tresses," the "dark Curls". The verses quoted above shew Abū Sa'id as a pantheist, who saw the Divine

Beauty in the universe around him, reflecting Itself in the creatures which, without that Divine radiance, could have had no being or beauty at all. He writes again,

Thy Path, wherein we walk,  
in every step, is fair,  
Thy Favour, which we seek,  
in diverse ways, is fair,  
Whatever eye doth gaze upon Thy Face,  
finds Beauty there,  
Thy Praise, whatever tongue  
doth give it Thee, is fair.

These pantheistic ideas, introduced first by Bāyazīd of Bisṭām (ob. 874) are very characteristic of Persian Islamic mysticism, and were developed still further by Sanā'i Rūmī, and Jāmī.

Abū Sa'id maintains the immortality of the human soul, and teaches a very definite doctrine of the "Divine Spark" as the "ground" of the soul. He calls it a divine "Mystery" (*sirr*) in the heart and soul of God's servant, and it corresponds to *the conscience, that which is open to the voice of God*, and by means of which intuitive knowledge is received.

God, in His purity, looks upon that "sirr," and assistance is given to it from that pure Divine contemplation. This Divine assistance is the guardian of that "sirr," and he who acknowledges the Divine Unity is enabled to do so by that "sirr". It is one of the gifts of God, and that gift is made manifest by the favour and mercy of God, not by the merits and the acts of man. At first God implanted in man's heart a sense of need, and a longing desire and sorrow. Then He looked upon that need and sorrow with favour and pity, and placed His gift within that heart, and that gift is called the "sirr" of God. That "sirr"

\* *Asrār al-Tawhīd*, p. 371.

† I quote here Prof. Browne's beautiful translation.



is immortal and cannot be destroyed, for it is continually contemplated by God, and belongs to Him. It is free from all creatureliness and is only lent to the body. Whoever has that "spark" is living in truth, and whoever has it not is but an animal.\*

The soul had existed long before it was "lent" to the body. In one of his verses, Abū Sa'īd writes:

Long did we rest, ere yet the arches of the  
highest spheres were planned,  
Long, ere the azure vaults of the courts of  
heaven appeared,  
In eternal non-being we slept secure, and there  
upon us was stamped,  
The seal of Thy love, ere yet we had known  
what it was to live.

He says:

God created the souls four† thousand years before He created their bodies, and placed them near to Himself and there shed His light upon them. He knew how much each soul received as its share from that light, and He bestowed His favour on the souls in proportion to the share received; so that they remained tranquil in that light and became nourished thereby. Those who in this world live in fellowship and agreement with one another must have been on terms of intimacy there. Here they have friendship with one another and are called the friends of God, and they are in that state because they love one another for the sake of God —If one be in the East and one in the West, they find fellowship and comfort in conversing with one another, and although one belong to an early age and another to a later, yet (the latter) finds benefit and comfort only by the speech of the former.‡

So the soul of man, according to Abū Sa'īd, though created, has within it something of the Divine,

a spark which is immortal, and it is this Divine spark which makes the soul aware of God and causes it ever to turn towards Him with a sense of need and longing and a desire to return to that state in which it dwelt ever in the Light of God.

While spiritual perfection is a gift from God, the mystic cannot hope to attain it without some effort on his part. God, the Beloved, the Divine Beauty, draws him on to seek the consummation of his love, but, says Abū Sa'īd, this drawing on demands striving, "so long as he is not attracted, he does not strive, but so long as he does not strive, there is no vision granted to him".§ Though as a pantheist Abū Sa'īd held that God was the Sole Cause of all existence, and all action, yet as a spiritual guide and leader he held that man was morally responsible for his own evil deeds. He used often to say in the hearing of his disciples "O God, for whatever comes from us to Thee, we ask forgiveness and for whatever comes to us from Thee, we offer praise to Thee."¶ In his verses again and again he shews a deep sense of sin and the need of forgiveness, and his realisation of the fact that man is responsible for his sins of both omission and commission, and must seek to atone for them by humility and repentance and a true desire to amend.

\* *Asrār al-Tawhīd*, p. 383, 384.

† Theosophical students will note this reference to the four rounds of their philosophy: it was in the middle of the fourth round, 18,000,000 years ago that human souls first incarnated in bodies of matter.—EDS.

‡ *Asrār al-Tawhīd*, p. 399.

§ *Asrār al-Tawhīd*, p. 387.

¶ *Ibid*, p. 408.



The true saint, in the opinion of Abū Sa'id, was not the solitary devotee who withdrew himself from other men and from the affairs of everyday life, or the ecstatic who displayed his saintship by trance and miraculous deeds, such as walking on water, flying in the air and magical traversing of distance in a moment of time; for, as he pointed out, the frog could swim, and the swallow skim the surface of the water, while the crow and fly could traverse the air, and Satan himself could pass in a moment from East to West.

That is the true man of God, who sits in the midst of his fellow-men and rises up and eats and sleeps and buys and sells and gives and takes in the bazaar amongst other people, and who marries and has social intercourse with other folk, and yet is never for one moment forgetful of God.\*

The saint must learn to look upon his fellows with the same feeling of love and care for them that God bestows.

He who looks upon the creatures with the eye of a creature continues to contend with them, but he who looks upon them with the eye of the Creator finds rest from them.†

Among the rules which he laid down for his monastery at Nīshāpūr was that of kindness to the poor and needy, and comfort to those who were in trouble. The way to God is found by the service of His creatures. Abū Sa'id, in certain of his lines, tells his readers that if they desire to

draw near to God, they must seek Him in the hearts of men. They should speak well of all men, whether present or absent, and if they themselves seek to be a Light to guide others, then, like the sun, they must shew the same face to all. Again he writes that to bring joy to a single heart is better than to build shrines for worship, and to enslave one soul by kindness is worth more than the setting free of a thousand slaves. Abū Sa'id himself was known far and wide for his charity and kindness to others and he also shewed a broad tolerance of other men's religious beliefs, being able to see, like the true mystic, the truth in all creeds, and holding that the Ways leading to God are as many in number as the motes that dance in the sunbeam.

None the less, the Way for him, as we have seen, meant stern asceticism and self-renunciation—*Ṣūfism*, he said, meant that the *Ṣūfī* should lay aside all vain thoughts, give away all possessions and accept all that God saw fit to lay upon him. Only by the Purgative life could the mystic be fitted to receive Illumination, the Divine gnosis, and thus be enabled to live the Unitive Life. While preaching one day, he said,

If thou dost wish that God should dwell in thy heart, purify thy heart from all save Him, for the King will not enter a house filled with stores and furniture, He will only enter a heart

\* *Asrār al-Tawhīd*, p. 259.

† *Ibid.*, p. 382.



which is empty of all save Himself, and which does not admit thyself there with Him.\*

Only the one who knows that his self is non-existent, knows that his Lord is Real Existence; until the self is slain, it is not possible to escape from it. The Divine spark within the soul leads it to seek such an escape, and in its need, to turn in supplication to God.

A dervish once asked Abū Sa'īd what was the cause of the tumult he felt within his breast, and the Shaykh replied, "God Almighty has created two fires, one unto life and one unto death. The living fire is the fire of supplication which He has placed in the breasts of His servants in this world, so that their carnal self may be consumed; that fire burns brightly, and when the self is consumed away, suddenly that fire of supplication becomes the fire of longing, and that fire of longing will never die in this world or the next; and this is that flame of which the apostle of God spoke when he said, 'When God willed good to His servant He kindles a light in his heart.' They asked the apostle of God what was the sign of that light and he said "Separation from the abode of vanity and turn-

ing towards the abode of eternity and preparing for death, before the descent of death." His questioner asked, "When the Blessed Vision is granted, does that fire of longing become rest?" And Abū Sa'īd said, "That vision increases desire, it does not produce satiety—a light comes into the heart as it contemplates, and by that light it is able to look upon the Beauty and the Majesty of God."†

The only veils between the soul and God are Self and its illusions and when these are removed the soul can attain to God. The gnostic, who has for ever cast off his self, by complete denial of his own individuality, has affirmed the existence of the Real and Universal Self. He has attained unto the deepest knowledge of God and now abides for ever in union with Him.

Such was the teaching of Abū Sa'īd b. Abī al-Khayr, to whom the Path was a life of self-sacrificing service, of hardship, of poverty, and of self-purification leading at last to the death of self and the life with God.‡

MARGARET SMITH

\* *Asrār al-Tawhīd*, pp. 388, 389.

† *op. cit.* pp. 388, 389.

‡ My references are to the Persian text of the "*Asrār*" ed. V. A. Zhukovsky, St. Petersburg 1899. Cf. also R. A. Nicholson's "*Studies in Islamic Mysticism*" Cambridge 1921. Other accounts of Abū Sa'īd's life and teachings are given by 'Aṭṭār and Jāmī etc.



## RENASCENT INDIA

[Dr. N. B. Parulekar shows insight into India's problems and in this instalment makes a noteworthy contribution.

One of the aims of this journal is to labour for the appreciation of culture which follows on its understanding, by the West of the East as by the East of the West. This essay makes some excellent suggestions. Next month we will publish a pungently outspoken article "Lo! In the Orient" by Lloyd Morris—an Englishman, who for some years has been sojourning in California, and who deals with this same topic from another angle. There is no other subject—not even outlawry of war—so fundamentally important as this of cultural unity of East and West through the mediatorship of India and Great Britain.

In this series have already appeared (1) "The Educated Exploit—the Illiterate Build," (2) "Cross-Roads—Secular and Spiritual," (3) Communal Riots—the Underworld in India". The next will be on the fascinating problem, "Indian Women: The Old Rôle in a New World".—EDS.]

### INDIA WHERE THE WEST MEETS EAST

A Hindu doctor of philosophy after many years stay in the West was returning home. As the steamer approached Bombay and the sky-line of the city became visible his heart filled with joy. He took off his straw hat, hurled it into the ocean and said, "Here goes Western civilisation."

A closer view of the same city discloses a different story, however. Beneath the smoke screens cast from over a hundred chimneys are employed nearly a hundred and fifty thousand workers on textile machines imported exclusively from the West. Ninety per cent of the motion picture entertainments are tested first on a Hollywood screen. Type a letter, print a visiting card, stitch a garment—the machines come from the West. In industry, business management, government affairs, education, in nine-tenths of public conduct, generations of young men are

being trained to follow Western patterns. Page after page of the newspapers is taken up by advertisements of Western products which have become daily necessities in India. We are using dental creams made to suit American taste. Imported foods and drinks which, a generation ago, were religious taboos, are consumed in quantities. A walk through the bazaar shows how from hardware to haberdashery, the East and the West are intermingled and indistinguishable. As I write these lines my fountain pen is Canadian, the ink is American, the paper is Swedish and the paper fasteners lying around are made in Germany, but all were bought in India. The West does not terminate at the Red Sea but stretches out further and still further entering into our daily life, modifying our habits, and cajoling us how best we should fit into her



companionship. In the new life that is sweeping over India and the East, it is difficult to imagine a field of activity, where the West is not present. Her rôle is important. She has supplied to the East a saga for her new civilisation.

An American Professor of Philosophy from one of the great Eastern Universities in the U.S.A. went on a world tour. He passed through India and China with a feeling of discomfort. People appeared different—strange, illiterate, without the well-groomed appearance of the West. Science had yet to wake millions out of their medieval slumber. At last, he landed at Yokohama; he was politely ushered into a pullman car waiting right on the pier, while his baggage was taken care of by the unseen hands of an Express Company. Summing up his experiences, he writes in a magazine devoted to international unity.

The train steamed out and a huge cement factory could be seen spread in the moon light. As I pulled down the curtain, switched off the cushion light and turned into bed, I could not help saying to myself, "Here at last I am back home."

During the last few centuries Western civilisation has been reaching mainly after material values. Its progress has been unilateral, its success a single track. Occupied with his own achievements, the white man has considered himself chosen, superior to other races. To him the earth existed for conquest and commercial exploitation. The system of education introduc-

ed by England in India is a sample of racial conceit. Indian philosophy was rejected by Indian Universities in preference to Western systems of philosophy. The literature of India, its culture, religion and social life were cast out of educational courses. The idea was to make the Indian western in thought and taste. Elated by the power of machines which men had just perfected, and enriched at home by the wealth collected from conquered people abroad, the scientists failed to apply objective methods in measuring other people's virtues. Missionaries set aside piety and love with regard to other religions, and liberal leaders slept over their sense of justice in negotiating with different cultural groups. A glance at the innumerable statues erected by Englishmen in India brings home the attitude of the West. One of them, dedicated to a British Official with sword in one hand and pen in the other, carries this challenging inscription underneath: "Indians, would you like to be ruled by Sword or Pen?"

The reaction in the mind of the Orient has been one of fear, suspicion and suppressed animosity against the Occident. For nearly a hundred and fifty years Englishmen and Indians have been cast together in many departments, education, government administration, commerce and even in church. Yet the former have always refused to concede to the latter a status of equality. One can imagine the impossibility of a situation where two races find themselves



in such a relationship that one exaggerates the other's faults, feels profited by its failures and wants to perpetuate hate and contempt against it wherever possible. The one dominant idea in the Orient was not so much to learn from the Occident but to get rid of her. On the other hand, what the Western powers cared most for in their eastern territories was not fellowship but factory labour, not culture but commercial gain; they scrambled for administrative posts, pensions, and military power to boot, to guard, if necessary, against native insurgence. So to-day when the Englishman is on the eve of his departure from India, he looks backward rather than forward in speaking of his relations with India.

In the world war a million fighting men were sent out of India and a large portion of them are lying dead on territories extending from Flanders to Palestine and from Calais to Cairo. But when the war was over and the memorial for soldiers was erected in Calcutta, not a mention of these men was made. A column to the glory of the dead stands surrounded by statues of four British Tommies. Something is radically wrong when the sacrifice made by one's fellow countrymen is scarcely estimated as highly as the sacrifice of dogs and dumb animals whose services in war are deeply recorded all over the world.

I am mentioning the relationship between the British and the Indians in particular because the contacts between the East and the West are more numerous,

more fundamental and long standing among them than between any other two peoples. I have travelled through the length and breadth of India, visited most of the leading cities in the country and seen quite a few public memorials. One wonders at the paucity of the Englishman's imagination in India and the apparent distorted perspective of his own racial heritage. In the parks and the principal squares of cities, in Government offices and around public buildings, lakhs of rupees are spent on commemorating the names of all kinds of officials and British military men. There are those among them whose records have been far from praiseworthy and whose methods in promoting British imperial interest in India are about as questionable as those of the Spaniards in dealing with the Incas and the Aztecs. Undoubtedly there are better representatives of British genius than the groups of profiteers, callous administrative heads and military men whose statues occupy the majority of public sites. As most of these are bound to be consigned to lumber yards soon after India is free, I wonder what will be left behind of the personalities of Englishmen, of their minds as against machines, and of the intimate contacts between two races as against court buildings, council halls and military barracks.

The whole relationship between the East and the West must be constructed anew. The Oriental has yet to read the book of life in which mankind in the West



writes lessons of cultural progress and human idealism. So long as the sorrows of the West did not reach to the soul of the East, the humanitarian movements in Europe and America could evoke but faint echoes. Romain Rolland complained bitterly against young Hindus in Europe—the same I suppose holds true of young Chinese, young Arabs and Burmese as well—for being oblivious of the sufferings of Europe. The feeling against the West had grown so great that the Great War was welcomed by the majority among the oriental people as a divine vendetta, a sign of God's wrath against the iniquities of man. "The Lord is awake," exclaimed the Oriental. "He has decreed that those who profit by the sword shall also perish by it." I wonder what might have happened to the world if India had gone on a concerted policy of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Japan already has shown the way, and Turkey is following suit. Japan westernised her armies and public affairs and soon gained recognition as a "power" among other powers. One shudders to think of the possible contribution of India to the quantity of international gunpowder and gospel of hate.

Looking at these circumstances one appreciates the timely intervention of Mahatma Gandhi. Though official peace prizes are withheld from Gandhi and are still awarded on the basis of old diplomacy, yet the world at large gives to him gratitude and admiration as to no other individual.

He is one of those few men in history whose companionship knows no country, race or dogmas of religion, but extends beyond these and beyond the life-time of generations. Such men are continuous with the spiritual yearnings of mankind in all times. The non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi is not merely a political weapon to gain Indian rule without bloodshed. It is meant also to quicken the culture and conscience of India. His is a voice from the heart born of that deepest human emotion to forget, to forgive and feel in unison with all. It is extremely significant that at the commencement of her national career India has the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. His message is to elevate the oppressed, free the oppressor from past suspicions, and open out fresh avenues for future co-operation. In the absence of the large heartedness and prophetic influence of Mahatma Gandhi, the independence of India, I am afraid, might have lost half its value and half its world significance.

How far must India be charitable? How far considerate and saturated with love towards neighbours and towards enemies? What is the measure of Gandhi's idealism for his country? I can do no better than illustrate from a page of *Young India*, which he writes week after week in the same ethical strain. Under his own initials four subjects were commented upon—Pax-Britanica, Untouchables in Cochin, Starvation



of Cows in Orissa, and The Sufferings of the Stateless People in Eastern Europe. In other words, the attempt of Gandhi is to teach his people to face violence wherever manifested with non-violence exclusively.

How shall we use this opportunity to open out new channels of understanding between the two hemispheres? The first important step to my mind is to make the Orient feel that west of Suez as much as east of it, there are men hungry, unemployed and insecure of life. An average Oriental has very few opportunities to draw close to the heart of the suffering West. He sees only English Officers, military men, spendthrift tourists, extravagant American motion pictures and Western banking and shipping houses in the East the portals of which have an air of perpetual prosperity. It is impossible to meet a Western boot-black in Bombay; his presence would be a blot on the prestige of British Civil Service tradition. It is impossible to permit a white man in India to work like a native. They must all look like Sahibs and not as wage-earners. I recall how the wife of a French commandant on leave from Morocco expressed to me her relief that I was not a Negro. She would have been horrified if a Negro had seen her work. "I should lose my prestige if they see me work in Africa," she exclaimed.

If the East could be made to see that back of this vanity and feeling of superiority an amount of suffering is seething in the souls of

the vast multitudes in Europe and America, it would generate a common understanding and a sense of comradeship, developed under common distress. I should like to take some of the younger Oriental nationalists and show them in Europe and America the hard working mothers and workers wandering in search of food like nomads on Asiatic prairies.

There are men in the Orient to whom life is sacred and who are moved by the slightest suffering in man or animal. In spite of many religious aberrations the East, and India in particular, have held life sacred and any injury to it an act of impiety. A few minutes' conversation in any village shows how the masses respond to the sentiment of non-violence with a readiness, which, I am afraid, no programme of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals can cultivate. The feeling of unity with the humblest of creatures is innate and deeply ingrained in the psychology of the people. Ashoka built drinking fountains, cultivated medicinal gardens, planted trees on highways and kept them open, "for men and animals". It is one of the strangest phenomena that the dreamy East anxious to transcend life on earth should at the same time so scrupulously respect it and religiously strive not to hurt even the lowest among living creatures.

Harnessed to international relations, disarmament conferences, and efforts to stop wars and the slaughter of men by men, the



spiritual urge for non-violence and Ahimsa in the East and in India in particular will prove a great constructive asset. It puts at the disposal of peace-loving people of the West fresh resources hitherto unavailed of in world organisations. *The present is an auspicious moment because both the East and the West are animated by the same desire and express a common abhorrence for violence.* The sympathy of the Western world for Indian Nationalism is due not so much to the sentiment of each country being entitled to freedom but to the programme of non-violence which is also what the West yearns to get translated in international disputes. "Otherwise," says Prof. J. T. Shotwell in his study of world Economy under the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "civilization cannot endure; for the destructive capacity of science in conflict is rapidly gaining on its capacity for creative and productive work."

This then is the first meeting ground between the East and the West, where India may be instrumental in injecting into the technique of modern science a spiritual urge for peace and for preservation of life instead of its destruction. Once upon a time gods and demons undertook to churn the ocean to exploit its hidden wealth. The agitated sea brought forth precious stones, a beautiful woman, the moon, nectar and finally a death giving poison; gods fled away with the precious findings; but Siva, the supreme among them, saved gods

and men alike by swallowing the poison. He would rather have the deadly element consume himself than consume the creation. The story illustrates how in search of scientific fruits men are motivated by good and bad propensities. *In such times the world needs faith, penance and suffering of which Siva is the symbol in India.*

The second great quest of our times is the quest of Reason, the quest of Intelligence, and India has the potentiality of being just the needed companion of the West in this problem. In philosophy, ethics, psychology and social thinking the West is coming round to the consciousness that her reasoning is based mainly on exclusive propositions, on identities intolerant of contradictions and in general on a type of logic which though admirably fitted to deal with matter in physics is altogether insufficient to deal with man in a variety of relations, such as friend and foreigner, equal and unequal, moral and immoral, social and anti-social. The greatest weakness of Western logic is its breakdown in ethics. There one sees the deficiency clearest because, applied to human conduct, its limitations are obvious as in no other department of life. One may assert or deny for a while the existence of the Spirit or the possibilities of after-life but one cannot doubt the simple proposition that the invisible and the spiritual must exist. Creation according to the general western view is either an act of God or a process of evolution; that is, they explain



it in terms of the Bible or biology; But to a Hindu, creation is a Lila or a cosmic play. The modern world is in need of sportsmanship and a habit of treating one's fellow-men not as bond-holders in a corporation, nor as equals in a party caucus but as play-fellows co-ordinated to sustain the harmony of life. I am afraid the Anglo-Saxon concept of sport does not fully express Lila which to the Oriental is a cosmic rhythm where the one and the many, the good and the bad, the self and the other, the now and the never, life and death and all pairs of opposite are in an eternal dance. It is the consciousness of harmony pulsating from the centre of the world and running untrammelled through all sorts of contradictions. A sharp comprehensive intelligence is needed to cut through the fog of prejudice that blinds races, and to help them to supplement each other's efforts. To understand the logical form and contents of that reasoning it is necessary to study religion and the psychology of religious experience,—subjects for which it is no accident that India should offer the most fruitful field in the world. If the logic developed in them is brought to fructify the concepts of modern science in the West, I have no doubt that it may lift present day thinking out of barrenness and futility. To speculative reason the reward of such co-ordinated efforts is Anand or Joy, while to practical reason it means harmony between diverse interests of men.

The third and equally vital form of association between the Orient and the Occident is supplied by the science of Technology where the West has given a phenomenal lead to the East. By technology I mean not merely engineering, but unending efforts in Europe and America to break and build institutions for the progress of man. From the time of Plato down to the recent socialists, the West has carried on an unbroken struggle for justice and the liberty of man. It is a story profound in many ways like the story of Mahabharata and shows how lower Castes were freed from the tyranny of higher ones in efforts to organise society on a national basis. It is a heritage on which the rising East draws for inspiration. Add to this the struggle ahead in the East to produce and consume with the help of modern machines. It needs not only altruism of the finest type but a practical technique to work it out in details. The experience of those in the West who made machinery and at times were broken by it is a valuable guide to India and the East in general. In their efforts for socialisation of wealth and improvement of scientific methods, the co-operation between East and West is inevitable. It doubles the existing stock of intelligence, knowledge, and mutual sympathies so helpful in the efforts of men to reach a happier scheme of economic life.

Through a maze of misunderstanding, mutual prejudice, self-



conceit and love of power, the East and the West emerge in our times as two halves of the same eternal soul in search of one another as described in Plato's *Republic*. We are now in a position to understand one another, to feel at home with each other's culture and share our sentiments because by suffering, self-analysis and through force of historical circumstances, men have discovered an identity of basic problems. Emotionally we are equally craving for peace but intellectually our ideas need to be recast before any real progress is possible, and materially the greatest single task before the East and the West is to utilise science and organise its fruits for the profit of all instead of a few. We are beginning to read in the life of one another spiritual values, which combined will carry on progress, but alone will leave us just where we are, in strife within and without.

The East and the West are placed to-day physically as next door neighbours. It was not so in the days of Columbus. The other day a well known American author was narrating to me casually how after travelling in India from

Kashmir to Colombo in one month he was to sail the next day to meet his wife who was to join him in Bermuda. In our times Burma or Bermuda have shrunk to the proximity of a downtown tea room where one may join his friend on the way to a matinee. A man broadcasts his voice from the station of the General Electric Company, Schenectady, and the echo girdling round the earth reaches him in one eighth of a second. Science, the creation of the West, has helped to break down physical barriers and put men in proximity wherever they be. It is increasingly perfecting the technique to co-operate and keep in touch with smaller groups of men who though born and living scattered in different environments are nevertheless capable of feeling at home with the whole world. Our gratitude is due to the West whose scientific achievements have rid us from the fear of isolated death by putting progressive men in shouting distance of one another.

Now, is the turn of India—let her break down spiritual barriers of ignorance, religious creeds, and proud isolation.

N. B. PARULEKAR



## SOME ASPECTS OF PSYCHO-PHYSICAL PHENOMENA

[Mrs. Philip Champion de Crespigny is widely known both as an English novelist of distinction and as a leader in British Spiritualist circles. It is not so generally known that she is also a painter. She is actively associated with the Lyceum Club, of which she is Vice-Chairman; with the Writers' Club, of which she has twice been Chairman; and with the British College of Psychic Science, of which she is the Honorary Principal. For some twenty years she has devoted much of her life to the investigation of psychic phenomena, and with unremitting energy and arduous labour has given freely of her time and work to it.

She (and there are others like her) seems very anxious to gain the support of the orthodox scientist. Perhaps a good hint from H. P. Blavatsky on the subject may prove helpful to all such. The great Theosophist and Occultist was fully familiar with the weaknesses and difficulties of the mediums, but she also knew what particular stumbling block stood most in the way of the scientist. She said that the demonstration of the true nature of evolution to the scientist depends upon the demonstration of an Astral Body within man, which preceded in geological time the physical body, for which it became the model in the course of evolution.

The study of ectoplasmic structures, to which this article refers, is a first step in the right direction. If investigators like our author will change the current of their thought and, abandoning the view that "spirits of the dead" produce all phenomena, study more the *raison d'être* of mediumship itself, they will soon find that ectoplasm is a substance of the magnetic astral body upon which the molecules of the body arrange themselves as iron filings follow the lines of force in a magnetic field. Its visibility is due to the condition inhering in the medium.—EDS.]

No line of intelligent enquiry to-day should be approached with greater caution and reserve than the subject of psychical phenomena. Serious students engaged on this exceptionally baffling form of research are aware that it bristles with difficulties of an exceedingly elusive description, of a type not met with in ordinary research work, and they are consequently guarded in pronouncing definite opinions on results. In the words that follow I offer diffidently a few suggestions with regard to this abstruse subject as some of the fruit of my own experience during a period of nearly twenty years.

To begin with, the instruments by means of which investigation

has to be carried on, are in themselves a stumbling-block and source of trouble to the investigator. Where the telescope of the astronomer and the apparatus of the chemical laboratory are known quantities and can be reckoned upon as stable and reliable in their behaviour, the instrument at the disposal of the psychical researcher—the only one so far as is at present known—is variable and uncertain to the last degree; on the living organism of the "medium" he is entirely dependent. One can best liken it to the difficulties experienced by Alice in Wonderland when she tried to play croquet with a live flamingo. Even when exteriorated from the medium, and manipulated at some



distance, ectoplasm, that mysterious link between the wave-lengths of this plane and presumably of that other plane to which our five senses do not respond, seems to retain a certain degree of life, and qualities of its own—or rather of the medium from whom it has been borrowed.

This difficulty has been a serious obstruction in the path of psychic enquiry, not only from the practical standpoint of experiment, but it has given the subject a bad name as a line not worth serious attention, and has militated against any claims it might have put forward to be included in the category of exact sciences.

Now, however, times are changing. The scientist of to-day has been led by the torch of his own lighting from the denser forms of matter into the ether of space. Mind is coming into its own as a factor in the evolution of matter; the physicist is forced to entertain the idea of an Intelligence behind the Universe.

In the meanwhile, psychic research has produced to a certain degree an inductive methodology of its own, which is the first step in the conversion of pure guess-work into an established science.

But the practical study of the subject still presents many inhibitions which discourage the physical scientist from taking an active interest in it, and hitherto one of the most serious has been in the practice of conducting experiments in pitch darkness.

If progress of real value is to be made the attention of modern

scientists is of the very first importance—the man who, through his knowledge and training, is most fitted to pronounce on the nature and the causes of the phenomena of the séance-room. But so long as it is considered essential that darkness should be one of the conditions for practical experiment the man of science will stand aloof. It is only natural that he should refuse to submit to conditions in which the most important of all the senses, vision, is inhibited. Before we can hope to engage the interest of these men of scientific knowledge the phenomena must be produced in, at the least, a red light.

We know that this can be done. It is only necessary to read the history of Psychic Research to learn so much. Whatever the laws may be that govern the production of phenomena, they do not necessarily depend on darkness. They have taken place, and are still taking place through some mediums, not only in a red light, but even in daylight.

Therefore I would ask experimenters to exclude the dark-room variety as no longer of assistance towards real progress. It has played its part. We know—those who have had experience and are qualified to offer opinions—that tambourines and musical-boxes *can* be made to fly round the room over the sitters' heads, without human contact, by unseen agents; tables can be over-turned and coats removed in spite of arms securely bound, and whole or partial materialisations can take



place under the strictest test conditions. All very interesting and instructive in the early stages of investigation but, so long as they are conducted in the dark, leading nowhere now so far as a knowledge of ultimate causes is concerned. In learning to understand them, we should learn to a certain extent to be able to control them, and that surely is what we should now be busy about.

That the physical phenomenon is more *easily* produced in the dark is admitted. The wireless message will travel further by night than by day; the sensitive plate must be developed in a red light only and even the red ray may have a disintegrating effect on ectoplasm. To win success it may be that patience and even more perseverance than usual will be required, but laziness is not altogether confined to *this* plane, and I have so often seen results produced by the operators on the other side in answer to a special request from the operators on this, that I feel sure if mediums and their controls would "put their backs into it" we should soon be able to dispense altogether with dark room-séances, and therefore be in a position to offer to the scientist conditions in which he would be willing to experiment.

In one case, for instance, I have watched through a succession of sittings, a medium degenerate from first-rate rank into the production of phenomena so unsatisfactory as to carry no conviction to the mind of any intelligent enquirer, entirely through relaxa-

tion of effort on both this side and the other. On two occasions I have made a special appeal to the "Control" to produce something up to previous standards; the response to the stimulus was immediate. I believe if we take a firm stand here, that eventually, working in conjunction with the invisible operators, we shall be able to dispense with darkened séance-rooms and establish conditions in which through an extended field of observation we shall be able to make real advance in an understanding of the laws which govern supernormal phenomena. The very fact of the constant watchfulness in case of fraud which is bred by the darkness, absorbs a great part of attention which might usefully be otherwise bestowed.

In the case of the "trumpet-medium" or "direct voice" the circumstances are different, although I may say I have heard the "voice" produced in light sufficiently strong to see every object in the room. But it appears to require a very great effort, and puts considerable strain on the medium, and as the evidence lies in the content of the message, rather than the manner in which it is given, the physical conditions are not so important.

Of ectoplasm itself we know very little; and here again the serious investigation of the modern biologist would be of the greatest service. It appears to be composed in varying degree of physical, and what, for want of a better name, may be called super-



physical substance. Through its agency unseen intelligences seem able to contact physical matter, which they are unable to do in its absence. Every human organism contains this substance to a certain degree; a medium has it in greater abundance than the normal person.

Sometimes it is invisible to human vision; sometimes it can be seen; sometimes it can be felt; generally it can be smelt,—for ectoplasm has a curious and most unmistakable odour which, once experienced, can always be recognised.

I have lately had the privilege of watching the unfoldment of the processes of a physical phenomenon from its earliest stages.

The demonstration, which at first took place in the dark, has so far developed that the process can be observed in a red light. At one time it was thought a gauze curtain interposed between the medium and the sitters would establish test conditions beyond all question; the ectoplasm issuing from the medium was seen in the form of a faintly luminous ray to reach the curtain, but at the first contact it broke up into many still fainter rays that were apparently powerless to complete the demonstration. An inch-meshed net was tried with the same result.

So the ordinary methods of securing the medium were resorted to, and gradually, after much patient experiment, the faint and divided rays of the ectoplasm resolved themselves into a definite

“rod,” much the same as Dr. Crawford speaks of in his experiments in Belfast. This rod again developed at the end of it a “snake’s head” hand, which has finally developed into a perfect hand, thumb and four fingers complete, capable of independent action, which the sitters are allowed to touch, and which eventually dissolves before their eyes.

I have noticed at the various séances I have been able to attend, a certain rule appears to be observed in the manipulation of ectoplasm. All rules may have their exceptions, and far be it from me to make dogmatic assertions—I speak only of my own experience.

If a hand be required for the accomplishment of the phenomenon, the ectoplasm is drawn from the medium from the neighbourhood of that limb; if a foot, from near the medium’s foot. In the case of the “voice” the ectoplasm is certainly drawn from the throat and larynx, the sitters contributing in smaller degree, for many of them suffer afterwards from hoarseness.

Last November there was an article written by Professor MacBride, F. R. S., one of our most brilliant biologists, in which he described some experiments made by a German professor, which may perhaps throw a little light on ectoplasm.

This Professor cut off the extremity of a newt’s tail and grafted it on to the shoulder. It grew, but instead of growing into a *tail* as might have been expected, it



grew into another fore-limb, showing that it took on the form and characteristics of the organised ectoplasm in its immediate neighbourhood, upon which it fed.

It would almost seem that ectoplasm follows the same lines, and that for the success of the various forms of phenomena, *organised* ectoplasm is a necessary adjunct. If the prehensile qualities of the hand are required, ectoplasm trained in that direction is necessary; if the voice, then it must be from the vocal organs, and so on.

I am speaking from an abysmal ignorance. I can only offer this as a suggestion for further investigation. If we could understand more of the laws which govern ectoplasmic phenomena, we might be able to furnish conditions which would help instead of hindering—as I am sure is often the case—the production of interesting phenomena. We do not know to what extent the rigidity of the medium may interfere with the free flow of this substance upon which all successful demonstration seems to depend. I do know that on one occasion

the passing of the medium's hands through holes in the cabinet to be controlled by sitters, absolutely prevented the production of the expected phenomenon. It was considered evidence of fraud, but I now believe the organised ectoplasm of the medium's hand was required, and the very precautions that were taken precluded automatically a successful result.

And knowing as little as we do, how often may not that be the case? How often do we unwittingly spike our own guns in our blind efforts to guard against fraud?

Therefore I appeal to the workers to discard the dark séance-room, and to endeavour to establish conditions in which we may really progress. Let us show the physical scientist that we have lifted psychic enquiry from a slough of chaos and emotionalism into something which, even if we do not understand it, is orderly and at the least on the borderline where guess-work blossoms into science, and with his help we may then be able to decode another of God's wonderful messages to man.

ROSE CH. DE CRESPIGNY



## INDIAN ART

### EXHIBITION IN LONDON

[J. D. Beresford's thoughts show how the West is acknowledging that the motive and basis of work of the Indian artists are as different from those of their Western confrères as the method of impersonality of the former is different, and in our view, superior because more purely spiritual than that of the insistence on personal recognition which prevails in the Occident. Personality rules markets and society: people go to hear a celebrated pianist and if by any chance one enquires what the programme is, the booking office eyes him curiously and says—"O! what does it matter! — plays." We are glad therefore Mr. Beresford emphasises that in spite of striking differences Indian art has a message of its own, which should be studied. There is, however, the second step which remains to be taken. Misconception as to the prehistoric humanity being primitive, as to the work of ancient races being rooted in savage instincts, and so forth, detracts from an adequate appreciation of hoary cultures. Some of these pictures and images may not be "primitive symbols to hold the attention of the child-mind"; they may be clear visions of enlightened minds who attempt to present to a mighty and grown civilization deep concepts, archetypal, dynamic and everlasting.—EDS.]

The Art-Critic, using the term in its specialised connotation as applying only to the graphic and plastic Arts, is almost of necessity less historically minded than the critic of literature. Within the little limits of half a century he may refer to the influences of say, the Barbizon School, or the astonishing evolution of the various twentieth century "isms," which may be appropriate to the work under consideration. But among all the permanent and ephemeral schools that have been born in European Art it is so impossible to trace a unifying principle, that it is at once easier and more advisable to accept without further questioning various canons of method and composition, and judge the aspirant for honours without reference to history.

The essential test in this connection at the present day is what an artist has "done" with his

subject. In that most material of ages, the Victorian, England was under the spell of realism, despite the contemptuous insurgences of such men as Turner and Whistler. Public taste—a powerful influence, however despised by the connoisseur—demanded fidelity to life; and the nearer an artist could go to creating an illusion of reality the more highly he was praised. Following that period, such freakish methods as those of cubism and vorticism evidenced no doubt a too violent reaction against this infringement of what may be regarded as the supreme canon of Master-art in any period or country, namely, that what we seek is Interpretation and not Representation. But it may well be argued that in this thing such ephemeral influences as those of reaction could never produce a masterpiece.

Yet even when we have except-



ed the great principle that Art without interpretation is merely craftsmanship, we are no nearer to a definition. Many have been attempted, and some, such as that which clung about the principle of "empathy"—*empfindung*, the ability of the creator "to feel himself into" his subject—have been brilliantly upheld by various gifted writers, among them Vernon Lee. But no definition has ever been, nor in the present stage of knowledge could ever be, permanently accepted as final and satisfying. At the last analysis there remains always some element that escapes our understanding.

Curiously enough this element as displayed in the graphic arts, is one of the oldest expressions of which we have any record. When the little five-year-old daughter of the Marquis of Sautuola cried out "Bulls, father, bulls" and pointed to the marvellous frescoes of the Altamira Caves, she unconsciously approved the master-art of men who lived before the dawn of history. Even a child could be sure that here was a bull, yet not she nor anyone else had ever seen just such a bull; because the artist's conception had included so much more than could be reproduced by a camera. Here, in fact, was the very spirit and essence of the bull, an interpretation of living, active life and the forces behind it, though the representation was near enough to the experience of common vision to appeal to a small child. We must certainly accord to the Cromagnon artist the power of *empfindung*,

but he might have had that alone without the gift for making such a pattern of line and colour as should convey his sense of the bull's spirit to another. There is still some quality that escapes us, and avoids definition.

And this fundamental problem of defining Art must inevitably have occurred to anyone who visited the Indian Exhibition held in London this Spring, and there attempted to realise the spirit that lay behind it. For here, indeed, we find a tradition, a unifying principle, of a kind that is entirely lacking in Western painting; and it is only within this tradition that we can make a classification of the various "schools".

There is, however, one exception to this rule, namely, the Græco-Indian "school," two or three examples of which were shown in this Exhibition. The period of this influence, chiefly manifested in the old province of Bactria, the chief town of which is the modern Balkh, lasted from the second century B. C. for four or five hundred years; and its effect has been greatly exaggerated. Indeed, layman and mere observer as I am, I would go much further even than the great authority on this subject, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, and claim that the Greek influence, an altogether alien intrusion on Indian Art, left no mark on the Buddhist iconography which seems to me to be the determining model of the Indian painter.

This exception, in fact, as I observed it in the Loan Collection in Saville Row, served only as an



indicator that directed the mind to the prevailing aspect of Indian Art. For the Græco-Indian examples instantly announced themselves as intruders. They alone among all the other paintings and sculpture, proclaimed the use of the living model. And from that I realised not only that the Indian artist does not paint or carve from the living model, but, a far more significant matter, not even from his visual memory of living material.

Here, then, we have a primary and an immensely important distinction, between Indian and European Art,—including in the latter division those Cromagnon works referred to, which clearly indicate the memory of a thing seen, however transmuted subsequently by the imagination and the artist's power of empathy. For all Indian Art is in one sense religious, though the subject may be incidents in the life of Akbar or even of a more secular-minded ruler. And because the inner meaning of this difference has been more clearly understood and better expressed than it would be possible for me to do either the one or the other, I will quote a few illuminating passages on this subject from the work of Mr. Coomaraswamy on the Hieratic Art.

In its main development, Indian Art was not produced with a view to æsthetic experience. Images, in particular, were not regarded as works of art but as means of edification . . . . For this spiritual exercise *yantras* [methods] of two kinds are employed, one purely geometrical and linear, the other three-dimensional and more or less anthropo-

morphic or theriomorphic. Both types are alike in kind; both are equally externalisations of mental visions . . . . The obtaining of the mental visualisation (which is more essential than its material realisation) is a process of *yoga*. Such a visualisation differs from those present in normal vision: it is more vivid; it fills the whole field of view; all parts are equally and simultaneously present; the relation of these parts is not organic nor on the other hand accidental, but ideally determined . . . . What may at first sight look like the observation of nature . . . . is simply the most vital and most felt part of Indian Art, where the worshipper attains the most complete *samâdhi*, the artist is most completely and literally identified with his subject. [Another side-light on the principle of "empathy"!]

Another aspect of this same truth was enunciated by Mr. Philip Henderson in his article on "The Spirit of Indian Poetry," which appeared in THE ARYAN PATH in April 1930:—

And while philosophers and metaphysicians of the West arrived at their conclusions by a process of laborious intellectual evolution, those of the East had long ago reached contact with reality through a spiritual intuition far transcending thought.

It is obvious, therefore, that in any consideration of Indian Art, we must be prepared to transcend pure æsthetics. Here we are not truly concerned with what the artist has "done" with his subject, neither with representation nor, in the common critical use of the word, interpretation. When, for example, we pause before a bronze Siva, dancing in his wheel surrounded by flames (of which there was a very fine specimen in the London exhibition), we are not concerned with questions of com-



position or modelling, but with an allegory of spirit in the wheel of life; and our judgment upon the artist's success will be influenced not by any examination of his technique, but by the effect his inner vision has produced upon us.

It is well, also, to remember in this connection that the artist himself remains without any distinctive personality. Very few Indian paintings are signed. They were not painted for the advancement and glorification of an individual in any worldly sense; they express no element of material self-seeking. The artist has been as completely merged in his subject as the Yogi in his meditation; and if we seek a final criterion of his success, it should be by our judgment of how far he has been able to sink the individual values in the universal.

Now, writing some eighteen months ago on the Italian Exhibition of pictures at Burlington House, I said in *THE ARYAN PATH*, that I found there "no seeking nor reverence for the eternal mysteries. . . . nor any realisation of the supernal wonder of the God in man". In the Indian exhibition, my conclusions were exactly the reverse, for while I found there no such high æsthetic qualities, reverence for the eternal mysteries appeared as the inspiration of almost every picture. This is not to say that the Indian painters are not aware of æsthetic values or have no sense of composition; but their technique is very near that of the miniature painter, and their feeling for depth, atmosphere and

pattern so different from the European's that a special art education would be necessary to appreciate it. Also, in the same connection, the traditional conventionalism which has remained unchanged for 2000 years and become so familiar to Eastern eyes that it is almost a sign language, conveys no message to inexperienced Western eyes.

We appear, then, to have arrived at an impasse. On the one hand we have the high æsthetic values of Western European painting, on the other the religious values of the Indian; but he would be an optimist, indeed, who could hope to combine them on a single canvas. Is it possible that the truth of the matter lies in the deduction that the graphic arts are too primitive for the interpretation of the religious emotion? As I have implied in this article, drawing was the very earliest of those expressions in which the fundamental æsthetic has endured almost unchanged through ten thousand years of development. Literature could not exist before an adequate language had been evolved to convey it, nor music before the refinements of craftsmanship had produced instruments susceptible of the necessary modulations. But give a savage a bone and a sharpened flint, and if he had the gift, as some of the most primitive peoples undoubtedly had—he could draw as well as the student in any Paris atelier. Primitive man, in short, had powers of visual memory, that most modern people are losing in the distraction of other interests,



Good eyesight is no longer as important as it was when men lived by hunting, and the tendency to myopia rapidly increases among civilised peoples. Wherefore it may be that painting is already on the decline as a means of emotional expression.

To return, in conclusion, to the Indian Exhibition, I find in retrospect that my sympathies were stirred rather by my conception of what lay behind the paintings than by its interpretation on canvas. By a corresponding act of intuition I could read something of the pattern representing "the contact with reality through a spiritual intuition far transcending thought". Yet, even so, I found myself in a world in which my mind had no freedom of movement. I realised that these sym-

bols could never convey to me the same reactions as those stimulated in one who had been familiar with the tradition from childhood. And, finally, as I have said, I was left to wonder if painting, whether the subject be strictly formalised or comparatively naturalesque, could ever serve as a vehicle for the interpretation of the inner truths. So much depends on the training and early associations of the observer. In India the conventionalised image of the Buddha will awaken an instant response which is surely of the same nature as that evoked in Western countries by the image of the crucified Christ. But is either of them more than a primitive symbol to hold the attention of the child mind?

J. D. BERESFORD

#### INDIAN ART IN LONDON 1880

Recommend everybody to go to the South Kensington Museum and spend as much time as can be spared for several visits to the magnificent collection of Indian Art objects now to be seen there. . . . It is impossible to walk through the numerous galleries in the most cursory way without taking a strong interest in the remarkable races of that vast Oriental Empire whose lines of development have been so different from our own, and it is quite as astonishing to note the points in which they are superior to Europeans as to observe the indications of their defects. Take first the manifestations of their religion. The enormous labour and skill exhibited in their temple work, as illustrated by a multitude of full-sized casts and original objects, shows them to have been, and to be, a people saturated with supernaturalism and the sentiment of worship; but the European mind revolts from the monstrous forms under which they typified the various attributes of their innumerable gods. They are not, properly speaking, idolaters, any more than Roman Catholics are. They can distinguish the deity from the symbol, and their thinkers have been what Max Müller calls Henotheists rather than Polytheists—that is to say, they troubled themselves with no subtle metaphysics, of divided or undivided personality, such as are found in the perplexities of the Athanasian Creed. . . . Everybody knows that Hindoo idols are nearly all ugly, and that those of the Greeks were nearly all beautiful; but what is curious to note is, that in other directions than that of embodying mythological ideas, the Hindoos had, and have, as fine a taste as the Greeks.

From the *Weekly Times* of June 27th, 1880, and reprinted in *The Theosophist* of November 1880



## IN THE WORLD OF BOOKS

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*The Mysterious Universe.* By SIR JAMES JEANS. (Cambridge University Press. 3s. 6d.)

Sir James Jeans, with a suddenness fittingly meteoric, has become a luminary in our English heavens. He has published in quick succession three very interesting books making popular—that is, accessible to minds like my own,—the findings of current astronomy. There has been nothing like these books since Sir Robert Ball's *Story of the Heavens*, which was a classic of my early childhood; and their success has been deservedly prodigious. If that were all, there would be nothing to do but to welcome the books and congratulate their author.

But in the final chapter of the most popular of these books, *The Mysterious Universe*, Sir James goes far beyond his brief. For nearly forty pages he sails "into the deep waters" and makes pronouncements concerning the nature of the Universe and the character of the Mind which created it—the phrasing is his own—which, though they have not a jot more of real authority than any statements I might make myself on these vast subjects, are bound to be taken by nine-tenths of his readers as evident truths of the same order as the experimental results which he has collected for their instruction and delight. Sir James, regarded as a responsible member of the body of men of science, has palpably exceeded his instructions. Either he did it wittingly; in which case he becomes something of the charlatan; or he did it unwittingly; in which case he is yet another example of the philosophical naivety which is compatible with scientific eminence, at least of the second order.

Roughly, Sir James' argument is this. Mathematical concepts afford the clearest, fullest and most natural explanation of observed phenomena. Therefore "no one but a mathematician need ever hope fully to understand those branches of science which try to unravel the funda-

mental nature of the universe" (p. 128). Further, mathematics is the creation of pure thought, "drawing nothing from experience" (p. 130). Therefore, since "we have already considered with disfavour the possibility of the universe having been planned by a biologist or an engineer; from the intrinsic evidence of his creation, the Great Architect of the Universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician" (p. 134). That is obviously a very comforting conclusion for a mathematician. He is a little Architect of the Universe, who thinks the same kind of thoughts as his big brother—thoughts which we ordinary mortals "need never hope" to share or understand. Peter, when he tempted Jesus, was rebuked "for thinking the thoughts of men, and not the thoughts of God"; he was expected to think the thoughts of God. Sir James Jeans would have told him that "he need never hope to". Which is, I think, presumptuous in Sir James.

Let us consider a little further. "Mathematics is the creation of pure thought, . . . drawing nothing from experience". One of the most remarkable technical devices of the modern mathematical physicist is his employment in his calculations of the factor  $i$ , or the square root of minus one. It plays a very important part in the formulation of quantum theory. The square root of minus one is obviously an imaginary quantity, and any number in which it is a factor is obviously an imaginary number. To precisely such imaginary numbers does Sir James Jeans appeal to support his contention that "Mathematics . . . draws nothing from experience". On the contrary, such an imaginary number as  $i$  is derived directly from experience, and is as pure thought unthinkable. It has meaning for thought only as a convenient and necessary symbol for a certain spatial relation. Wherever we place our zero point in space, we can measure along any straight line which passes through



it in two opposite directions. These two opposite directions are indicated by the signs, plus and minus. The plus direction is in no sense whatever more real than the minus and any distance measured in the minus direction is just as real as an equal distance measured in a plus direction. And because of this primary reality of experience—the simple fact that if we can go north from any point we can equally well go south—the square root of minus one, which is an absurdity for pure thought is an adequate symbol to denote a real relation.

Mathematical conceptions derive directly from experience. To imagine that they supply the privileged mathematician with an utterly independent key by which he, and he alone, miraculously unlocks the mysteries of the universe is just stupidity. To proceed from this unwarranted assumption to the truly portentous argument that because the “pure thought” of the higher mathematician solves the riddle of the universe, (which it does not), therefore the universe itself is a universe composed of mathematical thoughts, existing in the mind of the Highest Mathematician, is preposterously naive.

But man, proud man,  
Dressed in a little brief authority,  
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As make the angels weep.

Shakespeare's lines are the only adequate comment that occurs to me on this absurd presumption. Every step in Sir James Jeans' parody of an argument is patently fallacious.

On one of these fallacies I have made no direct comment. The calm assumption that mathematics has revealed, or is about to reveal, the secrets of the universe of human experience is quite false; seeing that mathematics can give no description whatever of the simple process involved in my thinking and writing these lines. The truth is, as was said by a mathematician no less distinguished than Sir James Jeans and far more capable of philosophical thinking, Mr. Wittgenstein, that when mathematical

science has explained *everything* that it can explain, when it has solved *all* its problems, the mathematician *qua* mathematician will know no more than the Hottentot why things are what they are. From its calculations at their inception mathematics has omitted all those elements in human experience that make it human; these excluded elements can never enter its results. In other words, if by an abuse of metaphor, we choose to regard the Universe as composed of the thoughts of some great thinker, we could say one certain thing about it—namely, that the least of the thoughts which compose that imaginary universe is beyond the capacity of the mathematician as such to think, or mathematics to express. But the universe is not a universe of thought, or of electrons, or even of waves; and Sir James Jeans would have been well advised had he accepted the view of those whom he mentions at the beginning of this fatal plunge “into the deep waters”. “Many would hold that, from the broad philosophical standpoint, the outstanding achievement of twentieth century physics is . . . the general recognition that we [i.e., the mathematical physicists] are not yet in contact with ultimate reality.” Even that is excessive—the “not yet” is presumptuous. It would be nearer the truth to say that the present condition of mathematical physics—with its unresolved and naked opposition of relativity and quantum theory—is such that there are good grounds for believing that it indicates some radical incapacity in present mathematical method for dealing even with the phenomena that have hitherto been regarded as its special province. “The mathematical representation of an electron,” says Mr. L. L. Whyte in his brilliant mathematical *Critique of Physics*, “is now too complex to be used in the exact calculation of complex phenomena.” There is double reason to-day why the mathematician should take heed of the old proverb: *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. “Let the cobbler stick to his last!”

JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY



*L'Inde contre les Anglais.* By MADAME ANDRÉE VIOLLIS. (Editions des Portiques, Paris.)

The day has gone by for Europeans to visit the East filled only with a sense of the superiority of their civilisation, and exhibiting but the curiosity of the dilettante. If the war, with its aftermath, has not given them yet a perfect wisdom, it has at least inculcated a certain modesty. When they come to the world of the East now, it is in the spirit of inquiry and in the hope of instruction. Such was the attitude of Luc Durtain on his last visit (of which we wrote last February in *THE ARYAN PATH*) and such also was the attitude of Mme. Andrée Viollis. She left for India in the early spring of 1930 and remained throughout the summer, traveling all over the country, visiting the industrial and intellectual centres, mingling with the people, studying the political situation, and conversing with Gandhi and other leaders. And the outcome of her observations and interviews is the book under review—a book full of valuable lessons.

Though sufficiently impartial never to allow her remarks to take an accusatory tone, the writer describes with such sympathy the life of the Hindu people that the reader is moved by their sufferings and disposed to be on their side. How is it possible not to sympathise with them, for instance, when we learn that most of the money obtained from taxes goes to the upkeep of the army, the police and the Civil Service, while so many of the people live under the most wretched conditions? Forty millions out of the three hundred millions of the population cannot get more than one meal a day. "And what a meal! Almost always some flour of millet diluted with water." The industrial world is in no better position than the agricultural. In the suburb of Parel (Bombay), which is a centre of textile manufacture, Mme. Viollis saw groups of six to twenty-five people crowded "in rooms without air, without light, feeding only on millet, rice and curds in insufficient quantity," and working about sixty hours a week.

How can one fail to feel sympathy when one learns that in the eighteenth century—and even in the middle ages—India had already Universities, technical schools, elementary schools in each village, a flourishing culture, and that now the number of the illiterate amounts to 98 per cent? Finally, how can one not feel sad when one sees that equality of qualifications, educational or otherwise is not followed by equality of treatment? "An English station-master gets between £18 and £38 per month, an Indian between £5 and £10; an English inspector between £28 and £33, an Indian between £13 and £15; a mechanician between £15 and £25, an Indian between £5 and £10." And it is the same in all the Services. In the Army, Indian officers coming from Sandhurst are treated as inferiors, and in many cases the English ladies do not return the visits paid by their wives. In fact, for the average Englishman, the Hindus, though they be noble Brahmanas or scholars, poets or philosophers, are always *coloured men*, that is to say "something like Kaffirs or Patagonians". If to these grievances, and to many others that want of space prevents us from mentioning, we add the disappointment caused by England which, after having promised India in 1917 "a responsible government within the limits of the British Empire," has kept putting off Home Rule, one can understand that, in spite of the meekness of Gandhi's teachings, the Hindus, who have often learned independence in the school of the West, are strongly excited against England. They accuse her of having altered the course of their development, of having ruined their industries, and of having done them wrong both as regards their spiritual life and their temporal interests. Some Hindus even feel so deep a hatred for the English domination, that the echoes of it often reached the ears of Mme. Viollis: "India is the milch cow of the English people! That they will not go away from us, we Hindus can understand, but we can do without them. We will no longer be treated like children or pariahs." "In order to force *their* civilisation upon us,



they have suspended our evolution. All that they have done here, they have done for themselves and against us. We have had enough of it."

In order to learn the other side of the story, Mme. Viollis pursued her enquiries among the British officials, small and great, as well as among many of their compatriots; and she shows the various viewpoints of the English people on the Indian question. Some are optimistic, some seem indifferent, some wish sincerely to satisfy the aspirations of the Hindus, while others are ingenuously surprised at their claims. Has not the British Government done all that it could for the well-being of India? Has it not constructed thousands and thousands of miles of roads and railways, dug trenches for irrigation, fertilised waste lands, created Agricultural Banks, Co-operative Societies, and assessed taxes with equity? Do not many of the Hindus themselves confess that it is more just and more humane than their own countrymen under whom they work? There is misery, but where does the fault lie if

not in the Hindus themselves because of their state of mind and their ancient customs—fatalism which gives birth to inertia; vegetarian diet and early marriage which create anæmia; a caste system "which puts out of activity sixty millions of people," and last but not least a total absence of public feeling and solidarity? If we go away it is not only England that will have to suffer: left to the rivalry between her princes, the struggles between Mohammedans and Hindus, Brahmanas and Pariahs, socialists and capitalists, materialists and mystics, India will be the prey of anarchy, and will fall under a foreign domination much harder to bear than the British one.

But to speak about the future is as idle as to discuss Indian or British responsibilities. What matters is, that India insists on having her independence. Is England able to comply soon with this demand? We must hope, as does Mme. Viollis, that it will—led to the desired end by a love of justice and the prospect of a peaceful collaboration of two great countries.

M. DUGARD

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*Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence.* BY JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY. (Cape, London. 10s. 6d. net.)

The traveller upon spiritual heights goes always lonely and beset by deep precipices. Sometimes he triumphs, passing up and up till he is lost, as in the sky itself, in spheres beyond our comprehension, yet leaving his memory and his words for our inspiration. More often, perhaps, he falls by the way, and his lot is, in an uncharitable world, our neglect. It is an especial merit in Mr. Murry's study of D. H. Lawrence as he revealed himself in his writings that it shows how the example of spiritual failure on such a scale may be scarcely less illuminating than the victory of the more saintly hero. Few competent opinions deny Lawrence either authentic genius or significance as a teacher; Mr. Murry does not hesitate to declare him of the order of the man Jesus, even though he failed where Jesus did not. He loved humanity not less, but crip-

pled by circumstance lacked the great courage needed to carry the burden of his love, and so strove to kill it.

He fled away from it, he hid his face from it, he sought oblivion from it: in woman. The more avidly he sought oblivion from the consuming flame of love, the less he could find it, the less capable he became of finding it. And slowly and inevitably, the love turned into hate.

Hate first of himself, then of woman, and last of all of "a world of men which had caused him to suffer as scarcely any man has suffered before". Within that flight from love, and its transformation to hate, Mr. Murry brings the whole tale of Lawrence's work and life, and to read this account, astonishing in its insight, masterly in its handling, unswerving in its truthfulness, is to accept Lawrence, not indeed in discipleship but even more deeply in understanding. Certain foolish commentators, unable to see how a suggestion of failure in whatever terms can imply other than denigration, have charged Mr. Murry with



hypocrisy in still professing friendship for the man he thus "attacks". The truth is, in Mr. Max Plowman's words, that "in raising the figure of Lawrence to

tragic eminence Murry has performed the one service necessary to a proper realisation of Lawrence's greatness".

GEOFFREY WEST

*The Heart of Thoreau's Journals.* Edited by ODELL SHEPARD. (George Allen and Unwin. 12s. 6d.)

"The fact is I am a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot." So wrote Henry David Thoreau in 1853, when asked to define his profession. To him the practice of his profession meant the writing of a journal. For this he buried himself in seclusion at Walden, for this he made the experiment of living on a dollar or two a week. His journal, which on his death was big enough to fill thirty-nine volumes, is the record of a rich communion with Nature, a fund of philosophy gleaned through first-hand experience and meditation. He found the whole world in the narrow compass of Concord.

There can be few writers from whom it is easier to reap such a harvest of deep, closely knit thoughts. Thoreau is at once poetical and in lively contact with Nature's more subtle practices. His own description of his journal is perfect. "This may be a calendar of the ebbs and flows of the soul; and on these sheets as a beach the waves may cast up pearls and seaweed." It has been given to Professor Odell Shepard to choose the pearls. What a magnificent string they make! Not a page of this book but can be glanced at haphazard and some shining, quivering thought tasted in all its rich metaphor and close-girt apothegm. Mr. Shepard's policy is to concentrate on Thoreau's earlier years and omit the wastes of his later scientific observations of Nature. Thoreau can stand such dissection; nay, he demands it. It plucks out the heart of his journals. A writer of more continuity would suffer by a piecemeal reading, but Thoreau leaps to his full stature.

It is of great interest to find in Thoreau, despite his arrogance and scorn for society, his too often stressed devo-

tion to the ascetic life, and his contempt for all but immediate divine revelation, a persistent contact with Theosophical ideas. Here is a typical utterance, made at the age of 32:—

I do not prefer one religion or philosophy to another. I have no sympathy with the bigotry and ignorance which make transient and partial and puerile distinctions between one man's faith or form of faith and another's,—as Christian and heathen. I pray to be delivered from narrowness, partiality exaggeration, bigotry. To the philosopher all sects, all nations, are alike. I like Brahma, Hari, Buddha, The Great Spirit, as well as God.

But indeed there is so much thought for a Theosophist in Thoreau's journals that one could quote indefinitely. It is important to realise too that Thoreau, even if in his words he found contact with humanity coarsening, by his actions showed that in his heart he knew the inter-relations of man and man. He helped fugitive slaves, he begged alms for a poor Irishman's family, and learnt much from Emerson, John Brown, and others.

Yet it was the overwhelming joy which Thoreau found in lonely contact with the beauties of the Concord country that dominated his life. "I keep out of doors for the sake of the mineral, vegetable and animal in me," he wrote. "My thought is part of the meaning of the world and hence I use a part of the world to express my thought." Hear Thoreau on Silence:—

As I leave the village, drawing nearer to the woods, I listen from time to time to hear the Hounds of Silence baying the Moon—to know if they are on the track of any game. If there's no Diana in the night, what is it worth? I hark the goddess Diana. The silence rings; it is musical and thrills me. A night in which the silence was audible. I hear the unspeakable.

We too, in this book, may walk with Thoreau—we too hear with him the unspeakable.

G. W. W



*The Criminal: A Study.* By HENRY A. GEISERT. (B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis and London. \$3.00)

This book of 466 pages is written by an ex-chaplain of eight years' experience, apparently in the Missouri State Prison, one of the most notorious penal institutions of the United States. That he is a Roman Catholic appears from the permission to publish, in the following words: "NIHIL OBSTAT. Sti. Ludovici, die 1. Maii, 1930, F. J. Holweck, Censor Librorum," countersigned by "Johannes J. Glennon, Archiepiscopus." All good people may therefore feel assurance that they may read the book, from A to Z, without prejudicing their hope of salvation! While, then, one must be prepared to find at times a certain theological note, it is refreshing to observe that the writer does not force this on his readers, but actually warns against the danger of forcing dogmatic religion on convicts, both before and after their confinement. They are not to be talked to about the wrath of God, sin, or the devil, nor, indeed, of grace and salvation through the blood of Lamb. His wide experience, which coincides with my own observation, is that such dogmatic views, presented to criminals against their will, cause only resentment and refusal to listen to the better.

Mr. Geisert has studied personally about 1,300 prisoners and from these he selects many cases, in which the history and views of convicts are presented, making the book a veritable museum of psychological and moral monstrosities and perversions. These are extreme cases and one must not be misled into thinking that all convicts are of such dispositions.

While entitled "The Criminal," the book is not limited to criminology proper, but discourses also on penology, while psychology and education take up perhaps half the space, directed, of course, to the question of the nature of crime and the proper education of children with a view of diverting them from criminal tendencies. As to the last, educators must be the judges of their value. Mr. Geisert's exposure of the defects

of the modern American prison is admirable and should be read by all interested in the question of crime. Our prisons, as at present managed, are simply breeding places of criminals. Thanks to the pernicious habit of indiscriminately mixing first offenders with hardened criminals, he who enters one of our modern bastilles, should he be not already corrupted, is almost sure to emerge with all sorts of perverted ideas, contracted from his associates. The prison is a sort of forced convention of criminals, where plans are elaborated whereby criminal methods may be perfected and the risks of being caught in future diminished. Much stress is placed on the pernicious effects of idleness among convicts and the necessity for abundant recreation of a healthful kind, both mental and physical. These ideas are quite in line with those of the most modern and liberal penologists.

Mr. Geisert, quite rightly, opposes the frequent use of the insanity plea as an excuse. He opposes, too, the idea that crime in general is a disease and regards it as a bad habit. At the same time he emphasizes the need of a thorough physical and psychological examination of every new-comer, and gives many illustrations of cases where criminal tendencies have been relieved by the removal of physical defects, such as faults of vision or hearing. While conceding that criminality may be at times hereditary, he regards this as much overrated and considers environment as the more potent factor, taking an intermediate ground between these two schools of criminologists.

While, then, regarding the book, if not the work of a specialist, as one which in the main presents a liberal and balanced study of the criminal, one cannot refrain from criticising certain points of view. While well-disposed towards those individual prisoners who have come under his influence, he lacks a certain sympathetic view of the convict in general which is summed up in his frequent use of the opprobrious word "felon". He starts out with a fundamentally false definition of "criminal". He defines a "criminal"



as one who disobeys the law, meaning the law made by man. Those who know that laws are made by fallible and often designing men not infrequently for their own selfish purposes; that they are frequently intended to force on one's fellow man obedience to one's own whims, greeds, or obsessions, or are secured by influence and bribery; and that they are inconsiderately adopted, often repealed and as often left on the books to plague even the most honest and most honourable, will see, that this definition of "criminal," however in accord with legal usage, has no basis in reason. Here, it is against the law, and therefore a "crime," to drive a nail in one's house on Sunday; there, a hundred yards away, over the border in the next state, there is no such law and the same act is not a "crime". One may constitute himself a "criminal," or the reverse, by walking a hundred yards. Laws are simply the rules—good or bad—laid down for playing the game; the player who does not observe the rules is a "criminal"; even cheating or worse, if not specifically prohibited, may be done with impunity—the perpetrator is not a "criminal". A few years ago you could be sent to prison, a "criminal," for marrying your dead wife's sister;

*Transactions of the Fourth International Congress for Psychical Research* (S. P. R. London.)

Among the many papers included, one by Sir Oliver Lodge will specially interest the readers of *THE ARYAN PATH*. It deals with the reasons for the non-recognition of psychical research by the majority of the scientific world. Says Sir Oliver:—

Psychical research is obnoxious to science not because the results are obtained by observation, but because at present we do not know the laws of the phenomena, and have no theory on which to explain them.

More than one writer has pointed out in our pages the particular weakness of this movement. Many years ago Stainton Moses (M. A. Oxon) wrote about it. Why is it that this incapacity to explain what is observed persists so tenaciously?

to-day you may be complimented for your kindness and good sense. Further, Mr. Geisert's defence of the idea of imprisonment as "punishment," his endorsement of flogging and other brutal methods, his ambiguous attitude towards capital punishment while thinking that it is perhaps better to hang a murderer while he is "saved," rather than let him live to backslide, are not in line with the views of the more modern and liberal penologists.

Discounting these, it may be said that the book presents views on the great criminal problems of the day with which every citizen should familiarize himself. As a Roman Catholic clergyman it would be useless to look for the theosophical outlook on human nature, but while a knowledge of this would doubtless have improved his psychological speculations, it is interesting to observe how one led by common-sense may arrive at many conclusions consonant therewith.

H. N. STOKES

[Dr. H.N. Stokes has proved a valuable friend to the prisoner and has rendered him yeoman service as Editor of *The O. E. Library Critic*. Dr. Stokes has also proven his sincere interest in Theosophy through the same channel.—Eds.]

As to acceptance of observed phenomena faithfully and accurately described, the author says:—

We must admit that the recorder or student of any unusual phenomenon, even though a man of standing,—a Cabinet Minister or a Fellow of the Royal Society,—will not be treated by the rest of the scientific world as immaculate, and beyond suspicion of either consciously or unconsciously exaggerating or decorating his record.

Since observed phenomena do not find acceptance, since explanations are not forthcoming from the psychical researcher, and since this state of affairs has been going on for wellnigh half a century, what is the way out? Sir Oliver Lodge says:

I doubt not that in due time the facts and their revolutionary meaning will become part of accepted knowledge. But first they must run the gauntlet of what is after all pardonable and even complimentary scepticism; for the



scepticism is due to the novelty of the facts. No, not exactly to their novelty, for in a sense they are ancient enough,—but to their vast significance, and to the upheaval of ideas which must follow a general acceptance of their truth.

Since phenomena similar to those occurred in ancient times, a matter of vast significance, it is pertinent to ask what the old-world has to offer by way of explanation and instruction. This journal has made a plea, more than once, and it might be repeated: Unless the modern student and researcher of the

psychic and psychological phenomena studies the old-world explanations he must go round and round on a beaten track. Let him gain instruction from the records of the great Ancients and of their modern heirs, the genuine Theosophists. In H. P. Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* and the *Secret Doctrine* much of the instruction is available. Let the psychical researcher go to those explanations not with arrogance and doubt but "gently to hear and kindly to judge".

S. B.

*Man's Highest Purpose.* By KARL WEINFURTER, translated by Prof. Arnold Capleton and Charles Unger. (Rider and Co., London, 10s. 6d.)

In the preface the author leads us to infer that he is connected with the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. He warns us that many false orders exist (especially in the U. S. A.) with their own lore and rituals, masquerading under the name of Rosy Cross.

*All of them, with no exception whatever,* are false Orders, as the actual Rosicrucians have no visible Brotherhood, no Lodge where they meet each other, whereas they do exist, and there is a possibility to get into personal touch with them. (p. 16)

H. P. Blavatsky says that, "strictly speaking, the Rosicrucians do not now even exist, the last of that fraternity having departed in the person of Cagliostro". She also tells us of the origin of the Brotherhood, which was not founded until the middle of the thirteenth century.

The origin of the Brotherhood can be ascertained by any earnest, *genuine* student of Occultism, who happens to travel in Asia Minor, if he chooses to fall in with some of the Brotherhood, and if he is willing to devote himself to the head-tiring work of deciphering a Rosicrucian manuscript—the hardest thing in the world—for it is carefully preserved in the archives of the very Lodge which was founded by the first Kabbalist of that name, but which now goes by another name.

Mr. Weinfurter acknowledges that Madame Blavatsky was an Occultist, and recommends the study of *The Voice of the Silence*. That book, however, says: "*There is but one road to the Path*"—and this would seem obvious.

But Mr. Weinfurter like so many others seems to stress a differentiation of methods by which the Path may be reached. Let it be emphasised at once that Souls are neither eastern nor western. The garments they wear may differ, but the road on which they all have to travel is the same. To stress unduly the garments is to forget the Soul. The Rosicrucian impulse, it would seem, according to the quotation from Madame Blavatsky given above, came from the East.

The author quotes with disapproval—indeed that is what led him to write his book—"the intolerable mental state of the would-be Occult Societies nowadays".

They do not allow the carrying out of any practice, declaring that telepathy or any spiritualistic experiments are very dangerous, though secretly they themselves try to do so or at least would do so, if they could. They say you should first perfectly purify yourself and then take up the practical training, after having secured a leader. They ask you to be a saint first of all, and then allow you to start. By that they mix up the cause with the result, as the Union with God is *only* to be attained by patient training, and no one can become a saint of his own accord. (p. 14).

Frankly, this passage is to the reviewer a hopeless jumble. Theosophy, for instance, as a philosophy of life, warns against dabbling in séances, etc., and gives excellent reasons therefor; it also warns against trying to get psychic powers—the lower iddhi—which are impermanent. If a man *will* experiment, however, he must. The higher spiritual powers come to birth alone with the life



of spotless purity and altruism. "The Union with God is *only* to be attained by patient training." Quite true, but the severe ethical training, scientifically laid down and demonstrated in Theosophy, is quite sufficient to employ the time of an aspirant for the Path for a goodly period. "No one can become a Saint of his own accord." How else can a man become one? Man progresses purely by self-devised and self-induced efforts, no God being able to intervene, either to hinder or to help.

The imputation on the character of students of "would-be Occult Societies" is quite uncalled for, if it be not backed up by evidence. How can Mr. Weinfurter know that they secretly try to go in for spiritualistic experiments, or "at least would do so, if they could"? This sort of unsupported assertion is on a par with several gratuitous assumptions,

one of which is that Madame Blavatsky was misinformed in what she said regarding the Tantras. She fell into error "because she was not told all while staying in India". (p. 95) The inference is that Mr. Weinfurter has been told all. The Editor of the *Occult Review* has wisely said:

Frankly it is difficult to think that H. P. B. was as ignorant as Mr. Weinfurter would like to believe. How high was her ideal of true occultism may be seen from her little work on this subject written for the benefit of the serious inquirer. Much of what passes for white magic in the esoteric circles of the West would be regarded by the higher schools of occultism with a certain amount of suspicion of being akin to the dark side.

From our perusal of Mr. Weinfurter's excursions into mysticism as given by himself, we do not place confidence in his judgment as to what is or what is not black magic.

B. A. (Oxon)

*The Harvest of Leisure*, translated from the Tsure-Zure-Gusa. By RYU-KICHI KURATA. (Wisdom of the East Series—John Murray, London. 3s. 6d.)

Rigid asceticism as much hampers Soul-life and Spirit-realization as unchecked license. The golden mean is hard to strike, but in it the strait path and the narrow way is to be found. The philosophy of this little volume revolves round the idea of the enjoyment of life without its corruption. The original author Yoshida Kenko belonged to the Japan of the 13th-14th centuries. The following gives an excellent idea of the dominant force of his life:—

He little knows the world who says that a man can live in whatever manner he wishes, and that at home and in the usual relations he can lead the religious life adequately. I cannot think this is so. We monks, unlike ordinary people, desire to live so that we may transmit the Unchanging Law of Changes, and how is this to be done if we are to serve the Emperor or to be troubled with family concerns? It is for us to cling to the Unchanging, and having resolved to follow the Buddha we must also follow the quiet life. Yet if we live in the

mountains we must defend ourselves from cold and hunger. So while I declare that the return to epicureanism and fine clothes kindles the flame of worldly desire and renders the religious life impossible, I cannot agree with the extreme view that the monk's life must be wholly desireless. Surely he also must have his desires, though very unlike those of the impassioned worldling. It must be permitted to him to desire his humble bed, his poor clothing, his one bowl of food, his vegetable soup, and these frugal desires are soon satisfied. As to his inward life, if he is free from false shame and pays reverent attention to his rule, he will soon learn to distinguish the right from the wrong in this matter. But being mortal and longing for enlightenment, we monks must certainly surrender the world, for if we lead the ordinary life we shall soon be overcome by passionate desires, and so far from attaining the wisdom of the Buddhas we shall sink into the ignorance of animals.

There are some exquisite bits in this collection of 237 items, and they bring many answers to the question "Where then shall we place the true worth of life?" Witty and pithy anecdotes add greatly to the charm of the book which has an Introduction by the late L. Adams Beck.

S. B.



*The Religion of Jesus.* By TOYOHICO KAGAWA (S. C. M. P., London. 4s.)

Numerous religious movements have begun because of some personal experience of a psychological nature. Here is the story of Toyohiko Kagawa, the ardent servant of his people, a social worker who says that his fount of sacrifice is Jesus Christ. He became converted to Christianity because as a youth, one Sunday morning "he had had a vision of the Crucified Christ, so real and so haunting that he could not escape it, and finally in desperation he had come to his missionary friend to know what to do." There are two points which the reader of this little book needs to ponder over. As there are as earnest and greater social servants even than Toyohiko Kagawa, who follow other religious persuasions or none whatever, we must presume that between altruistic social service and Christianity there can be no direct connection. Secondly, there is as little of logical sequence between Christianity and social service as there is between the psychic experience of Kagawa and the result it produced—his conversion to Christianity. If the young man had enquired as to the rationale of such a psychological experience on that Sunday, he would not have left one religious sect to

accept another. No doubt he would have been converted, but that inner conversion would have brought him the vision of a truly universal brotherhood and of an impersonal deity and led him to serve the souls and not only the bodies of his fellows. This is not to cast any aspersion on his splendid labour of love and the example set, but it is always wise and necessary to evaluate the different currents in a story like this which possesses the power to carry away the minds of men by an emotional surge.

The author has made one reference to Theosophy, which, he says, "could not be understood by babies". Would babies understand the immaculate conception, the virgin birth, the Trinity, the miracles, the doctrine of non-resistance? We trow not. The rational explanations which Theosophy offers have been found in our own practical experience to be understood and appreciated by boys and girls of ten. Karma is more logical than forgiveness of sins; reincarnation more convincing than eternal heaven or hell; Jesus, as a great and glorious Adept, a more rational concept than as the only begotten Son of God;—and children are more uncompromisingly logical than the grown ups.

S. B.

*Emerson and Beyond.* By WILLIAM YERINGTON. (The Ohio State University Press.)

*Emerson.* By PHILLIPS RUSSELL. (Brentano's Publishers, New York.)

*Emerson and Asia.* By FREDERIC IVES CARPENTER. (Harvard University Press, Cambridge.)

Mr. Yerington's book is a digest of Emerson's writings. He seems to have absorbed with an intuitive sympathy the peculiar view-points of Emerson and has been able to present them in a fascinating manner. His attempt is to evolve the outlines of a new philosophy in the light of Emerson's teachings. The only comment that could be made against him is that he has failed to interest himself in the Oriental background of Emerson's thinking.

Mr. Russell's volume is full of useful information and detail as regards the actual events in the life of Emerson, but there is not even an attempt on his part at interpreting the philosophy, much less a desire to discover its Oriental origins.

It is refreshing to turn to Mr. Carpenter's *Emerson and Asia*. Its main theme is the important problem of Emerson's debt to the Orient. It was Emerson's passion to discover new worlds of thought and harmoniously weave them into the fabric of his own mind. He discovered the Neoplatonists, the Vedic and the Upanishadic Seers, the Persian poets and the Chinese thinkers, and made an intensive study of their teachings. This is how he attained to his wonderful versatility.



He gained a clear perception of mystical and spiritual values dormant in the lores of the East, and re-phrased them in a manner intelligible to the Western mind.

Mr. Carpenter has achieved a remarkable success in tracing definite points of Emerson's contact with Eastern thinkers and this enables him to characterise Emerson as the founder of the American renaissance of Orientalism. The chapters on Persian poetry, on the Neoplatonists, and on Arabian literature are extremely interesting. Mr. Carpenter treats the Neoplatonists as Asians, because Asia, to him is but the symbol of a particular quality of consciousness. It is a "synonym for mystery and romance". The Neoplatonists are mysterious and romantic. Plato and the Bible are not reckoned as Asian, because in them there is neither mystery nor romance. This symbolic use of the term Asia is obviously misleading. Fundamentally Asia symbolises the highest logic of spiritual intuition that is found in Plato, as in the Vedas and in the Upanishads. Mr. Carpenter thinks that "Oriental literatures deal with intangible ideas, vague concepts, and often undefined thoughts". It seems, however, that Mr. Carpenter's own acquaintance with Asia and particularly with the Hindu Vedas and the Upanishads is somewhat superficial, his sources of information have been often unreliable and misleading. His chapter on "The Wisdom of the Brahmins"

proves to be the weakest—an instance would be revealing: In that chapter he says that the Hindu conception of Fate means a rigid necessity and Emerson added his own new note of joy, which is unknown to Hindu scriptures, to transform it into a "*Beautiful Necessity*". To Emerson himself however the right Hindu conception of Fate is not a rigid necessity without freedom and without joy, though he well knew that a wrong interpretation of the concept had prevailed in India for a time. Emerson in his famous essay on Fate says:—

It was a poetic attempt to lift this mountain of Fate to reconcile this despotism of race with liberty, which led the Hindus to say, "Fate is nothing but the deeds committed in a prior state of existence."

The true Hindu conception of Fate or Karma means the *absolute freedom* of action which every individual enjoys in his ethical and spiritual life. It is this Fate which is true freedom and joy that Emerson learnt from the Hindu Shastras and preached to the Western world. Fate is action, and action leads to the Brahman; "the Brahman is Bliss"—says the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. Joy is an incessantly recurring note in the Vedic and the Upanishadic literature and far from being absent it has been singled out again and again as the Key to the problem of Being. In the *Taittiriya Upanishad* we read:

Joy is Brahma; for, from Joy are born all these things; by Joy, when born, they live and Joy they enter in the end.

D. G. V.



## CORRESPONDENCE

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### H. P. B. AND SLANDER

In last month's "Ends and Sayings," reference was made to the libel suit brought against the *New York Sun* by Madame Blavatsky, and of the public retraction by that journal of the offending articles after the suit came automatically to an untimely end on account of her death. It may interest readers to know that in 1877 Madame Blavatsky wrote to the *New York World* of the "slandrous reports, vile insinuations, and innuendoes" that had "rained about" her. Her trusted friends were the recipients of anonymous letters containing the "foulest aspersions" on her.

At various times I have been charged with : (1) drunkenness ; (2) forgery ; (3) being a Russian spy ; (4) with being an anti-Russian spy ; (5) with being no Russian at all, but a French adventuress ; (6) with having been in jail for theft ; (7) with being the mistress of a Polish count in Union Square ; (8) with murdering seven husbands ; (9) with bigamy ; (10) with being the mistress of Col. Olcott, (11) also of an acrobat.

She ends thus :

But I wish to say for myself just this ; that I defy any person in America to come forward and prove a single charge against my honour. I invite everyone possessed of such proof as will vindicate them in a court of justice to publish it over their own signatures in the newspapers. I will furnish to anyone a list of my several residences, and contribute towards paying detectives to trace my every step. But I hereby give notice that if any more unverifiable slanders can be traced to responsible sources, I will invoke the protection of the law, which, it is the theory of your national Constitution, was made for heathens as well as Christian denizens.

Madame Blavatsky had to wait until 1890 before she was able to trace such slanders, and not vague innuendoes, to a responsible source, and *then* it was she was able to act and to prove her case conclusively, witness the voluntary retraction in the *N. Y. Sun*.

Bombay

B. A. (OXON)

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### SOCIAL WORK OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

[Recently the League of Nations has been criticized for its ineffectiveness in political matters. This has led to an enquiry as to what work other than political debates does the League engender. Below is an answer and a suggestion ; we hope the authorities at Geneva will pay heed to the latter.—EDS.]

From its primary aim of war prevention, which is universally known, the League of Nations has extended its influence in sociological fields in every country in the world. Lack of understanding and the correlated evils of bad economics, wrong sociology and a resulting wrong psychology are the factors that engender war. It is brought on by the wrong spirit existing between nations. The League of Nations tries to ameliorate the evils of one-sided view-points.

Other ills also foment wars in the long run. They are evils and problems appertaining to work and health. Before the war they existed in all countries, but the world conflict brought them more to the surface and in certain cases increased their magnitude. To eradicate social scourges has been one of the aims of the League since its inception.

That section devoted to the problems of human welfare has made strides in decreasing the activities of the White Slave Traffic, now called the Traffic in Women and Children, for the traffic covers Oriental as well as European fields. Girl-children are still bought and sold in certain parts of China, though in India vigilance is reported to be so effective that there is no trade to speak of in that field.

A committee was formed to investigate the question, and the League drew up an annual report and asked all governments to keep both League and Committee in touch with the progress made in preventive measures in different countries. The need for watching ports, warning girls against accepting certain theatrical contracts for abroad, and the



useful work of women police in the different capitals, were questions brought up for discussion.

The League next organised an enquiry. In 1927 and 1928 it published two reports which shocked the world. These proved that traffic in humans still continues on a considerable scale. They uncovered all the horror and wretchedness of victims who have been inveigled in the trafficker's toils. Though the activities of those international enemies of society have decreased, their nefarious dealings are not yet stamped out. Their destruction can only be accomplished by the League's widespread vigilance and with the co-operation of society in every country where the traffickers have been known at one time or another to spread their net.

It is of importance to note that the change of name of this trade in humans from the title of *White Slave Traffic* to the more comprehensive one of *Traffic in Women and Children*, was brought about so that all agreed regulations instituted in the different countries to cope with the menace would apply as much to the natives of their colonies as to their own white women and children. For instance, young Indian girls, if faced with the dangers above outlined, would be entitled to the same succour as any member of the white population who might have fallen in some trafficker's trap.

Another traffic of deadly consequence to humanity is the trade in dangerous drugs. Here again the League has worked hard to abolish the commerce in opium and its subsidiaries, morphine and heroin. Cocaine, which is made from the coca leaf, also received the League's close attention. Drug-taking increased very much after the war and certain narcotics, such as opium, that had hitherto been confined to Eastern countries like India and China, found their way to Europe and America.

The Opium Committee urged all nations to control the amount of drugs which passed in and out of their frontiers and to increase the penalties for drug

smuggling. (Enormous profits are made on small quantities of drugs such as morphine, cocaine and heroin—this last being perhaps the deadliest of all). In many countries a great deal of the drug evil has been stamped out as the result of those severer methods of punishment advocated by the League. Switzerland was the only country that demurred at first from taking steps to put down the traffic, for it had vested interests in the industry. That country has long been the centre of drug manufacture of every description and is also a nucleus for drug smugglers. The fact that so many of the drugs are exported for medicinal purposes added at the time to the problem of controlling their movements.

While the committee conferred, they envisaged the difficulties of stamping out the drug trade altogether—the problem of vested interests in the East as well as in the West, as set forth by representatives of the opium-smoking and opium-growing countries.

In 1917 the Chinese Government did their best to stamp out the opium-growing industry, but their efforts were counteracted by the smuggling of tons of morphia into China every year from Europe. Another Eastern country, Persia, which by the way introduced opium into China originally, objected to a limited production on the grounds that her principal financial resources lay in her poppy fields. India had another reason for considering the limit of opium production suggested by the European powers too low, seeing that in certain parts of India, when no doctor is available, people eat raw opium as a remedy for fever and find it beneficial.

The difficulties of allowing one country to eat opium from which it derived no harm and forbidding another country to smoke it, were apparent to all the experts gathered under the ægis of the Opium Committee.

In 1924, Switzerland had to carry out the Opium Convention which had been started in 1912 and which the League took up later when the long interruption of war was over. India herself has



made strides in the right direction by setting out to cut down her exports in opium from March, 1926. The actual reduction began in 1927. In ten years' time she will be only exporting what is required for strictly medicinal purposes.

From drugs to health is but a step. The fields of health are wide, but there also the League has made its influence felt. It has investigated conditions where epidemics have broken out and sent forth contingents of experts, not only to compile reports, but to propagate valuable information and improved hygiene among the victims.

The progress against dread diseases, bubonic plague, cholera, smallpox, typhus, has received their attention and aid. The Great Plagues which swept Europe in the past are still a reality in the East. From time to time these waves of pestilence spread over India, China and other Eastern countries, taking toll in thousands of lives. The conditions that bring about virulent epidemics are uncleanness, vermin and imperfect sanitation.

An office has been established in Singapore with a view to checking and reducing diseases and preventing the spread of infection from one port to the other. News is sent out by wireless, warning ships of infected spots. This office is a sort of health police station. That was in 1925. Now the League is considering opening a similar health vigilance bureau in Algeria, which would render service to the whole of Africa.

The League has surely done and is going to do valuable work not only in the realms of politics from a rational, international view-point. It is training the peoples of the earth to discard their mutual distrust and to gain a truer spiritual conception of one another. No efforts are spared in the attempt to give the world a better all-round civilisation, comprising security, higher sociological ideals, fairer economics, together with decent labour conditions and good health.

But I think that the League's influence would be even wider spread than it is if it employed keener methods of

telling the world what it is doing for its welfare. To achieve universal success the League should not lose the common touch. It should endeavour to awaken average men and women to a more active consciousness of its significance. It should bring to their notice its universal human interest and the good it is trying to awaken in human beings for the betterment of posterity. This world-wide society requires a better and brighter publicity to bring the meaning of it home to the people, and make them realise that they too must work for it, singly or in communities, because the League of Nations is their League, working in their interests and in the interests of their children, and not just a handful of statesmen at Geneva conferring over frontiers, minorities and sanctions that sound obscure to the ordinary run of human beings.

The true principles of the League might be summed up in the term—Practical Idealism. To that might be added, profitably enough, a spirit of practical and universal publicity. The delegates of Geneva have gone a long way; they have covered arid ground, and surmounted stiff obstacles in their fight for the security of mankind. They are not yet out of the wood, though the worst of the spade-work is over. But, to talk in parables, after spade-work comes the weeding.

To keep healthy and progressive a practical idealism that is to benefit all mankind, a continual weeding out and planting in process must take place. Every new idea must be tested, every outworn one scrapped to make way for progress if the League is to achieve the world-wide betterment it purports to work for, and towards which, in certain respects, it has already gained a tremendous amount of ground.

London

ODETTE TCHERNINE

[ODETTE TCHERNINE is the author of *Wild Morning* which has gained a place for itself among desired novels, necessitating a new edition.—EDS.]



## A NEGATIVE DOCUMENT

I have just read over twice in your April issue the review by Dr. L. P. Jacks of *Mahatma Gandhi: His own story*. I read it first to myself and a second time to my wife for we are both of English lineage and much interested in the Indian problem from our experience of having lived in India and having known for many years the Indian people. We both agree that Dr. Jacks's article is most valuable as a negative document.

Negative documents have come down to us through the centuries in Christian literature written as anathemas against the "Pagan Religions". Those who issued them, took care to destroy as far as possible all material regarding these philosophies, leaving to us little but their own negative documents to use in rebuilding the writings of those great pagan schools. Such early writings have been of inestimable value to us, and no doubt Dr. Jacks's article will be so understood by many and appreciated. Alas, it so plainly reveals the almost complete lack of ability in the Western mind to understand the moral basis of Oriental life! It is this lack on our side that is the tragedy of the whole situation.

Dr. Jacks arraigns Mr. Gandhi for practising selfish "self-purification" to the undoing of three hundred million of his countrymen and other millions of Britain, although Mr. Gandhi plainly voices his universal dedication and service.

My national service is part of the training I undergo for freeing my soul from the bondage of flesh. . . . When that fineness and rarity of spirit which I long for have become incapable of any evil; when nothing harsh or haughty occupies my thought-world then, and not till then, will my non-violence move the hearts of the world.

Such soul analysis and aspiration are among the records of all responsible lives, Christian or Hindu. They were heard two thousand years ago in Galilee—and yet Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers and drove them from the temples.

Dr. Jacks throughout his article conveys a high opinion of Mr. Gandhi as

an adversary. He speaks of his "non-violent non-cooperative principle" as a "deadly weapon of offence," acknowledges it as "more exasperating and more painful than open violence".

He criticises Mr. Gandhi for using such weapons although it is not yet fifteen years back in British and American history since bombing planes and poison gas grenades were used.

In condemning Mr. Gandhi for choosing such means Dr. Jacks has overlooked the fact that it has been the British and not Mr. Gandhi who have compelled this selection, for it is well known that no fire arms or responsible and final voice in government are permitted by the British in India except under British supervision. It is this very supervision with its lack of sympathy that has developed the strength in "non-cooperation" and given this arm its "deadly power". In the suppression of human liberty Britain has again aborted her own ends. Such is the tragedy of human evolution.

HARRY HUNTINGTON SHUTTS  
*California*

## THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

In 1888 Madame Blavatsky wrote in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 204-5):—

The strange statement made in one of the Stanzas: "The Songs of Fohat and his Sons were *radiant* as the noon-tide Sun and the Moon combined;" and that the four Sons on the *middle* four-fold Circle "*saw* their father's songs and *heard* his Solar-selenic radiance;" is explained in the Commentary in these words: "The agitation of the *Fohatic* Forces at the two cold ends (North and South Poles) of the Earth which resulted in a multicoloured radiance at night, have in them several of the properties of Akâsa (Ether) *colour* and sound as well." ... "Sound is the characteristic of Akâsa (Ether); it generates air, the property of which is touch; which (by friction) becomes productive of Colour and Light." ... (Vishnu Purâna)

Even so far back as forty years ago the phenomenon of sound accompanying and produced by the phenomenon of



polar lights had been observed, and even now Modern Science does not seem to have advanced much further, possibly because if it had ever read the above quotation it would have regarded it, as Madame Blavatsky shrewdly surmised, as "archaic nonsense". But concerning the Northern Lights Professor S. Chapman wrote interestingly in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* not very long ago. He tells of the auroral zone along which the lights appear every clear night. "This zone is not centred at the North Pole, but at the pole of the earth's magnetic axis." In these regions "the sight is often magnificent in form, colour and motion".

The height of the lights from the ground, according to prolonged investigation, is usually not less than 60 miles, though in a few cases a distance as low as 54 miles has been recorded. Because of the great elevation it is possible that an aurora may be seen from a distance of 750 miles. But there are several reports of Auroræ which are near the ground. These are rare and have not been scientifically corroborated, but the observers have been people whose good faith could not be impugned. Professor Chapman rather favours the occurrence of such low auroræ, since there have been many reports of sounds accompanying the lights and it is difficult to think we should hear sounds at a distance of 60 miles above. The sounds have been described as "swishing, crackling, rustling". In *The Secret Doctrine*, the words "whistling, hissing and cracking" are used. When will Science turn her eyes towards the past in order to leap further into the future?

London

T.

#### BROTHERHOOD AND BOOKS

A recent copy of a lecture delivered by Mr. John Galsworthy at Princeton University this spring recalls to my mind the article "A League of Books" appearing in the May number of THE ARYAN PATH. Mr. Galsworthy pointedly remarks upon the dangers of overworked printing presses.

The number of volumes issued each year continually gains on the number of the population in all Western countries. . . . The danger in this age is not of our remaining ignorant, it is that we should lose the power of thinking for ourselves.

He later makes an impassioned but, alas, not a very constructive plea for Peace among Nations. He thus urges, "Mood in favour of Peace! If there is not to be Peace between the great so-called civilized nations, then without exaggeration each country that indulges in war (for a like fate will befall all) will become as a shadow of itself and slink into the pit of the Past. This is not a cry of Alarm; it is the warning of common sense."

Where shall we find those great ideals which will unite man to man regardless of differences in race, colour and language? There have been great teachers, philosophers, poets, writers in all countries who have had glimpses of the Ideal of Universal Brotherhood. Could not, then, a start be made in the "League of Books" of collating and collecting the unselfish and yet simple expressions of the idealists of all ages and eras? We buy collections of "The World's Best Short Stories" or "One Hundred Worst Ghost Stories," then why could not a collection of "The World's Noblest Ideas" be made available in every language?

There will be those among us who will see failure ahead of such schemes for Brotherhood. Let them renew hope from the words of H. P. Blavatsky who early in her life's work said "we are labouring for a brighter morrow," and further:—

The suppression of one single bad *cause* will suppress not one, but a variety of effects. And if a Brotherhood or even a number of Brotherhoods may not be able to prevent nations from occasionally cutting each other's throats, still unity in thought and action, and philosophical research into the mysteries of being, will always prevent some, while trying to comprehend that which has hitherto remained to them a riddle, from creating additional causes in a world already so full of woe and evil.

Let us hope that such men as Galsworthy will consider seriously the problems and the necessary ways and means.

Bombay.

B. T.



## ECHOES OF THEOSOPHY

*"The sun of Theosophy must shine for all, not for a part. There is more of this Movement than you have yet had an inkling of."*—MAHATMA M.

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A moral lesson is like a liniment in a bottle: it helps nobody till after it's rubbed in around the sore spot. And the best way to rub it in is to handle the job yourself. If you let other people do it, they take the skin off.—H. WINSLOW (*Saturday Evening Post*)

Our lack of sincerity about our likes and dislikes makes it easy for the creators of ugliness to "get away with it". We are afraid to say frankly, "This means nothing to me; I can find nothing pleasing in it" when a fresh hideous experiment is put before us. . . . Why do we tolerate hideous sculpture, noisy, untuneful music, garish painting, indecent books, and crude decoration? One of the reasons is that we mistake experimentalism for progress—and lack of self-control for originality.—M. I. CRAWSHAY (*To-day & To-morrow*)

Respectability has become a joke; right and wrong, inextricably mingled. We are all so used to having "the facts of life" paraded before us in their ugliest possible aspect that we no longer become indignant. We can no longer be shocked at anything, because we have become used to everything. But we can still, some of us, be repelled by vulgarity and bad taste; and we can most of us be bored.

—LOUISE M. FIELD (*North American Review*)

The true servants of God are men of the spirit. In them we find something more than the generous qualities of courage, something greater than loyalty to country and home, something higher than the attractive gifts of culture and kindness.—(*The Times*)

So long as those of us who are comfortably placed refuse to help, and even oppose, measures for relieving hideous discomfort affecting vast numbers, so long must our "crisis" deepen and darken until it ends in the only imaginable way.

—HAMILTON FYFE (*The Spectator*)

I do not believe that mysticism is a mere mental aberration. I am more inclined to believe that the human consciousness is a developing thing, and that the mystical consciousness represents a higher stage than we have reached. At this higher level the problem of evil seems to vanish. Somehow it is seen to be no longer a problem. I know nothing of this state by personal experience, but I believe that some other men do.—J. W. N. SULLIVAN (*The Daily Express*)

Man has founded all his calculations upon a mathematical system fundamentally false. His sums work out right for his own purposes, because he has crammed and constrained his planet into accepting his premises. Judged by other laws, though the answers would remain correct, the premises would appear merely crazy; ingenious, but crazy.—V. SACKVILLE-WEST (*All Passion Spent*)



## ENDS AND SAYINGS

"———ends of verse

*And sayings of philosophers."*

HUDIBRAS.

There is almost always a touch of inspiration in whatever Mr. Galsworthy communicates to his reader. The nature of inspiration however difficult to define, has this ever-present factor about it: the inspired man cannot help passing on the light to those who contact his message. In his Romanes lecture delivered last May at Oxford, and now published in pamphlet form, Mr. Galsworthy offers substantial help to budding as well as struggling novelists, who yearn to create immortal characters. We are, however, interested in the psychological aspect of the problem. Modestly he advances "suspicions rather than conclusions" but in his main contention Theosophical psychology meets a familiar face. Mr. Galsworthy describes "the make up of the creative mind," as composed of two parts, the conscious or directive mind, and the sub-conscious.

More fluidly, perhaps, one may think of the sub-conscious mind as a sort of lava of experience, over which the conscious mind has formed in a crust more or less thin, and more or less perforated by holes through which the lava bubbles. And we may think of what we loosely call creative genius as a much more than normal perforation of the crust, combined with a very high aptitude for shaping the emergent lava into the characters of fiction, into pictures, music or what not.

Mr. Galsworthy substantiates the above by his personal experience. His characters emerge "from the store-cupboard of the sub-conscious"; they are not controlled by his directive conscious mind, but are like "controls" at spiritualistic séances who play important parts in the production of phenomena when the conscious mind is reduced to the quiescent condition of the medium. The comparison must not be pushed far, for in this particular case the directive mind is not a medium but a mediator, and there is no likelihood of moral lapse of cheating and fraud. Hereby hangs the point we want to make: the sub-conscious mind needs analysis. Is the whole of it creative? Morally beneficent? Inspiring and uplifting? Theosophy repeats the teaching of ancient Hindu psychology, and using the terms of Mr. Galsworthy's pamphlet we might say that there are three constituents and not two of which note should be taken. The normal human consciousness is permeated by a sub-consciousness and a *Super-consciousness*. The prophet, the poet, the magician create with the help of the Super-consciousness, the directing conscious mind of which is the mediator. The pseudo-creator and false creator struggle in the muddy



waters of the sub-conscious, and their creations, in course of time, become corpses and are thrown out on the shifting sands of the Impermanent. Such may be compared to the passive medium.

There are two powers of the one omnipresent and ever-present Life and so the *Gîtâ* says that "light and darkness are the world's eternal ways". Mr. Galsworthy correctly "suspects" that "the substratum of the human being" is "identical with the energy of which everything else alive is made". In the human make-up light and darkness are present—birth and death, immortality and transitoriness, the sub- and the super-conscious mind are phases thereof. There is the man's evil genius and there is his Guardian-angel, the former is the denizen of the world of the sub-conscious, the latter is the citizen in the kingdom of Heaven—the realm of the Super-consciousness. Psycho-analysis, by its methods, stirs this sub-conscious; it may be found helpful at times but only when it deals with the contents of the sub-conscious; unless it revolutionizes its ideas on the subject of the human constitution it must fail to render soul-service of a constructive and beneficent kind. Psycho-analysis, whenever successful, is but a cathartic; it can never be a spiritual nourisher.

Immediately arises the enquiry about the ways and means to contact the Guardian-angel, as also to cast out the evil genius, both of which energies dwell

within man. Theosophy repeats the instruction of the great ancient psychologists, and starts by affirming that primarily it is a matter of ethics. According to the Science of the Soul, morality is a very different thing from what it is taken to be in the conventional or the religious worlds, and still more so from the license which passes for morality in the sex-mad society of to-day. Our readers' attention may be drawn to a useful pamphlet entitled *Mediatorship* (U. L. T. Pamphlet No. 13) which should be studied in conjunction with *The Creation of Character in Literature* by John Galsworthy. The ground must first be cleared by theoretical knowledge before a practical approach to the Super-consciousness of the Guardian-angel is made.

Long have the Zimbabwe Ruins perplexed archæologists and travellers. In a long article in the June *Blackwood's Magazine*, Mr. P. S. Nazaroff hopes that he has read the riddle, a secret, he says, which Prof. Frobenius came nearest to solving. After stressing the fact that Rhodesia is studded with five hundred ruins of the same style and archæological character as those of Zimbabwe, if less perfect and imposing, he disposes of opposing conclusions reached by two schools of investigators, and proceeds to an ably built up argument which may be summarised thus: The first striking peculiarity of Zimbabwe and the other ruins is the total absence of roofs. Massive walls carefully



enclose something from access by living men or beasts, from without and beneath, but *not from birds*, and birds of one kind only, to judge from the steles and small columnar turrets which seem designed for nesting or as perching places. The "something" did not fear exposure to the elements and atmospheric influences. Nowhere in the neighbourhood are there ancient burial places or traces of interments, yet the people who built the ruins must have been very numerous. A long, narrow, gloomy corridor leads in Zimbabwe to the "Sacred Enclosure". There is a large niche in the walls which may have been "the place where the Sacred Fire was guarded in special urns, clearly a sort of massive lamp". The writer then quotes from the *Zend Avesta* regarding dakhmas, in order to support his view that "almost all the ruins of Rhodesia and the Transvaal are dakhmas [Towers of Silence]".

"At the first glance at the 'Elliptical Temple' of Zimbabwe," he says, "its external resemblance to the Towers of Silence at Bombay at once strikes the eye; we only miss the vultures sitting on the walls." A long, narrow, gloomy passage flanked by high walls led from the main entrance to the "Sacred Enclosure".

The lofty inner walls were necessary to shelter the mourners, not only from the ghastly sight of the decomposing bodies but also from the air infected with stench and corruption. The cortège

would pass along this corridor to the "Sacred Enclosure," which was the *sagri* of the Parsees, the place where burned the perpetual fires, where were offered up prayers for the departed.

As to when it all happened: Mr. Nazaroff discounts the prehistoric origin of the ruins and assigns no date earlier "than about 700 or 1000 B. C.—that is, before the life and teaching of Zoroaster". Where is the reliable authority for this actual date? Aristotle who was not one to make a statement without a good reason for it, assigned to Zoroaster a date of no less than 6000 years before the days of Plato. Plutarch similarly places him 2500 years before the Trojan war; Diogenes Laertius quotes Hermodorus, the follower of Plato, as authority in assigning that date, and further supports his view by quoting Xanthus of Lydia, according to whom Zoroaster lived 6000 years before Xerxes. Strictly oriental authorities also differ, and modern scholars are undecided as to the exact date. To try to 'fix' a date for these ancient monuments with the aid of an uncertain and unfixed era of Zoroaster ranging from 7000 to 700 B. C. is to say the least, unsatisfactory. In his conclusion Mr. Nazaroff writes:

We find respect of the Sacred Fire among the tribes of South-west Africa . . . May not this cult of fire be a relic of the distant past, the respect of the Sacred Element, the Emblem of Ahura Mazda, brought over to Africa from Asia by the fire-worshipping followers of Zoroaster.