

THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL
MOVEMENT, AND
THE BROTHERHOOD
OF HUMANITY



THE STUDY OF
OCCULT SCIENCE AND
PHILOSOPHY, AND
ARYAN LITERATURE

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July, 1952

THIS would be the argument of the visitor from the distant planet . . . The soul emerges from the unknown, begins to work in and with matter, is reborn again and again, makes karma, develops the six vehicles for itself, meets retribution for sin and punishment for mistake, grows strong by suffering, succeeds in bursting through the gloom, is enlightened by the true illumination, grasps power, retains charity, expands with love for orphan humanity, and thenceforth helps all others who remain in darkness until all may be raised up to the place with the "Father in Heaven" who is the Higher Self.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

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(b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and

(c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

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A H M

Spirit is matter *on the seventh plane*; matter is Spirit—on the lowest point of its cyclic activity; and both—are MAYA. —H. P. BLAVATSKY

THEOSOPHY

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THE DUAL ASPECT OF THEOSOPHY

THE relationship between the body of students known as U.L.T. and the Theosophical teachings neither is nor should be easy to establish. The presumed identity between doctrines and organizations is the root of every authoritarian structure, and, while U.L.T. is not in any formal sense an organization, its activities are undeniably carried on in concert by human beings.

It can be said, accurately enough, that U.L.T. exists to make the teachings of Theosophy available for all those who wish to hear of them or study them. Yet it is not the province of U.L.T. to inform inquirers as to how these teachings *must* be regarded. They are a free offering, with no obligations of belief attached. H. P. Blavatsky once responded to those who criticized her magazine *Lucifer* for not "devoting every inch of space to theosophical and occult teachings," by saying that these inquirers, whether they realized it or not, were asking, "in other words, why it refuses to be dogmatic and bigoted." The difference between what H.P.B.'s theosophical critics demanded and what she supplied was the difference between presentation and claim of authority, for a deluge of doctrine could only be the latter. The exoteric aspect of the Theosophical Movement is indicated by devotion to freedom of thought—freedom of thought "as opposed to forms and dogmatism."

Freedom of thought implies the desire for knowledge and the determination to investigate. "Iconoclasm towards illusions" also plays its part in the Theosophical Movement because, as the scholastic philosopher Peter Abelard said, "it is through doubt that we

come to investigation, and through investigation that we come to truth." The inquirer into Theosophy is entitled to all the "doubts," reservations and qualifications he wishes, in respect to what he finds recorded by H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge. He will also, of course, be paradoxically instructed by *The Bhagavad Gita* to "cast aside all doubts," but no theosophist worthy of the name will ever imply that this counsel is to be applied to *any specific teaching* or teachings. The doubt which the student must cast aside is the doubt of suspicion, not the doubt that some formulation with which he is presently confronted can represent Absolute Truth.

But why would a student feel impelled to suspect doctrines which are simply presented and *not asserted* as "absolute truth"? It was precisely at this point that H. P. Blavatsky hoped members of the original Society would stand as examples before the world. In her *Key to Theosophy* she wrote that "When one party or another thinks himself the sole possessor of absolute truth, it becomes only natural that he should think his neighbor absolutely in the clutches of Error or the Devil. But once get a man to see that none of them has the whole truth, but that they are mutually complementary, that the complete truth can be found only in the combined views of all, after that which is false in each of them has been sifted out—then true brotherhood in religion will be established." Can we doubt that this admonition will always have a field for application *within* Theosophical circles as well as in the world at large?

Is H.P.B.'s Theosophy, then, the "whole truth"? She herself has said that it was not. Do the doctrines she presents contain "absolute truths"? She herself has said that this is beyond the scope of any doctrine. She has said that Theosophical teachings will need no essential revisions, but that "claim" also is to be checked by those facts, processes and laws of nature which have come to be known. Here we come to that area of synthesis for the "exoteric" and "esoteric" aspects of Theosophy which associations of theosophical students attempt to extend. The exoteric has to do with methods and attitudes of mind toward investigation; the esoteric with the *content* of teachings presented by those who have been called Masters of Wisdom. Yet the instructions H.P.B. herself received are passed on for each to regard as he will. Such will have reality to him only insofar as the reality is created by each for himself, and within himself. This is the

process by which *esoteric* theosophy is realized, and no amount of preachments or inducements will serve to hasten it.

If students were told how they are to regard H.P.B.'s writings, if her books were pressed upon them as Authority, the meaning of those pages would always be something less than that true authority of self-knowledge which is required for genuine conviction. For each, to feel he "knows," must make up his mind in his own way and in his own time. Here, we see, is a subtle paradox: Both H.P.B. and Judge wrote with "a tone of settled conviction." But such conviction, if presented by those who also say that students should "accept unreservedly the opinions of no man, living or dead," must be accounted as straightforwardness rather than device. If we are enjoined to be true *only* to our *own* convictions, by teachers who have strong convictions themselves, we must assume that no hidden messianic motives are involved. Thus there is less rational ground for doubting the integrity or reliability of such teachers.

U.L.T. is enjoined by its declaration of purposes to continue this subtle tradition. Its "loyalty to the great founders of the Theosophical Movement" must embody loyalty to the encouragement of free, unhampered, and unconfined investigation. This is the atmosphere which discourages all *unnecessary* doubts. It is psychological pressure toward conformity which turns normal, investigatory doubt into suspicion, suspicion which hampers the student from learning all that may be learned from the writers of Theosophical literature.

HEROISM

Great aims are costly; tempting to heroic magnanimities of doing and daring; to noble independencies and trusts. The righteous leans never on the reeds of circumstance. The sufficiency is within, he hates dependence. His conservatism is security against all the blandishments of fashion; the encroachments of habit; the sorceries of the world; all enslavements to times, persons, traditions; the selling of birthrights for indulgencies of sin. Illustrious in being and bearing, he tramples idols, idolatries under foot, constant in his worship of the veriest and loftiest ideals.

—A. BRONSON ALCOTT

THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS

ONE of the most interesting things about the way in which H. P. Blavatsky went about her work is her consistent avoidance of any limiting or purely "doctrinal" definition of Theosophy. Definitions are not lacking, however. She started out in the first issue of the *Theosophist*—for October, 1879—with two important articles, "What Is Theosophy?" and "What Are the Theosophists?", in both providing categorical statements on the character of Theosophy. In the first article, she states,

Theosophy is, then, the archaic *Wisdom Religion*, the esoteric doctrine once known in every ancient country having claims to civilization.

What, then, is the "esoteric doctrine"? Its first concern, manifestly, as she developed the subject, is with the First Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*—with the content, that is, of this proposition, for *The Secret Doctrine* would not be published, nor even finally written, for another eight or nine years. H.P.B. seems to "resist," however, any tendency to an "ABC" description of Theosophical doctrines, in formulating her definition. Instead, she often moves from a discussion of great first principles to the psychology of spiritual perception. In this, perhaps, we have a clue to what she is striving after in her making of definitions. A definition, after all, is of little value unless it is understood, so that the means of recognizing the essential character of Theosophy is wholly as important as any intimation of its philosophical "content." Accordingly, Theosophy is as much defined as a method of approach, an attitude of mind, a temper of aspiration, as it is a "body of knowledge."

Thus, in this article, borrowing from Vaughan, who, she says, provides a "far better, more philosophical definition" than Webster, she affirms:

"A Theosophist is one who gives you a theory of God or the works of God, which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis." In this view every great thinker and philosopher, especially every founder of a new religion, school of philosophy, or sect, is necessarily a Theosophist. Hence, Theosophy and Theo-

sophists have existed ever since the first glimmering of nascent thought made man seek instinctively for the means of expressing his own independent opinion.

Again, in "What Are the Theosophists?"—after noting that "he who would seriously attempt to fathom the psychological sciences, must come to the sacred land of Aryavarta"—she lists some of the sources of Theosophical ideas, and then declares:

As to the transcendental side of the ancient Theosophy, it is also high time that the Theosophical Society should explain. With how much, then, of this nature-searching, God-seeking science of the ancient Aryan and Greek mystics, and of the powers of modern spiritual mediumship, does the Society agree? Our answer is: with it all. But if asked what it believes in, the reply will be: "*As a body—Nothing.*" The Society, as a body, has no creed, as creeds are but the shells around spiritual knowledge, and Theosophy in its fruition is spiritual knowledge itself—the very essence of philosophical and theistic inquiry. Visible representative of Universal Theosophy, it can be no more sectarian than a Geographical Society, which represents universal geographical exploration without caring whether the explorers be of one creed or another. . . . Having no accepted creed, our Society is very ready to give and take, to learn and teach, by practical experimentation, as opposed to mere passive and credulous acceptance of enforced dogma. It is willing to accept every result claimed by any of the foregoing schools or systems, that can be logically and experimentally demonstrated. Conversely, it can take nothing on mere faith, no matter by whom the demand is made.

This was the platform of the Society, the basis of its invitation to members. Here, it said to the public, you will find only the highest moral and spiritual objectives; here you will find hospitality to every mode of truth, and every mode of knowing it. There is no place for assertion, for insistent formulas, in Theosophy. Like the later published *Secret Doctrine* of H.P.B., any doctrine presented for the consideration of the members, by any of the members, would be given an impartial hearing, but it could claim consideration, "not by reason of any appeal to dogmatic authority, but because it adheres closely to Nature, and follows the laws of uniformity and analogy."

It was against this background and on this basis that H.P.B. began the formulation and elaboration of the principles, the doctrines and tenets of the "Wisdom-Religion" of which she had spoken. No

sooner was the Society organized than she went to work "recording the Message." It was here that critics of the Society found at least the appearance of a contradiction. At the outset was announced a broad platform promising a complete democracy of ideas. The Society was likened by H.P.B. to a modern scientific association, a "geographical society," in which, in normal experience, there are numerous participants, all contributing to the sum of its knowledge or information, and if they do not contribute equally, at least the quality of the facts assembled is more or less uniform. It soon became evident, however, that no such "equality" existed in the comparison of H.P.B.'s writings with those of other Theosophists. H.P.B.'s "contributions" unmistakably outshone all others, so that there could be, for sensible men, no serious comparison. On first inspection, then, the Society seems to be something of a façade, so far as its proclaimed equality is concerned. In the East, the formal character of a Western research body in no way prevented intuitive students from recognizing in H.P.B. a Guru according to the ancient tradition. Some became disciples, eager learners of what she would teach, leaving the Society to its game of parliamentary procedures and rules of impartiality.

But H.P.B., although she may have been a Guru—one of the very great—did not appear to the West in that character, so far as the Theosophical Society was concerned. She accepted the canon of demonstration as the proof of truth. She cherished the rule of "accept nothing" as though it were the secret of the ages. She *sought* the West on its own terms, and helped to found a Society which took as its ruling principle in study that it would proclaim no orthodoxy, however profound.

We see, here, perhaps, a deliberate meeting of the conditions of intellectual and moral growth for the West as a whole. The East was sodden with belief; the West proud in its skepticism, strong in **its self-reliance**. The evolutionary impulse, for the cycle of her work, moreover, lay in the West. A weak truth, surely, which could not accept the challenge of the rigorous requirements of the Western theory of knowledge, the filter of the "scientific method"! And if **certain inconsistencies** were bound to emerge—if, unfamiliar to Western experience, there should appear one who, while willing and eager to play the game according to the rules of a skeptical body of inquirers, would nevertheless exhibit such transcendent grasp of

the matters inquired into as to destroy that body's resemblance to any conventional group organized for collective research—then these would have to be dealt with as they came up. After all, a truly impartial society *ought* to be able to deal intelligently with all extraordinary developments, especially when in the direction of its avowed objects.

But that difficulties would result was inevitable. Ten years later, writing in *Lucifer*, H.P.B. returns to the "definition" of Theosophy. She says nothing new, but now, instead of simply informing her readers, she is meeting objections, which were apparently quite numerous. In the November 1888 issue, under the title, "Is Theosophy a Religion?", she undertakes to show that despite the claims of critics, Theosophy is *not* what many people seem to think it is:

Theosophy, we say, is not *a* Religion.

Yet there are, as everyone knows, certain beliefs, philosophical, religious and scientific, which have become so closely associated in recent years with the word "Theosophy" that they have come to be taken by the general public for theosophy itself. Moreover, we shall be told these beliefs have been put forward, explained and defended by those very Founders who have declared that Theosophy is *not* a religion. What is then the explanation of this *apparent* contradiction? How can a certain body of beliefs and teachings, an elaborate doctrine, in fact, be labelled "Theosophy" and be tacitly accepted as "Theosophical" by nine-tenths of the members of the T.S., if Theosophy is not a Religion?—we are asked.

It is perhaps necessary, first of all, to say, that the assertion that "Theosophy is not *a* Religion," by no means excludes the fact that "Theosophy *is* Religion" itself. A Religion in the true and only correct sense, is a bond uniting men together—not a particular set of dogmas and beliefs. Now Religion, *per se*, in its widest meaning is that which binds not only *all* MEN, but also *all* BEINGS and *all things* in the entire Universe into one grand whole. This is our theosophical definition of religion. . . .

Thus Theosophy is not *a* Religion, we say, but RELIGION itself, the one bond of unity, which is so universal and all-embracing that no man, as no speck—from gods and mortals down to animals, the blade of grass and atom—can be outside of its light. Therefore, any organization or body of that name must necessarily be a UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

. . . unity of everything in the universe implies and justifies our belief in the existence of a knowledge at once scientific, philo-

sophical and religious, showing the necessity and actuality of the connection of man and all things in the universe with each other; which knowledge, therefore, becomes essentially RELIGION, and must be called in its integrity and universality by the distinctive name of WISDOM-RELIGION.

H.P.B. obviously has no intention of allowing Theosophy to be crucified upon some cross of materialized doctrine. Theosophy is religion because it makes for universal brotherhood. What makes for brotherhood is Theosophy, and vice versa. Theosophy stands for dynamics, not doctrines.

What then of the "certain body of beliefs and teachings, an elaborate doctrine, in fact," to which H.P.B. herself refers?

Let us consider the last-mentioned "belief"—"belief in the existence of a knowledge at once scientific, philosophical and religious. . . ." She does not, here, however, attempt to define, to set limits to, that knowledge. The belief has to do with the *existence* of such knowledge. The postulate is, "Truth exists, and can be known." It is a postulate unalterably opposed to all dogma, to all fixed and rigid versions of the truth.

This question came up again, a year later, raised by H.P.B. in another *Lucifer* article, "Philosophers and Philosophicules" (*Lucifer*, October, 1889). Again H.P.B. takes up the objections of the critics of the Society, whom she quotes, then answers:

". . . is it not . . . a fact that certain very definite views of a philosophic and, strictly speaking, of a religious character are held by the Founders and most prominent members of the Society?"

"Verily so," we answer. "But where is the alleged *contradiction* in this? Neither the Founders, nor the 'most prominent members,' nor yet the majority thereof, constitute *the* Society, but only a certain portion of it, which, moreover, having no creed as a body, yet allows its members to believe as and what they please." In answer to this, we are told:—

"Very true; yet these doctrines are collectively called 'Theosophy.' What is your explanation of this?"

We reply:—"To call them so is a 'collective' mistake; one of those loose applications of terms to things that ought to be more carefully defined; and the neglect of members to do so is now bearing its fruits. . . ."

H.P.B. adds that while the "doctrine" of an underlying source of all religions, called the "Wisdom-Religion," the secret teaching, is

indeed the "back-bone" of Theosophical societies in the West, it is not so in the East, where this teaching, the distinctive contribution of H.P.B. herself, had been abandoned since 1885. This is a peculiarly significant comment, to which we may return.

Having made this point, H.P.B. goes to dictionary definitions of "philosophy" to show that Theosophy is *a way of searching for truth*, concluding that, according to the terms of these authorities, "it [Theosophy] is indeed the quintessence of the highest *philosophy* in all and every one of its aspects."

Never once, however, in all these discussions, has H.P.B. ever allowed herself to fall into the trap of formal and limiting definition in terms of doctrines or tenets. Theosophy, she will say, is that sort of human undertaking which leads to brotherhood and enlightenment. She defines it in terms of its inspiration; in terms of its effects, when understood; in terms of its affirmation of universal, impersonal Deity, undeviating law, and the progress of the soul; but she will not depart from the broad platform of her original declarations in the *Theosophist*.

Let us note that these fundamental ideas are all directly related to, both cause and consequence of, the Three Objects of the Theosophical Society. Thus they are not "doctrines" in the ordinary sense, but necessary consequences of the Theosophical undertaking.

The tenets, then, with which the Theosophical books are filled—what of them? These, too, are surely no more than elaborations and explanations of the first principles which have been affirmed?

This must be so, but the principal idea—the crucial "tenet," one may say—which she speaks of in the last quoted article, that of belief in "a common source called the Wisdom-Religion of the secret teaching, from which, according to the same claims, all existing forms of religion are directly or indirectly derived," is not, she says, accepted by the Adyar members of the Society. *She*, let us note, accepts *their* rejection of this teaching. The integrity of the idea of independent judgment is more precious to her than even this great article of her own faith—so great that she made the idea it represented into the title of her major work, *The Secret Doctrine*.

What are we to learn from all this? One thing, surely, that the *process* of realization is fully as important as the content of realization. It was the principle of knowing which counted with H.P.B.

Those who, with her, were ready to embrace the conviction that a "secret doctrine" existed, could be assumed to have gone through a process by which the "demonstration" of its reality had, in some sense, become self-evident. To those who, on the other hand, had not taken that step, she would never insist that they do, nor require of them anything further than the Constitution of the Society had established as the means to membership.

Studying these articles carefully, one begins to sense that the heart of Theosophy is made up of those ideas which are *necessary to adopt* in order to search for the truth at all, consistently and impartially. If, as H.P.B. had said, a Theosophist is "an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth 'with an inspiration of his own' to solve the universal problems," it follows that certain conclusions about the nature of man are inescapable. Man must be the kind of being who is *able* "to solve the universal problems." Proceeding on this line, we see how the logic of man as a spiritual being unfolds from the very definition of "Theosophy" and "Theosophist." And it is in the development of this line of thought that we come upon the distinction between "esoteric" and "exoteric." The exoteric postulates of the Theosophical Movement are really the Three Objects of the original Theosophical Society—these, and no more. "Esoteric Theosophy" involves other postulates—corollaries, perhaps, but nevertheless involving a progression from the Objects, as stated—which are the basis of pursuing the Objects *in a practical way*. H.P.B. could never teach "doctrines" in any final sense—not, at any rate, doctrines which as such became a part of the Theosophical "teaching" simply by being affirmed. Her teaching was *functional* for self-discovery, for growth into first-hand knowledge; she is really saying, endlessly, what Krishna said thousands of years ago to Arjuna:

"When thy heart shall have worked through the snares of delusion, then thou wilt attain to high indifference as to those doctrines which are already taught or which are yet to be taught. When thy mind once liberated from the Vedas shall be fixed immovably in contemplation, then shalt thou attain to devotion."

—a paradox, perhaps, from the viewpoint of the world's conception of "knowledge," but a law of transcendent importance for those who recognize as knowledge only that which is known, finally and completely, within oneself.

Are we wrong, then, to say that Theosophy is the "Wisdom of the Ages"? What about the simple man who wants a plain answer to the question, "What is Theosophy?"

We shall all, doubtless, give him a plain answer—the best answer we can think of at the time. William Q. Judge, who was very good at plain answers, wrote in 1892:

What we most need is such a Theosophical education as will give us the ability to expound Theosophy in a way to be understood by the ordinary person. This practical, clear exposition is entirely possible. That it is of the highest importance there can be no doubt whatever. It relates to and affects ethics, every-day life, every thought, and consequently every act. The most learned, astute, and successful church, the Roman Catholic, proceeds on this basis. Should we refrain from a good practice because a bigot takes the same method? The priests of Rome do not explain, nor attempt to explain or expound, the highly metaphysical and obscure, though important, basis of their various doctrines. They touch the people in their daily life, a knowledge of their own system in all its details enabling them to put deep doctrine into every man's language, although the learning of the preacher may be temporarily concealed. With them the appeal is to fear; with us it is to reason and experience. So we have a natural advantage which ought not to be overlooked.

Mr. Judge, however,—let us note,—exhibits the same mastery of his subject as H.P.B. He knew the difference between knowledge, doctrine, and dogma from personal experience, so that in his articles and letters to students, he is never "doctrinal." Rather, he speaks to the condition of man and the potentialities of man, working, as H.P.B. worked, not for "acceptance" of a body of tenets, but for the awakening of minds and hearts.

More than sixty years have passed since H.P.B. wrote her great articles for the *Theosophist* and *Lucifer*, defining Theosophy as well as it can be defined. Her articles are still read and studied—more, perhaps, than they were then. But have the world and the Movement changed, and with them the idea of what Theosophy "is"?

There is a difference, perhaps, between the Society of her day and the bodies of seriously working students in the present. At any rate, students expect more of themselves than H.P.B. required of the exoteric members of the Society. Today, one who says that he is "a theosophist" usually means that he "accepts" as "true" the body of

doctrine represented by the Theosophical literature. He also "accepts" much more of what H.P.B. proposed to be the logical consequences of the Objects of the Society. He tends to the view that *The Voice of the Silence* is a true account of the psychology of spiritual growth. In other words, the contemporary student, whether he realizes it or not, is much more of an esotericist than the T.S. members of sixty and seventy years ago. It is important to recognize this, so that we may avoid sinning in our public statements against the high impartiality of the original platform of the society, as stated by H.P.B. There is a difference between assent to the Objects of the Society—actually, assent to only one Object was the requirement of membership—and becoming a disciple of H.P.B. and of those whom she represented. This difference should be understood, and its meaning preserved, for the sake of those inquirers who, at the outset, at least, are likely to appreciate most of all the generously catholic character of H.P.B.'s definitions of Theosophy and Theosophical inquiry. A man committed to inquire is not necessarily a man committed to "believe." The kind of "belief" that is worth anything is possible only *after* inquiry has been pursued.

SECTS AND THE TRUTHS

Every sect, of whatever opinion it may be, is a rallying point for doubt and error. Scotists, Thomists, Realists, Calvinists, Molinists, and Jansenists are only warlike appellations. There is no sect in geometry; we never say: A Euclidian, an Archimedian. When truth is evident, it is impossible to divide people into parties and factions.

Sect and error are synonymous terms. Thou art a peripatetic and I a Platonist; we are therefore both in the wrong; for thou opposeth Plato, because his chimeras repel thee; and I fly from Aristotle, because it appears to me that he knew not what he said. If the one or the other had demonstrated the truth, there would have been an end of sect. There is no sect in mathematics or experimental philosophy: a man who examines the relation between a cone and a sphere is not of the sect of Archimedes; and he who perceived that the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the square of the other two sides, is not in consequence a Pythagorean. Such is the character of truth, which belongs to all time and to all men.

—VOLTAIRE

SECURITY

TO all open minds who have questioned and found no haven of security, no solid basis uniting science and religion, no satisfying answer free of unjust dogma, Theosophy suggests a few natural ideas.

Life ever expresses itself in three ways: it creates, preserves, and destroys. Two of these, the creative and the preservative, are obviously constructive, their action naturally appealing and satisfying. The magic of Spring awakening the brown earth or the coming of a Soul into a new body expresses growth and vigor. Life is new, full of promise, and the vista of the future extends far ahead. But when the harvest is gathered and bitter winds sweep over barren fields, when bodies become weakened and bent, Nature appears cruel and destructive. Is it so final as it seems? Is not our understanding, our vision, out of focus? Have we not, while looking at the changing, form-side of Life, failed to see with our mind's eye the hidden side? Nature reveals *and* conceals. All the while the rhythmic three-fold process is going on, though we, in witnessing it, have forgotten the One who perceives, the Real Man, the One who experiences. The cycles spiral upwards. Always a new day, a new season, a new lifetime is ahead. Out of destruction arises regeneration. Man, Incarnated God, ever lives his immortality!

How, it is questioned, is security possible in the midst of change? In some ways Life seems orderly, in others it does not. Further, an unchanging mainstay is necessary upon which to create security. Here, again, man must look beneath and within the appearance of things, including himself, and recognize the presence of The Fundamental Principle of the Universe. No concept is more basic than this one, which has been stated in many ways to fit particular points of view. Physically and mentally, "I am the Cause unseen and the visible effect." Scientifically, "This is a Universe of Law." Intellectually, "The one degree of Life is Harmony." Ethically, "Whatever a man soweth, that also doth he reap." Philosophically, "Life is just."

Because Law is only half-applied in our lives, too often unconsciously, we do not realize its utter reliability. We know that certain

events of Nature always take place. Even misguided adherents of "civilized" religions, who proclaim life came from nothingness through the power of an outside Creator—"He who giveth and He who taketh away"—find a degree of refuge in the fact that God created man in his own image. Nothing less than the vastest spiritual powers granted to Man! If only he would claim his birthright and exercise god-like control over his whole nature, he would gradually awaken to the surety of his immortal Self, That which lives through all changes of creation, preservation and destruction or regeneration.

No mention has been made directly of the need to free oneself of the hopeless obsession that security can be attained by physical means. Its *raison d'être* should be self-evident. Nor has the need for a higher and nobler bent of mind been touched upon. Nor has the practice been suggested of the four cardinal virtues recounted by Plato—wisdom or prudence, courage or fortitude, temperance, and justice or righteousness. These will find their place naturally in the life of the man who *knows*, the one who says, "I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all existing things."

Was somebody asking to see the Soul?

See! your own shape and countenance—persons, substances, beasts,
the trees, the running rivers, the rocks and sands.

All hold spiritual joys, and afterwards loosen them:

How can the real body ever die, and be buried?

Of your real body, and any man's or woman's real body,

Item for item, it will elude the hands of the corpse-cleansers, and pass
to fitting spheres,

Carrying what has accrued to it from the moment of birth to the mo-
ment of death.

Not the types set up by the printer return their impression, the mean-
ing, the main concern,

Any more than a man's substance and life, or a woman's substance and
life, return in the body and the Soul,

Indifferently before death and after death.

—WALT WHITMAN

PLANETARY INFLUENCES

THE philosophy of Theosophy covers all things in manifestation and points out the relations of each thing to every other. Our personal purview extends over our own interests, over our religion, or our system of thought, or our ideas; and moving along those lines within narrow limits, we finally reach the place where we are living entirely for ourselves, making use of all the efforts, thoughts, and ideas of others solely that we, ourselves, may benefit by them. We need to raise our eyes and our minds to the greater view of what the great universe itself is.

This Earth is a planet, as we all know. But there are also other planets quite as likely to be inhabited as is this planet. So, too, this solar system of ours is but one of innumerable solar systems in the universe. All are parts of the vast whole; all are consequently related. There was a time when the knowledge of these relationships existed—when they were taught in the ancient temples as part of the Great Initiation. That was the true Astrology, but not the Astrology of the present day, which has lost the ancient knowledge just as the true meaning of religion has become lost in the course of time. And just as there are some sorry remnants of religious knowledge in the world today, so the remnants of astrological knowledge are almost entirely applied to the personality in physical life, considering with chart and table effects of planetary influence merely upon the physical affairs of men. The physical is but one line of effect, and the only line, if we believe planets to be mere physical embodiments. But there are other sides to the nature of planets, and these we must understand, if we are to get any true idea of planetary influence.

All beings and all forms of every kind are constituted of many different "principles." For instance, connected with man himself there is his body; there is the mind that he uses; there are powers which he exercises; and there is himself—the perceiver, the knower, the experiencer, who through his mind, his powers, his body, learns. It is apparent, then, that there are other departments of our body than the physical to be affected by any influence; and, if there is a

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physical effect of planetary influence, as there must of necessity be, we shall have to inquire also into its effect upon *all* these departments of our nature.

Not only is man constituted of seven distinct principles, but also all planets are septenary in their natures. There is a spiritual "something," a psychic "something," an intellectual "something," an astral "something," and a physical "something," in every planet. Planets are not merely physical things, any more than we as human beings are merely bodies. There are beings of various classes which constitute the planet and its inhabitants, just as this planet is constituted of the various beings belonging to the four kingdoms, from which it derives its own peculiar influence. Let us, then, consider something of the nature of these planets with which we are most intimately connected, if we would gain any idea as to the real meaning of planetary influence.

The Sun is the life-giver of our particular solar system. The Sun shines on all the planets, but the effects received differ for each planet according to the conditions presented. The Sun is the central store of our system and the focus for physical life, but it has also other constituents which apply to our intellectual or psychic, astral and spiritual constituents. At one and the same time, we might say that it is the giver of life physical and life spiritual, if we understand that we are not speaking of the mere physical Sun, which is, correspondentially, just what our bodies are, only that principle of it which we perceive objectively. Yet all the other principles are there, their influence flowing out upon us; from them we get whatever we are able to take. So we see there is not only a direct influence of the Sun on the Earth itself, but also upon us as peoples of it.

The Moon, the nearest planet to us, influences us physically, astrally and psychically, for of like nature are the forces in the Moon. Even the phases of the Moon have their particular influence upon us, as noted in the case of "lunatics," who are rendered more insane at certain phases. The Moon's influence is observable also in the lower kingdoms—the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal, as well as on ourselves—self-conscious beings.

Other planets still nearer to the Sun, as Mercury, for example, have still greater influence. Mercury receives seven times as much light from the Sun as the Earth, and has seven times as much—other

things. Venus, standing next in order of nearness to the Sun, receives twice the light that Earth receives and also shines by her own light. It is not a wise conclusion of our scientists that because any given planet is nearer the Sun than we are its climate and conditions would make the sustaining of life thereon impossible. Life always adjusts itself to whatever conditions exist. Hence, bodies and ideas connected with the state of matter due to the nearness of the Sun would exactly fit those existing conditions. Thus we may look upon the various planets as brothers of our own—members of one great humanity scattered in different portions of the great universe—belonging to the same family, and only working under different conditions. All have their effects upon us, the influence of one planet predominating over another in accord with the angle of position. Some planets are beneficial in their influence; others are called malevolent in their effects upon man. But WE stand as individuals in the midst of a great mass of beings in every direction in our solar system and beyond—all moving in the same direction, all springing from the same Source—however much the *path* of each humanity and of each individual differs—the Source and Goal the same for all.

We are influenced by other planets just as we are influenced by other people in our daily walks in life. What is it that causes others to influence us against our own good will, our own right perceptions? Nothing but our mistaken ideas as to what we are, and our suppositions that we can be thus affected—our attitude towards ideas, towards people, towards things, towards life in general. We think that conditions and circumstances bring us to whatever state we are in. That is not true. It is not the conditions nor the circumstances, but the attitude we hold toward them, which matters; the true attitude held with regard to our own natures gives us the power to withstand any influence whatever. According to our attitude, and according to our understanding that all things material and physical evolve from and are ruled by the spiritual, will we—the real Thinkers—receive the effect of any planet. Neither good nor evil can come to us unless there is good or evil within ourselves. If we are good, no evil can touch us. If we are evil, then for the time no good can touch us. All states are within ourselves, as we ought to understand by seeing that one gets good effects and another bad effects from precisely the same set of circumstances. So, we are not the victims of circum-

stances save as we make ourselves the victims.

A true understanding of planetary influence would involve an absolute realization of man's nature in all his constituents, in every principle and every element, which are those of the solar system to which he belongs. Each one of us is a copy of the great universe. Each one of us is connected with every class of beings. We have within us every form of consciousness and every state of substance, and if we understand ourselves, we can move in accord with all the rest, every influence coming our way, or even perceptible to us, only an aid by which we may do good to others. Then we shall be neither oppressed nor elevated by any influence; we can be repressed or oppressed only by our own erroneous thought, will, feelings and actions. We have established a daily tabernacle which has its peculiarities, but it is our own establishing—built by our own thoughts and doings and by no one else's. It was not imposed upon us by any "Being," nor, in fact, was it necessary, except as we were ignorant, and effects flowed through our ignorance. Now, we can either *learn*, or maintain the condition through continued ignorance.

Being at any given time or place subject to certain beneficial or malevolent influences, being born as persons at a certain time and place, under certain conjunctions of the planets are only fulfillments of Karmic law. We could not have come through any "holes in the sky" except those we had made for ourselves; we could not have made a place of entrance at certain conjunctions of the planets, except the conditions for us were there at that time and at no other time. Planetary influences express our *tendencies*, yes; but there is no "God" above to compel us, and there is no possibility of our being pushed into the following of certain wrong tendencies unless we want to be pushed. If we have made up our minds not to be so influenced, then we cannot be. We simply do not follow those tendencies in ourselves which we have discovered to be wrong, and so, we make another kind of birth possible.

So-called astrological prognostications of the present day relate chiefly to the body and its environment, and on that basis people seek only for good, try to dodge sickness and evil. On the basis of our own true natures we should not seek for good, nor even to *be* good. We should seek to *do* good, and then, we can see we *are* good. We are not trying for any reward, but trying only to make

ourselves efficient ministers of good to others. So, we do not have to avoid evil because we are not creating evil. Wherever and whenever we give forth evil we receive the effects of evil; whenever and wherever we give forth good we receive the effects of good. Each one is absolutely and unconditionally responsible for the condition in which he finds himself. To blame planetary influences for this or that condition is as foolish as to blame the water for drowning a man whose own carelessness, and not the water, was responsible for the drowning. But the same laws govern other planets as ours, and we do make of ourselves magnets which draw to ourselves like things in operation at any given time anywhere. If we are subject to despondency in ourselves, for instance, we shall certainly receive all the effects that despondent conditions anywhere put upon us. This is the nature of our interdependence and interrelation with every other being in our solar system.

It remains for man to see and *realize* that he has within him all the elements of the great ocean of Life. It remains for him, in that realization, to *act* as one who understands all the rest, and who sends out benefit in every direction for those knowing still less than he does.

THE LONG VOYAGE

There may await each of us, and perhaps await each of us in many different lives, delusions, crimes, suffering, hatreds, as great as or greater than any which we now know. All that we can say is that this evil, however great it may be, is only passing; that our lives are, with however much oscillation, gradually approximating to a final stage which they will some day reach. . . . The very greatness of the evil which we endure gives us some slight anticipation of the greatness of the good which outweighs it infinitely. In timeless reality there is no change and no weariness, and that which is highest can exist without ceasing. What this would mean, even if the highest were no higher than it is now, it is useless to try to say except to those who do not need to be reminded of it.

—JOHN McTAGGART

AN IMPORTANT LETTER

This letter, attributed to a Master of Wisdom, was first printed *complete* in *Lucifer* for August, 1896. It is said to have been received by H. P. Blavatsky some ten years before; and quotations from it had been printed elsewhere before its appearance in *Lucifer*, as below.—Editors, THEOSOPHY.

THE doctrine we promulgate being the only true one, must—supported by such evidence as we are preparing to give—become ultimately triumphant, like every other truth. Yet it is absolutely necessary to inculcate it gradually; enforcing its theories (unimpeachable facts for those who know) with direct inference, deduced from and corroborated by, the evidence furnished by modern exact science. That is why Col. H. S. Olcott, who works to revive Buddhism, may be regarded as one who labors in the true path of Theosophy, far more than any man who chooses as his goal the gratification of his own ardent aspirations for occult knowledge. Buddhism, stripped of its superstition, is eternal truth; and he who strives for the latter is striving for Theo-Sophia, divine wisdom, which is a synonym of truth. For our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code, or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to preach and popularize a knowledge of Theosophy. It is not the individual and determined purpose of attaining Nirvana—the culmination of all knowledge and absolute wisdom, which is after all only an exalted and glorious selfishness—but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbor, to cause to benefit by it as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can, which constitutes the true Theosophist.

The intellectual portion of mankind seems to be fast dividing into two classes: the one unconsciously preparing for itself long periods of temporary annihilation or states of non-consciousness, owing to the deliberate surrender of intellect and its imprisonment in the narrow grooves of bigotry and superstition—a process which cannot fail to lead to the utter deformation of the intellectual principle; the other unrestrainedly indulging its animal propensities with the deliberate intention of submitting to annihilation pure and simple, in case of failure, and to millenniums of degradation after physical dissolution.

Those intellectual classes reacting upon the ignorant masses—which they attract, and which look up to them as noble and fit examples to be followed—degrade and morally ruin those they ought to protect and guide. Between degrading superstition and still more degrading brutal materialism, the White Dove of Truth has hardly room whereon to rest her weary unwelcome feet.

It is time that Theosophy should enter the arena. The sons of Theosophists are more likely to become in their turn Theosophists than anything else. No messenger of the truth, no prophet has ever achieved during his life-time a complete triumph—not even Buddha. The Theosophical Society was chosen as the cornerstone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity. To achieve the proposed object, a greater, wiser, and especially a more benevolent intermingling of the high and the low, the alpha and the omega of society, was determined upon. The white race must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations, to call the poor despised “nigger” brother. This prospect may not smile for all, but he is no Theosophist who objects to this principle. In view of the ever-increasing triumph, and at the same time misuse, of free thought and liberty (the universal reign of Satan, Eliphas Levi would have called it) how is the combative natural instinct of man to be restrained from inflicting hitherto unheard-of-cruelty and enormous tyranny, injustice, etc., if not through the soothing influence of brotherhood, and of the practical application of Buddha’s esoteric doctrines? For everyone knows that total emancipation from the authority of the one all-pervading power, or law—called God by the priests, Buddha, divine wisdom and enlightenment, or Theosophy, by the philosophers of all ages—means also the emancipation from that of human law. Once unfettered, delivered from their dead-weight of dogmatism, interpretations, personal names, anthropomorphic conceptions, and salaried priests, the fundamental doctrines of all religions will be proved identical in their esoteric meaning. Osiris, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, will be shown as different means for one and the same royal highway of final bliss—Nirvana. Mystical Christianity teaches *Self*-redemption through one’s own seventh principle, the liberated Paramatma, called by the one Christ, by others Buddha; this is equivalent to regeneration, or rebirth in spirit, and it therefore expounds just the same truth as the Nirvana of Buddhism.

All of us have to get rid of our own Ego, the illusory, apparent self, to recognize our true Self, in a transcendental divine life. But if we would not be selfish we must strive to make other people see that truth, and recognize the reality of the transcendental Self, the Buddha, the Christ, or God of every preacher. This is why even esoteric Buddhism is the surest path to lead men toward the one esoteric truth.

As we find the world now, whether Christian, Mussulman, or Pagan, justice is disregarded, and honour and mercy are both flung to the winds. In a word, how—since the main objects of the Theosophical Society are misinterpreted by those who are most willing to serve us personally—are we to deal with the rest of mankind, with that curse known as *the struggle for life*, which is the real and most prolific parent of most woes and sorrows, and all crimes? Why has that struggle become almost the universal scheme of the universe? We answer, because no religion, with the exception of Buddhism, has taught a practical contempt for this earthly life; while each of them, always with that solitary exception, has through its hells and damnations inculcated the greatest dread of death. Therefore do we find that struggle for life raging most fiercely in Christian countries, most prevalent in Europe and America. It weakens in the Pagan lands, and is nearly unknown among Buddhist populations. In China during famine, and where the masses are most ignorant of their own or of any religion, it was remarked that those mothers who devoured their children belonged to localities where there was none; and that where the Bonzes alone had the field, the population died with the utmost indifference. Teach the people to see that life on this earth, even the happiest, is but a burden and an illusion; that it is our own Karma (the cause producing the effects) that is our own judge—our Saviour in future lives—and the great struggle for life will soon lose its intensity. There are no penitentiaries in Buddhist lands, and crime is nearly unknown among the Buddhist Tibetans. The world in general, and Christendom especially, left for 2,000 years to the regime of a personal God, as well as to its political and social systems based on that idea, has now proved a failure.

If the Theosophists say we have nothing to do with all this; the lower classes and inferior races (those of India, for instance, in the

conception of the British) cannot concern us, and must manage as they can, what becomes of our fine professions of benevolence, philanthropy, reform, etc.? Are those professions a mockery? And if a mockery, can ours be the true path? Shall we devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans—fed on the fat of the land, many of them loaded with the gifts of blind fortune—the rationale of bell-ringing, of cup-growing, of the spiritual telephone, and astral body formation, and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, of the poor and oppressed, to take care of themselves, and of their hereafter, as best they can? Never! perish rather the Theosophical Society with both its hapless Founders, than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic, and a hall of occultism! That we, the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha, should ever allow the Theosophical Society to represent the embodiment of selfishness, the refuge of the few, with no thought in them for the many, is a strange idea, my brothers! Among the few glimpses obtained by Europeans of Tibet and its mystical hierarchy of perfect Lamas there was one which was correctly understood and described. The incarnations of the Bodhisattva Padmapâni or Avalokiteshvara, of Tsongkapa, and that of Amitâbha, relinquished at their death the attainment of Buddhahood, i.e., the *summum bonum* of bliss, and of individual personal felicity, that they might be born again and again for the benefit of mankind. In other words, that they might be again and again subjected to misery, imprisonment in flesh, and all the sorrows of life provided that they, by such a self-sacrifice, repeated throughout long and weary centuries, might become the means of securing salvation and bliss in the hereafter for a handful of men chosen among but one of the many planetary races of mankind. And it is we, the humble disciples of these perfect Lamas who are expected to allow the Theosophical Society to drop its noblest title, that of the Brotherhood of Humanity, to become a simple school of philosophy! No, no, good brothers, you have been laboring under the mistake too long already. Let us understand each other. He who does not feel competent to grasp the noble idea sufficiently to work for it, need not undertake a task too heavy for him. But there is hardly a Theosophist in the whole

Society unable to effectually help it by correcting erroneous impressions of outsiders, by himself actually propagating this idea. Oh! for noble and unselfish men to help us effectively in that divine task! All our knowledge, past and present, would not be sufficient to repay them.

Having explained our views and aspirations, I have but a few words more to add. The true religion and philosophy offer the solution of every problem. That the world is in such a bad condition, morally, is a conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies, those of the civilized races less than any other, has ever possessed the truth. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles, right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism, are as impossible to them now as they were 1886 years ago. They are as far from the solution as they were; but to these problems there must be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines will show their competence to offer it, then the world will be the first to confess that *there* must be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives truth and nothing but the truth.

Said *Yajnavalkya*: It may be seen after the following illustrations: The ocean is the one resort of all water; the skin is the ultimate sphere of all touch; the tongue is the one ground of all taste; the nose is the one basis of all smell; the eye is the one field of all form; the ear is the one place of all sound; the mind is the one source of all ideas; the heart is the one fountain of all knowledge; the Word is the one truth of all the Vedas:—even thus is It the one *fact* of all and every *being*. Put a lump of salt in water, it melts into the water of which it came; you can never grasp it afterwards; it is all salt, every drop of water you may touch. So indeed, oh dear one! is this great, endless, unlimited Being,—all thought. The universe coming of this, melts away into this, and being thus lost, loses all distinction whatever.

—*Brihadaranyakopanishad*

NOTES ON THE KEY

THE introduction of specific discussion concerning the individual soul and its attributes, so long deferred in the writing of the *Key*, begins on page 77 with a quotation from Colonel Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism*. What, it is natural to ask, could possibly be of more importance than a doctrine asserting the continuity of soul? Since, moreover, it is precisely the acquirement of individuality through periodic rebirths which H.P.B. designates as the "pivotal doctrine of the esoteric philosophy," why should not discussion of the soul have occurred earlier? And why does H.P.B. first utilize the teachings of Buddhism in introduction of the subject?

Buddhism, of all the world religions, has the reputation of being the least dogmatic. At least, the tradition of Buddha's insistence upon avoidance of dogma has been perpetuated even in the midst of those creedal oversimplifications which human nature seems to apply to every religion. On the matter of the soul, Buddha held, fixed opinions are apt to be especially disastrous. Buddha may be thought to have shown supreme wisdom by refusing to speak of the soul except in a specific context of discussion, never for a moment considering that a mere word, such as "Soul," could possibly represent the complex and subtle reality of man's true nature. And it would seem that H.P.B., in thus turning to Buddhism at the outset of her discussion of the soul, meant to impress upon readers that the categorical method of expression is here out of place. When the *Buddhist Catechism*, as quoted, says that "soul" may be regarded as a "word used by the ignorant to express a false idea," and when H.P.B. later states that *the same individuality* undergoes birth after birth, the student is plainly being asked to consider existence of the "soul" as a paradoxical subject.

This point of departure may be held to be of profound importance, for it suggests a synthesizing view, incorporating the concerns of the great skeptics of history as well as those of the great affirmative teachers. In her article, "What Are the Theosophists?", H.P.B. indicates that the Theosophical Movement actually involves votaries of both sorts—not only "mystics" like Patanjali, Plotinus and Jacob Boehme, but also men who refuse to proceed upon any other than

strictly logical deductions, such as Kapila, Epicurus and James Mill. The latter, perhaps, were blessed with an overabundance of Buddha's wariness of categorical answers to the great questions of soul and immortality, yet undoubtedly represent a necessary phase of theosophical caution in respect to catch-all dogmas.

H.P.B. elsewhere relates that Kapila was uncompromising in his attacks upon the special "revelations" of the Brahmins; he apparently insisted that human thought have at least visible foundations, there being a great deal of worth-while work and learning available on this plane of existence. Similarly, Epicurus insisted that men not betray half their birthright by seeking an escape from everyday concerns in a world of mystical imagination, denying the full meaning of the existing moment which the wise man must know to be a part of human purpose to appreciate. Epicurus, it is true, has been supposed to be the apostle of pure hedonism, but so have other and greater teachers become known for a line of emphasis in their teachings which represented but a portion of the whole. To understand that the Theosophical Movement embraces whatever truth is to be found in contrasting philosophies is to become well guarded against exclusiveness or narrowness of mind. All this may be implied by H.P.B.'s choice of Buddhistic paradoxes as the means for introducing the philosophy of soul, which philosophy it is the work of Theosophy to affirm, only providing it be understood that the Soul itself far transcends any doctrine or formulation.

Considerations in respect to the specific nature and destiny of soul may well have been postponed in the *Key* for two further reasons: First, the most philosophical and systematic beginning, in inquiry, according to the theosophical tradition, is with the Universals, not the particulars, of human experience. When passages in the earlier sections of the *Key* refer to the universal nature of Deity—the causative principle standing behind all growth—attention is focussed upon the spiritual link which each man shares with all his fellows, and with every other living thing. Unless this identity in spiritual nature is grasped, the nature of individuality is likely to be misconceived. Second, while man's nature in this period of evolution gravitates so decidedly towards the personal, discussion of immortality can easily lead away from philosophy to mere preoccupation with one's own imagined future.

It is possible to find in such reflection some explanation as to why many men of integrity and good character, while possessed of both excellent minds and a fine sense of responsibility "toward all life and all beings," express disapproval of discussion of either soul or immortality. A carelessly partisan attitude toward those who long to eliminate metaphysical speculation might produce the charge that such men *prefer* to believe that they are but one-life creatures; they apparently do so prefer, but the reasons for the preference need to be examined. If one recalls Krishna's statement to the effect that the exact conditions obtaining after death are not to be discovered, or Socrates' indifference to his precise fate after death, we can see that there is profound justification for mistrusting excessive concern with "immortality."

An objection to flights of metaphysics can be, and often is, raised on ethical grounds, it being held that the man who worries about what is going to happen to him after death will not pay sufficient attention to his social responsibilities here and now. Many of those who so object are obviously reacting against the "individual salvation" theme of various theologies, and perhaps, for them, there is intuitive realization that no real strengthening of moral fibre can take place in this way. It is, after all, perception of the interdependence of all nature and the brotherhood of man which inspires moral growth, and speculation upon one's individual fate is often a deterrent to such realization. On the other hand, what the opponents of metaphysics and teachings of immortality need to recognize is that the great religious teachers have said what they have had to say in affirmation of immortality only to increase man's awareness of the enduring significance of human striving for the good, the true and the beautiful—only to give grounds for clearer faith in an innate sense of justice, so easily discouraged by a one-life purview. It is, of course, consistent with these purposes to declare the fact of immortality as a law of nature.

So a consideration of reincarnation is reached in the *Key* only after the establishment of propositions concerning the One Life and the One Law—a sequence also found in the scheme of development in *The Secret Doctrine*. The individual soul is not considered as a "thing in itself," but is first discussed in relation to Karma. Thus, the *Key*, beginning on page 77, draws attention from universals to

relative particulars, but never separates the concept of soul-destiny from moral law. The doctrine of the *Skandhas* is the fulcrum for the transition—a subject, incidentally, upon which virtually nothing is said in *The Secret Doctrine*. Perhaps the idea of the *Skandhas* provides a simple approach to the subject of individuality, and obviously, some sort of simplification is needed when the treatment must necessarily be brief. It appears, then, that both the soul and reincarnation should be discussed only when the essentials of the karma philosophy, as assimilated by one who knows either something of the tremendous purview of *The Secret Doctrine* or the function of the *Skandhas*, as rendered in Buddhist teachings, are interwoven with all that is said concerning man's fate after death and his future lives.

The quotations from the *Buddhist Catechism* (p. 77) involve man's dual nature, without which no "karma" could be understood in a Theosophic sense, and offer logical completion to the implications of the First and Second Fundamental Propositions as hitherto presented. H.P.B. writes:

When we come to the question that the new personality in each succeeding re-birth is the aggregate of "*Skandhas*," or the attributes, of the *old* personality, and ask whether this new aggregation of *Skandhas* is a *new* being likewise, in which nothing has remained of the last, we read that: 'In one sense it is a new being, in another it is not.'

Here, then, is Karma in terms of the skandhas, which are a link between the personality and the individuality. And here, again, we see that the essential concept of the Second Fundamental Proposition now becomes a description of the manner and method by which each man creates his own weal or woe. In the *Theosophical Glossary*, under "Skandha," the same teaching is given other dimensions:

There are five—esoterically, seven—attributes in every human living being, which are known as the *Pancha Skandhas*. . . . These unite at the birth of man and constitute his personality. After the maturity of these Skandhas, they begin to separate and weaken, and this is followed by *jarâmarana*, or decrepitude and death.

The teaching of the Skandhas is closely connected with that of memory, the power which provides continuity in evolution. This is not, of course, the memory of the physical brain, but the impacted

memory "in every atom of *will* and *sensation*." (At this point, another necessity for postulating the first fundamental principle becomes clear, for unless there is that within each form of life which is eternal—"a universal Vital principle independent of *our* matter"—such continuity would be impossible. In every atom, then, resides "the mysterious power of evolution and involution, the omnipresent, omnipotent, and even omniscient creative potentiality.")

The life-span of man, then, is one during which full opportunity is given to the soul to synthesize the various forms of learning made possible to him by the aggregation of his skandhas, just as, in the formation of the solar system or a universe, considerable time must elapse before these come to a full "maturity" of their patterns of interrelationship. The individual soul, consequently, can select which of his "memories" will be heeded and which de-energized by transmutation of energy.

Around all soul, it is held, are degrees of refined substance which serve as the continuum of memory. It is sometimes called the "Astral Light," and may be considered, in effect, the *radiation* from all of the memories of universal nature. Here, also, must be the place of man's "free will" in his choosing of the influences he will heed. Whether he is affected by what have been called the "dregs" of the lower astral light, or by the potentially constructive "memories," is for his own choosing. Hence he moves in a sea of sensitive life, a life diffused in such a manner as to give to every atom will, sensation, and memory. His path of evolution is "checked by his Karma," which becomes the complex path of decisions made among his memories—memories not "his" alone but which are rather links in the chain of cause and effect binding him to all others.

Pondering questions of individuality and personality thus forced to our attention, we are, perhaps, in a better position to understand the full meaning of the broad principles outlined as the Three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*, and to see, as well, why H.P.B.'s teachings on the Soul were never oversimplified by her and should not be oversimplified by her students.

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK— AND ANSWER

WHY is it that people accept the ideas presented in the great classics and admit they are great, yet they reject Theosophical literature which only presents the same ideas in a more positive manner?

(a) People born into the Western tradition of thought have been plagued by various forms of authoritative religion for centuries. These have specialized in categorically telling people what is right and what is wrong—what true, what untrue. But slowly some of the followers of Christianity began to be leaders in their own right, and the age of inquiry was born. They had a rugged path to tread in order to gain the seemingly simple goal of the right to think for themselves. Little wonder so many of the free minds of today shy away from the “systems of thought” which offer ready answers to every question; it was a battle not easily won, and they do not intend to let its fruits slip easily out of their fingers.

They observe the way many people seem to swallow a religion and all its teachings in one gulp—*converted* to a religion more than *converting themselves* to a new horizon of thought. Such people seem to easily slip out of one form of religion into another. It is merely a matter of changing gods. Those who take exception to this practice of unthinking acceptance of creed are likely to sit as far on the other side of the fence as possible. So although students of Theosophy try to institute an entirely different sort of procedure for its study—that of objective, independent search—the philosophy, nevertheless, has a formal title, and consists of a series of definite doctrines, thus qualifying it for space in the realm of the taboo. Whether or not Theosophy embodies the same ideas as the great classics, it still appears to *teach* them. Some are tired of being taught; they want to do a bit of discovering for themselves. Perhaps they would like to go adventuring into the world of thought alone. Perhaps they realize that truth must be self-discovered.

Real learning is necessarily, then, a natural process, and, as necessarily, a slow one. It is always an individual matter, and those who feel this strongly may not want to get involved with any formal body whose doctrines might tend to impose themselves on the free-

dom of their minds. So they turn to the classics—to Shakespeare or Plato—for their inspiration. There they find what they want without fear of “the institution,” and there they are sure of keeping their freedom. A Theosophical teaching is embodied here, for it is said that the wise man must rise above all formal creeds and become “in some measure a spectator of all time and all space.”

One cannot help but admire such an attitude, for underlying it is a belief in the sacredness of individual choice and in the freedom which must prevail in order for the creativity of the mind to effect growth by self-induced and self-devised efforts. But from a Theosophical point of view, there is yet another important thing for a man to learn before he becomes a really philosophical searcher for truth, and that is that truth must be searched for everywhere and in all things. Such an one has an obligation to investigate any possibility with an open mind and a questing spirit, whether or not it is contained in a “religion” or any other category.

(b) People who study the classics are not necessarily concerned with man as a consciously responsible moral being. Theosophical literature concerns itself primarily with man as such. There seem, therefore, to be two reasons for a rejection of Theosophical literature while accepting classical writings. One reason is the matter of *why* the classics are accepted: are the ideas fully examined and their total meaning extracted and digested? Not always, we think. Some accept the classics as “great” for reasons not pertaining to the greatness of the ideas. Society says that to be well-educated a man should know the classics. Therefore one reads them. At the same time, however, he may belong to the Catholic church and advocate the doctrines of Catholicism. Reading the classics for reasons of social standing or to fulfill requirements in school does not necessarily insure that the reader will grasp the full meaning, or even slightly understand, the ideas presented. Such people can fit their conception of the classical ideas in with religious beliefs and find nothing amiss. No vital questions occur to them; the classics are simply accepted as “great.”

Another reason for acceptance of the classics and rejection of Theosophical literature is in a sense more encouraging. Although the trend of today is to seek something, anything, which will tell people how and what to do and provide someone who will accept the re-

sponsibility of man's choices, there are those who shy away from any "system of thought." They will not accept as truth an idea which is based on authority. They cannot simply *believe*. They admire freedom and accept with delight the conception of man as noble and godlike. They think it inconceivable that there might not be absolute justice and want to find a valid reason for being brotherly.

We say theosophical literature contains all this and much more. Yet the teachings have a certain name—Theosophy. It is a system of thought, presented under certain auspices. Although the *ideas* may be accepted more than willingly, there are many who cannot accept Theosophy: they do not want to be in any way prejudiced in viewing ideas. These people are seeking truth without regard to who presents it, or where it comes from, thinking truth to be where you find it, and not with any particular organization. Perhaps such people, who continue to study the classics and other great works, are more perceptive, rational, and well integrated than some who call themselves Theosophists.

In our many different experiences, we sometimes feel inadequate in defining such terms as "Soul," "Personality," "Ego," and "Monad" in their Theosophical context. Could some Theosophical explanation be given for these terms?

In any problem of this type, possibly the best thing for the individual to do is to consult *The Secret Doctrine* or any other book that represents basic theosophical teachings, although one is bound to "interpret" to his own degree of understanding. One's definitions will change, improve or enlarge with increased reading or thought, but a beginning must be made somewhere.

"Soul" is an abstract word when not qualified to some degree and means little by itself. There are many different types of souls, *i.e.*, Animal Soul, Divine Soul, Human Soul, Universal Soul, etc.

Animal Soul: Animals have latent in them the germ of the highest immortal soul which develops after a series of innumerable evolutions. The animal has an astral body that is similar to man's; the animal monad, however, does not reincarnate individually, but into a higher species, and it does not have a "Devachan." This monad, not being individualized, as in man, represents in the animal kingdom a class of intelligence. Sometimes we speak of "animal soul"

when referring to the fourth or kamic principle within man. This is the principle to which Manas is usually attracted in its lower aspect, that is, through selfish and sensual desires.

Human Soul: The fifth principle within man—the mind principle (Manas). The two higher principles can have no individuality on earth without this focal agent. It is said to be the connecting link between spirit and matter. It differentiates man from the animal, for the mind of man is self-conscious.

Divine or Spiritual Soul: Buddhi, or the sixth principle. Buddhi is a latent principle that has to have the conjunction with self-consciousness before it becomes the *discriminating* soul. Buddhi, in a sense, is still somewhat “material” when compared with divine spirit-Atma, yet it is also said that “the bulk of collective recollections can never desert this divine soul within us.”

Monad: The monad is the combination of the last two principles in man, though the monad is threefold, inclusive of Manas. It is said that the Atma-Buddhic monad emerges from its state of spiritual and intellectual unconsciousness, then gets involved in the plane of Mentality. The only difference between the human monad and the animal monad is that the human monad possesses self-conscious intelligence, while the animal has only the instinctual faculty. It is monadic life, though, which passes through the various stages of evolution to be finally lighted up by the mind principle.

Personality: This is usually referred to as a reflection of both the higher and lower selves. It is in this sense that man is dual. The lower principles are not immortal but, on the other hand, the life-atoms of the lower principles are drawn by affinity and Karmic law to the same individuality. (See *S.D.* II, 672 and fn.)

Ego: This is the immortal soul that reincarnates from age to age. It may be “differentiated” from the “Monad” in the sense that it represents the higher *trinity* (Atma-Buddhi-Manas), while the monad represents only Atma and Buddhi. Ego is also referred to as the individuality or higher ego.

It would be well for the individual interested in further information on the importance of these terms to read H. P. Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*, pages 171-176; and refer also to the *Secret Doctrine Index* under the headings discussed.

THE POINT OF BALANCE

Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? . . . They said, Barabbas. . . . Let Jesus be crucified.

—*Matthew xxvii, 17, 21, 22*

Jesus said unto Peter, Verily, I say unto thee that this night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

—*Matthew xxvi, 34*

He who thinks things easy is sure to find them difficult. Therefore the Sage ever anticipates difficulties, and thus he never encounters them.

—*LAO TZE*

When He is seen in His Immanence and transcendence, then the ties of the heart are unloosened, the doubts of the mind vanish, and the law of Karma works no more.

—*Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.8.*

WHERE is the point of balance wherefrom we can judge equally between right and wrong? This fine point of distinction, once made, would enable us to merge good and evil back into their original Source, after having learnt from them the experience they were meant to teach us. Sharp is the line of demarcation between the "twin" extremes, yet the wisdom of their underlying unity must prevail. "Sages say the path is difficult to tread and thin as the edge of a razor."

What can the Balance teach us? Man's nature is reflected in its symbols. The balance is used for *comparing* weights and forces. It is used to make things *equal*. Such expression as the "balancing of engines" bespeaks an interest in the harmonious running of a well-built machine. The "balance of trade" is what businessmen look for. The "balance of mind" is what everyone tries to acquire who is not bent on his own or others' destruction.

Let us consider one sort of balance: It has a central body with a pointer, which moves across a graduated scale located in the center above. The bar, called the beam, is supported at the center by a sharp wedge and supports in its turn two metallic plates, which are at the end of the beam, equally distant from the center. When we weigh on an ordinary balance, we place the material in the left plate:

this, in psychological analogy, may correspond to the incoming of *desires*. On the right plate we place the weights necessary to counteract the heavy material of the other plate and to bring equilibrium at the center of the balance; this may be represented by the weights of "moral fitness" referred to by Krishna in Chapter VII of *The Bhagavad-Gita*, enabling desire to become the motive power for right action. While the "*body*" of the balance remains the basis on which the whole operation can take place, the *mind*, as the weights, controls the equilibrium; the hand which regulates the adjustment of the weights is analogous to the *human soul*. The needle, as the Spiritual Soul, is the pointer to the *Witness*, the *Self*, which represents the embodiment of the Law numbered on the graduated scale. The placing of material and weights brings about the oscillation of the needle which is the balancing motion of *Karma*. It is by placing appropriate weights ever more quickly and surely on the right scale that we obtain the stillness of the Center, which is complete equilibrium. The two plates, as the two extremes, must finally rest in Unity. In the same way, action and reaction can be regulated by the human soul until at last it masters the art of balance with the key of Shila, thus becoming still, or *Karmaless*.

As incarnated beings we are bound to oscillate between the two poles until we have learned to focus our minds on the meaning of the "weights" to be used; until we train our "hand" to that delicacy of touch necessary to evaluate properly the objects which must be weighed. Whether it be our actions or those of others makes no difference. The constant adjustment is one of learning, and it must be done accurately and honestly. The Eye which judges of the exact point of balance is that of the Higher Self which stands as the Friend and the Witness to our yet imperfect discrimination. We cannot cheat through personal bias or fool ourselves when we have enlisted that help in adjusting the scales.

In this we have the body of facts, the service of the mind in reason and action, and—equilibrizing both—the brooding Seer who reflects the Knowledge from the spheres where the unity of all things is perceived.

How are we going to train ourselves to use rightly the balance of justice? To judge rightly, we need the help of fundamental Principles, Laws, and Ideas which form the frame in which worlds move.

To apply the Principles in conditioned existence, we need the instrument, the mind, functioning in its finer faculties.

What is it that makes the crowd choose Barabbas rather than Jesus? Impulsive feeling based on wrong evaluation; fear, ignorance and delusion, following the direction of a few minds motivated by personal ambition, hate, or a deliberate evil.

We come to a more subtle problem when we turn from the crowd and consider Peter, a devoted disciple. What is it that made him thrice deny his Master? It must have been some lack of perception and practiced control *when times were smooth* which made him fail when the trial came. We should, as says Lao Tze, "take precautions before the evil appears; regulate things before disorder begins." The state of discipleship is one of extreme watchfulness, where nothing is allowed to pass without answering the Soul's quest, whether life be quiet or turbulent. We must learn to discriminate not only between evil and good, but between the right proportion of good as against "good" so exaggerated that it ceases to achieve good results. Some, for instance, in their desire to avoid judging others, will refuse point blank to examine their *actions*, forgetting that there is a distinction between condemning another, and weighing accurately his actions, so as to learn discrimination. That repeated over and over again may well lead us one day to make the choice of the crowd for Barabbas, or to fail like Peter. We must, without condemning any, "study the hearts of men, that we may know what is in this world in which we live and of which we will to be a part."

In the great journey of life, we learn from those we meet, and from our own hard-won experience. In adjusting our vision and our touch, in directing our efforts, we slowly learn how to choose what is needed for the tasks which are brought to us by the moving tides of life. Some of the meaning of the statement, "to rise above Karma," is implied in this process. *The Voice of the Silence* echoes the same idea: "Great Sifter is the name of the Heart Doctrine." To sift accurately and gently, we must become detached. Detachment brings right perception; right perception, justice; justice, true mercy, which transcends the delusion of personality. From right perception, justice, and mercy, the divine in us will be born, and the great BALANCE will come into repose. . . .

ON THE LOOKOUT

PHILOSOPHICAL PROGRESS IN EDUCATION

There is an encouraging abundance of evidence that many educators of excellent reputation are presently capable of synthesizing Theosophic-tending trends in psychology, religion and philosophy in such a way as to guarantee benefits for generations of future students. Synthesis is the natural work of philosophy, and it is pleasing to note that some histories of education now before the public contain clear philosophical currents. Significantly, there is noticeable also a special leaning toward appreciation of both the Platonic tradition of the West and the religions and philosophies of the East.

An excellent example of such a "trend" is supplied by Dr. Robert Ulich's *History of Educational Thought*, the following passage, for instance, revealing this Harvard professor's perception that education, to be genuine, must be rooted in philosophy. Dr. Ulich writes:

We discover everywhere the need for a new and total conception of man: in his relation to science and faith, in his relation to state and government, and finally in his relation to self and society. If we do not succeed in creating such a new conception and applying it to reality, our time may not be different from the end of Antiquity, with all its melancholy, chaos, and final decay. If, on the other hand, we succeed—and we can succeed if we are really determined and ready to submit to sacrifices—then we may hope that this greatest crisis of western civilization is but the stormy overture of a new era of humanity, greater than any seen before.

For this effort to turn chaos into progress we need as companions the great educational prophets who, in earlier crises of civilization, helped their fellow men to strive for new horizons. It is not because these leaders of humanity belong to the past that we have to acquaint ourselves with their ideas. We need their advice because they were the men with the courage and the vision to protest against false traditions and complacencies. They show the brave what mankind can achieve if it realizes the strength that comes from devotion to great purposes.

EDUCATION AND THE SECOND OBJECT

Those who are familiar with the long discussion of the Theosophical significance of Platonism, in *Isis Unveiled*, "Before the Veil,"

will doubtless be impressed by Ulich's evaluation of Platonic influence:

If one understands the influence of Plato's educational thought on posterity in the broadest sense of the word, namely, as the radiation of Plato's ideas on the culture of mankind, then dealing with this influence is almost the same as dealing with the development of philosophical thought in its various ramifications. For even in periods when most of Plato's works were rather unknown, as in the Middle Ages, his role could be compared to that of the builders of our old cathedrals. People live in their shades, enjoy their beauty, and draw comfort and inspiration from their silent solemnity; but the name of the architect himself is hidden behind the veil of history.

During the Renaissance he inspired the humanist teachers in their fight against monkish schoolmasters, as he inspired the humanist philosophers in their fight against monkish Aristotelianism. Since then all humanist or neo-humanist movements in education have started with the battle cry: "Back to Plato!"

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RICHES OF ASIA

Dr. Ulich passes to an appreciation of the fact that only from the East have come the inspirations for a *World Religion*:

It is regrettable that this book had to be restricted to our Western civilization, for the time is ripe for a history of educational thought which conceives of our Western world as only a part of the total civilization of mankind. Particularly in the thought of Asia could we find sources of profound wisdom. We sometimes forget in our Western conceit that, in spite of all their philosophical richness, Europe and the countries with typical European civilization have failed to produce anything which deserves to be called a world religion. Confucius, Lao-tse, Buddha, Isaiah, Christ—all have sprung from Asiatic soil. And, whether or not we like to admit it, they have done more for the education of mankind than all other great men together.

PLATO AS THE LINK BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

The Preface to *Isis Unveiled*, we might say, is prototypal to many of Dr. Ulich's points of emphasis. The connection between Plato and Eastern religion is given as follows, while indicating a continued secret existence throughout millennia of the "ancient universal religion" (I, xi, xii, xiii):

It is the Platonic philosophy, the most elaborate compend of the abstruse systems of old India, that can alone afford us this middle ground. Although twenty-two and a quarter centuries have elapsed since the death of Plato, the great minds of the world are still occupied with his writings. He was, in the fullest sense of the word, the world's interpreter. And the greatest philosopher of the pre-Christian era mirrored faithfully in his works the spiritualism of the Vedic philosophers who lived thousands of years before himself, and its metaphysical expression. Vyasa, Djeminy, Kapila, Vrihaspati, Sumati, and so many others, will be found to have transmitted their indelible imprint through the intervening centuries upon Plato and his school. Thus is warranted the inference that to Plato and the ancient Hindu sages was alike revealed the same wisdom.

The philosophy of Plato, we are assured by Porphyry, of the Neoplatonic School, was taught and illustrated in the Mysteries. . . . Basing all his doctrines upon the presence of the Supreme Mind, Plato taught that the *nous*, spirit, or rational soul of man, being "generated by the Divine Father," possessed a nature kindred, or even homogeneous, with the Divinity, and was capable of beholding the eternal realities.

COURSES IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION

The perspective so happily expressed by Dr. Ulich has other champions among educators. For example, an essay by Kenneth Morgan of Colgate, included in *The Teaching of Religion*, edited by Christian Gauss, has the effect of summarizing recent progress along the lines of the original Theosophical Society's Second Object. While Morgan's formal affiliations seem "Christian," he here emphasizes the need for a *non-sectarian* background of thinking for all teachers:

For a fuller understanding of non-Christian cultures, most colleges recognize the desirability of offering a course, or courses, in the non-Christian religions of the world, although their reasons may sometimes be based more on a desire for cultural breadth than for an understanding of the religious concerns which are common to men in all cultures. Such a course, when taught sympathetically, is an excellent discipline because it enables the student to study religion objectively and critically, and in the light of that technique to gain a new perspective on religion in his own culture and personal life.

In designing this course, the old concept of comparative religions, which usually meant a course demonstrating the inferiority of all faiths to Christianity, is fortunately disappearing from liberal arts education. The objective now is to present each religion as fairly

and as fully as possible, seeking understanding both of the cultural factors involved and of the basic religious problems which are common to men in all times and all cultures.

"WHEN CHILDREN ASK"

This thoughtfully conceived book by Marguerite H. Bro brings the Theosophical outlook upon religion and philosophy to bear upon the teaching of the very young. It is a plea for each parent to become a philosopher rather than an indoctrinator. Mrs. Bro hopes, too, that parents will recognize that a universal language of *moral* inquiry is as much needed as knowledge of the ABC's. She invites parents to help children to consider the comparative values of the world's great faiths without fastening upon their minds a conviction of the superiority of one special creed or interpretation. "Questions," writes Mrs. Bro, "are the child's hold upon the universe. Questions are the child's growing edge."

PHILOSOPHY AND INTEGRITY

Among leading contributors to educational thought who proclaim the necessity for transmuting religious adherence to philosophical depth are Robert Hutchins and Dr. Albert Einstein. In an article in the January *Progressive*, for instance, Dr. Hutchins links our confusion on the subject of "freedom of thought" with our lack of philosophical background:

We must admit that our education has been very little of that philosophical, historical kind which would enable us to understand what is going on in the world and to exercise an informed, critical judgment upon it.

Instead of encouraging independent thought and criticism as the best demonstration of the vitality of the truths inscribed on our hearts, we are busily engaged in suppressing them. If it is impossible for a man to be a professor unless he holds views that the majority will approve, then the American universities will become little more than detention homes for the young, with technical schools attached.

EINSTEIN ON EDUCATION AND RELIGION

Dr. Einstein, patiently continuing his arguments against the personal God concept, helps to explain *why* it is that Western civilization has been so bereft of philosophy, and why educators need to go

back and think again as if they were the first men who ever thought:

In their struggle for the ethical good, teachers of religion must have the stature to give up the doctrine of a personal God, that is, give up that source of fear and hope which in the past placed such vast power in the hands of priests. In their labors they will have to avail themselves of those forces which are capable of cultivating the Good, the True, and the Beautiful in humanity itself. This, is, to be sure, a more difficult but an incomparably more worthy task.

The further the spiritual evolution of mankind advances, the more certain it seems to me that the path of genuine religiosity does not lie through the fear of life, and the fear of death, and blind faith, but through striving after rational knowledge. (*Out of My Later Years.*)

VISIONS OF THE FUTURE FROM ANTIQUITY

Educational writers who now seek a glimpse of *universal* religion are doing so, it seems evident, by freeing themselves from both kinds of materialism, the religious and the anti-religious. Therefore, as in A. Gordon Melvin's *A History of Education*, we see continued emphasis on the philosophical and psychological validity of the ideas of Eastern educators, so much less materialistic than their Western cousins. Dr. Melvin, for one, begins his history of education in the *seventh century B.C.*, with the teachings of Lao-tze. Then, after an enlightening discussion of Confucius, he praises the philosophical depth of the ancient Greeks. All these great teachers of mankind had a vision which, according to Dr. Melvin, we are only now beginning to uncover. He writes:

With our inheritance of over-intellectualized Greek culture, coming to us weighted with medieval scholarship, we have lost what is probably an important key to education. This is the awakening of the young through physical and spiritual alertness, through a fairly developed body, and the foundation of character development in the wisdom of great men. The Greeks had a glimpse of what Emerson beheld in clear vision—men like gods.

We can but hope that these currents are the definite signs of a mighty tide which will wash away the superficialities of educational debate and, through the improvement of the understanding of our teachers, gradually bring youth closer to that "creation of free men and women, free intellectually, free morally, and above all things unselfish," spoken of as the Theosophic aim by H. P. Blavatsky.

PRISONERS ARE PEOPLE

The recent riots staged by convicts in eastern penitentiaries offer emphatic evidence of a great need for the type of prison reform conceived and instituted by Warden Kenyon Scudder. For he understands, as is indicated by his recent book, *Prisoners are People*, that the vindictive demands of an "eye for an eye" penal code must be replaced by a psychology based on a conception of Karma. Courageously and uncompromisingly, Scudder ensured, in his administration of the penal institution at Chino, Calif., that the "dignity of the individual is recognized and each treated as a person." In formulating the revolutionary philosophy of a prison without walls, he has introduced into criminal rehabilitation the basic Theosophical idea that the dignity of the individual is his ability to assume moral responsibility:

RESPONSIBLE FOR RIOTS OR REFORM

Without a wall, and without the use of guns and brutality, every man coming to Chino will have to make his own decision whether to escape or not to escape. If security facilities are severe, and if guards are so omnipresent that escape is not possible, then the important responsibility of deciding whether or not to escape will be eliminated. No man will have to make this decision, and therefore his moral responsibility will not be strengthened. If he is constantly faced with the possibility of escape and continually rejects this opportunity, then he has taken an important moral step, and has accepted a responsibility. In so doing he admits to himself his desire to become a social individual. The training and treatment men receive in prison will determine to a large degree their success or failure on parole. Individuals change slowly; therefore the process of adjustment must be gradual. It's easy to be good with a gun in your back when you are told what to do and when to do it. It's quite another thing to have to accept responsibility while in prison, the same kind of responsibility you are expected to assume in a free world outside the walls.

ANOTHER WARDEN AND COUNSELOR

The same recognition and consideration of inmates as persons was practiced by Clinton T. Duffy, as is revealed in the account of his experiences as warden in *The San Quentin Story*:

I saw them not as strangers or criminals or even numbers on a file card, but as human beings whose virtues and faults I knew

better than anyone else, whose case histories I had studied for the parole board, whose wives and mothers and children I had known from many a tearful visit over the years. I have since been told that this was a naïve and dangerous view, but I have walked the yard alone another thousand times or more since then, and nothing has ever happened to change my mind.

From this fundamental conception of inmates as individuals who must return to a place in society, the reforms in prison environment conceived by Wardens Scudder and Duffy were seen as logical necessities. Meeting the ordinary needs of a man for good food, decent clothes, and opportunities to work, to learn a trade, to take responsibility, became a prime requisite in the process of rehabilitation.

SENTENCES OTHER THAN PRISON TERMS

From consideration of each man's inherent capacities and a sincere desire to help each offender to rehabilitate himself, Warden Scudder in *Prisoners are People* suggests that we should seek other types of sentence for crimes whenever possible, allowing the individual to atone for his mistake in a dignified and positive way. He concludes:

Since society derives no benefit from punishing a man for punishment's sake, many men should not be sent to prison until every other available resource has been exhausted. Our courts could safely double the number now serving a sentence in the community under supervision and thus capitalize on the normal reaction of contrition which follows almost every conviction. In this way many more promising first offenders would be able to make restitution for the wrong they have done, at the same time support their families and avoid the lasting stigma of a prison term. A prison experience is too apt to bring out the worst in a man and leave its permanent scar upon his personality.

ORDAINED PUNISHMENT VS. KARMIC RETRIBUTION

This would seem to be in the direction of the Buddhist approach which considers crime and punishment (as indicated by H. F. Hall in *The Soul of a People*) as a fulfillment of natural and universal law. The essence of the Buddhist view, as Hall reveals it, is that recompense to society after the perpetration of a crime is important only because such recompense serves as a symbolic reminder of the Law of Justice inherent in the very structure of things. Society is

not itself interested in procuring punishment, however, believing that all real punishment must come to the individual through his own hand. When a "culprit" accepts his token punishment from society in good grace, there is an obvious end to the matter, so far as the Buddhist is concerned, no stigma attaching to the man after his expiation has been concluded. How different an attitude from that which considers criminals somehow permanently tainted because of their transgressions! To the Buddhist the only justification for punishment is its opportunity for purifying the soul from the stain of sin committed against society and one's higher nature. And the punishment or suffering should be in proportion to the crime committed—too little would be less than is necessary to cleanse the soul; excessive punishment would be useless brutality.

SATURATION POINT WHEN?

Warden Duffy seems to have intuitively perceived the completion of this cycle of atonement in individual inmates, for he observes:

For some first offenders twenty-four hours in San Quentin would be—and is—a nightmare, and is thus a sufficient deterrent. For others the critical point comes in a month, or a year, or years. But there is a saturation point in practically every man's servitude beyond which every additional hour is wasted and destructive punishment. Occasionally men who are locked up too long become "stir simple." We have them in San Quentin, men who could have been salvaged ten or twenty years ago, when the scars of their crimes—they're not all murderers, either—were still raw and painful. But there is no hope of rehabilitating them now, and they will be a public charge as long as they live.

REVOLUTION THROUGH UNDERSTANDING

These books by Wardens Kenyon Scudder and Clinton T. Duffy give hope that a new and deeper understanding of the purposes and problems of penological reform is being reached by society and may be extended through legislation into an additional number of prisons each year. The success of the efforts of such men is, in a sense, a success gained from application of a fundamental theosophical idea—the recognition of the inherent dignity of man which makes him a morally responsible being, capable, under the *universal law* of retribution and compensation, of evolving with the help of others a new and better life for himself.

PLANTS AS PLOUGHS

Natural farming methods come to attention through the *Aryan Path* for February, 1952. "Dig Deep" by John Stewart Collis, reviews a book on soil regeneration by Friend Sykes, an English organiculturist who, during forty years of experience in farming, has made discoveries which promise phenomenal results in soil reclamation. Of chief significance, perhaps, is Mr. Sykes' emphasis upon the living relationships of earth, plant, animal, and man, all of which *may* work to mutual benefit.

It is all too evident that in our eagerness to apply "scientific" techniques," we have dulled some of our "native" intelligence as to the "laws" of nature. As Sir Howard Spring, one of England's foremost forestry experts, has put it: "[Nature's] ways of going to work must be understood and sympathized with if we are to attain the ends which are both ours and hers." It is heartening, meanwhile, to find men of foresight and experience writing almost daily on problems of forestry, watersheds, and topsoil erosion. Louis Bromfield's *Saturday Evening Post* article, "I Live on the Edge of Paradise" (March 11, 1950), tells how 8,038 square miles of Ohio land were reclaimed from flood damage, through planning which will also prevent future costly reduction of nature's resources in that area.

"BIO-DYNAMIC" FARMING

While application of scientific methods in agriculture has often resulted in unlooked-for and undesirable effects, there is growing evidence that nature and the laboratory may eventually collaborate for the benefit of man. In *Organic Gardening* for December, 1950, Dr. Herman Poppelbaum discusses "Bio-Dynamic" farming, suggesting the interdependence of "all living beings," and indicating the way in which the results of laboratory experimentation may lead to "cooperation with nature." Dr. Poppelbaum calls attention to the theories of Rudolf Steiner, once General Secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society, who later developed what is known in the United States as Bio-Dynamic gardening (see *The Theosophical Movement*, 1951, pp. 303-4).

Dr. Poppelbaum's development clearly reflects the influence of Theosophical ideas. The following passage, for instance, evidently relates to the *astral* aspects of living nature:

The "living body" which underlies the material forms of plants, animals and man is perceptible as penetrating the "physical body" and representing its architect and continuous rebuildler. The plant lives in a continuous stream of changing substances taken in and given off again, which make the shape outwardly visible as they pass through it. What persists in the metabolism is not the matter itself but the "formative forces" which rule it. They maintain the shape in spite of the metabolism.

ASTRAL GROWTH

This life-body (also called the formative forces body) builds the bridge between the different visible stages of the plant and connects them into a unity. But it also links the plant with the formative forces in the soil and the atmospheric surroundings and even with the extra-terrestrial agents, of which the sun is the most obvious representative. The whole plant world and the living soil are thus embedded in an invisible system comprising the sun, which in itself forms a huge organism. All things permeated with life do not stand in a state of separation one beside the other as lifeless things do, but bear about with them an invisible system of forces which connects them with all other living beings. Thus they interpenetrate each other, and their physical outline does not represent their limits. They project beyond it. . . . The bio-dynamic methods [of farming] comprise a great many steps which start from the careful consideration of the complicated interplay below and above the soil.

"RELATIONSHIPS"

Dr. Poppelbaum adds: "The conception of the world as a whole which is prior to the parts and must be considered if the parts are to be understood is common to both Goethe and Steiner." This passage recalls H. P. Blavatsky's article, "Electric and Magnetic Affinities Between Man and Nature," in which she quotes the following from Jacob Dixon:

"Every being and naturally-formed object is in its beginning, a spiritual or monadial entity" "each, according to species, evolves from its monadial centre an essential aura, which has positive and negative magnetoid relations with the essential aura of every other, and . . . *mesmeric* attraction and repulsion, exhibiting a strong analogy with *magnetic* attraction and repulsion, this analogous attraction and repulsion obtains not only between individuals of the same, but of different species, not only in animate but in inanimate nature."

FRUITFUL "SIDE-ISSUE"

Like other men of ability who, by reason of egotism, as was the case with A. O. Hume, or from some karmic causation of hidden origin, break with the Theosophical Movement and strike out in other directions with good effect, Dr. Steiner's later work in agricultural reform seems to have had a widely constructive influence. While it is necessary, perhaps, to regard the "occult" explanations of the biodynamic enthusiasts with some wariness, there seems little doubt that the general principles of this movement are in harmony with the basic organicism of the world of nature. We can only appreciate, for example, the account of the role of humus in maintaining the health of the soil, as presented by Dr. Poppelbaum:

The processes in the soil must be understood as an interplay of two opposing tendencies: vitalization and mineralization. . . . In recent decades the soil has not been regarded as an *organ* containing and providing life forces, but merely as a *substratum* which has to transmit certain substances, especially salts, to the body of the plant. . . . The loss of substance has to be made up if the balance is to be restored. The task becomes widely different when the soil is regarded as a transmitter of subtle life forces, as a kind of diaphragm which separates the spheres above and below the surface.

LAWS OF LIVING FORCE

Not only does matter have to be replaced but a healthy interplay of most intimate workings has to be restored. The soil has not merely to be replenished but, in a certain sense, cured of a latent illness. The carrier of this cure is humus. The living forces within it have to be strengthened to counteract excessive mineralization, and then have to be directed into the plants to keep them healthy. Soil and air, light and warmth must once more be allowed to form a mighty organism which pulsates around the plants and penetrates them so that they again may become the visible organs in the invisible body of the farm or garden. Since the soil is often deprived of life forces and spoiled through wrong measures (so that it is no longer "in good heart") it must be stimulated with new life.

A passage from the philosophical weekly, *Manas* (Dec. 13, 1950), clearly presents the sort of attitude involved in viewing nature as a "living whole":

Our exact sciences sometimes give us pause to consider that Nature may be more an entity than an abstraction. The mystery of the "source of life" is always with us, whether we enter the field of atomic physics, that of biology, or chemistry. Mysticism about Nature, too, is a *human* reality, and . . . this reality cannot be escaped.

"HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES" FOR SOIL

Apart from "mystical theory," one contribution of the Biodynamic farmers which distinguishes them from the larger group of Organic Gardeners is the development of certain "stimulators" which are said to act on the homeopathic principle in producing humus in the soil. Biodynamic researchers maintain that the vital elements needed for maintaining the health of the soil may be infinitesimal in quantity. These elements, we are told, cannot be chemically identified, although the effect of their presence in the soil is said to be plainly noticeable. (The stimulators containing these elements and information concerning their properties are available from the Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, R.D.I., Chester, New York.) It is made clear, however, that these preparations alone are not held to be sufficient for maintaining the health of the soil, but are to be used along with other restorative measures.

Of general interest is the fact that the publication, *Organic Gardening*, which has revealed no special interest in "earth mysticism," nevertheless printed Dr. Poppelbaum's article, thus indicating the hospitality of the larger movement for soil conservation to all views which repeat basic principles applying to the regeneration of the earth's fertile areas. It is also of interest that the late Albert Howard, founder of the Organic Movement, gained his original inspiration in India, where, as a botanist appointed in 1905 to a research station at Pusa, near Calcutta, he studied the methods of Indian farmers, reaching the conclusion that food grown on humus-rich soil is health-giving and disease-resisting. Perhaps there is karmic fulfillment in the fact that, today, the services from the West most appreciated in India are those from agricultural experts who have gone to India to help the Indian farmers with their technical and production problems.

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