

# 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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**E**ITHER Theosophy pure and undefiled is the most real thing in the world, or we are all wasting our time and effort. If we are able to conceive its reality in all seriousness, we should then never cease trying to understand and apply what has been recorded by Masters' Messenger for our guidance and instruction. What is the distinction between Theosophy and anything else? In *Fundamental Principles*, I should say. Nothing else affords an all-inclusive view of existence. Theosophists of every degree should realize that under Karma much is required of those to whom much has been given in opportunity and knowledge. We can only use our opportunities and knowledge to the best possible advantage and continue to do so, if we would not ourselves fall short of the requirement of "the Law of Laws—Compassion absolute."

—ROBERT CROSBIE

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Knowledge dwells in heads replete with thoughts of other men, Wisdom in minds  
attentive to their own.  
—WILLIAM COWPER

# THEOSOPHY

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## THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS

**T**HIRTY-FOUR years after the founding of the Theosophical Society in New York City, the United Lodge of Theosophists came into being in Los Angeles. There was nothing particularly imposing, in terms of externals, about the beginnings of U.L.T. No "notables" were present. The press was not in evidence. Unlike the start of the Society, U.L.T. set out without any public recognition at all. In the years since, while the United Lodge of Theosophists has spread around the world, and probably has more *active* members—people active as working students—than any other association calling itself "Theosophical," the U.L.T. has neither sought nor been accorded the publicity which commonly attends organizational success.

All things considered, this is quite natural. Theosophy was "news" in 1875. H.P.B. was also "news," and this, too, was fitting, in the sense that H.P.B. was one capable of representing before the public the impact and meaning of the Theosophical Movement. While she never wanted the limelight, she was willing to use public curiosity and the wonderment at this "new" movement, with its hints of the marvelous, its apparent promise of mysteries to be unfolded, in order to get the Theosophical teachings before the minds of as many people as possible. Her time was short, the task tremendous, and she was ready to be the "lightning rod" of the Movement, as well as its dynamo and inspirer.

In 1909, there was no H.P.B. She had left the scene in 1891, leaving behind theosophists in every country in the world, and a



large—indeed a topheavy—organization, the Theosophical Society. Only two or three years after her death, ambitious theosophists began to quarrel over “authority” and “succession”—both issues representing psychological weaknesses which she opposed from the very first. Again and again, she had explained in words of one syllable that authority in Theosophy is invariably ridiculous pretension, that no one can set himself up as “an interpreter” of Theosophy to others, that the living discoveries of the mind and heart are the very essence of Theosophy, and that the life of the Movement depends upon faithfulness to this inner spirit of the philosophy.

There was one man who had either brought with him, or absorbed from H.P.B.—doubtless he did both—the essential meaning of Theosophical work. This was William Q. Judge. If there was ever a man who lived and breathed the work that H.P.B. had begun in the world, it was Mr. Judge. But he was no imitator. He did his own work, but in her spirit, which was and is the spirit of devotion to principles. He had this spirit, and he let everything else go.

Mr. Judge was an unassuming man. Yet he was truly a genius. Those who doubt this have only to attempt what he accomplished successfully—he made himself the luminous mirror of an impersonal cause. It seems fair to say that only lovers of Theosophy can appreciate Mr. Judge. A kind of golden overtone and afterglow surrounds everything he did for Theosophy. That tone and glow were, in fact, himself, his friendliness, his quality of self-forgetfulness, his almost boyish eagerness to see the Movement prosper, to help others to see what he was able to see.

Then, in 1896, Mr. Judge died. He was still a young man, not yet forty-five, and the real reasons for his death, perhaps, have not been sufficiently inquired into. We can only guess at the occult laws which govern such things, but it seems evident that there did not remain in the world enough nourishment for a man of his sort to survive. He was betrayed in life, by those whom he ought to have been able to count on as his closest associates; and then, he was betrayed in death, by those who, claiming love for him, ought to have been willing to remain calm, and to have followed the example he set.

Possibly there comes a time in the life of every world movement set going by great individuals when the world has to be left alone with only memories of greatness. Everyone, sooner or later, must learn to



do and to stand for himself. In the matter of the occult philosophy, this rule must be of the highest importance. If self-reliance and a sense of responsibility are the qualities which the study and practice of Theosophy are supposed to develop in its devotees, then, in the nature of things, the time must come when those qualities have to be tested.

In any event, they *were* tested after Mr. Judge's death, just as they had been tested five years before, with H.P.B.'s passing. The test wrought only confusion. Again there were splits in the Society; again "successors" appeared who, as the years passed by, brought forth their special claims of revelation. Whatever else may be said of these people who muddled the stream of Theosophical influence, it is plain that they were unable to follow the example of the Teachers. They thought, apparently, that they had to imitate the "greatness" of H.P.B. and Judge, instead of continuing, in their own way, according to their own capacities, the work that H.P.B. and Judge originally had started.

It was a body of principles, not a draft of high-sounding sentiments, that H.P.B. brought to the world. It was a line of work, not a line of "occult succession," that she established in 1875. The only succession to H.P.B. is the succession to doing her work, and this brings no special glory or recognition, but only the need for endless energy, ever alert discrimination, and the will to be of use to the cause of Theosophy.

To say that Robert Crosbie, the Founder of the United Lodge of Theosophists, understood that this was the character of the Theosophical Movement is to declare him a remarkable if not unique man, so far as concerns the work of the Movement. Those who remember Robert Crosbie would probably prefer that nothing like this be said about him—prefer it, that is, in a part of their minds, for to say it exposes him to a kind of belittling criticism that is not only unjust but beside the point—yet something like this needs to be said about him, if only as prefatory to speaking of what he accomplished. It is certainly fair to say that he *did* what nobody else was either able or willing to do: he set going a new "incarnation" of the Theosophical Movement on the basis of its original principles. It will be necessary, of course, in order to confirm this statement about Mr. Crosbie, to gain a working knowledge of the Theosophical principles, and this,



by a pleasant irony, is largely possible to present-day inquirers simply because of the instrument for Theosophical education which Mr. Crosbie fashioned and gave the name of "United Lodge of Theosophists."

This Magazine was born within the bosom of the United Lodge of Theosophists, so that one might argue that it must as a matter of course praise Robert Crosbie. Nothing could be more alien to his spirit than such a policy. Mr. Crosbie was also the Founder of this Magazine, which from the beginning, in 1912, has pursued a policy of impersonality, as much from inclination as from rule. Except for an occasional mention or editorial discussion such as the present article, very little "about" U.L.T. has appeared in these pages. Actually, frequent mention of U.L.T. would not only warp the editorial emphasis of the publication, but it would also be tiresome to readers who do not happen to be associates of U.L.T. It is Theosophy that both U.L.T. and this Magazine are concerned with, and Theosophy is what students will find in both places—not organizational "doings" and their "reports." It should not be difficult to see that, in inaugurating this policy, Mr. Crosbie exhibited a rather fundamental maturity in respect to Theosophical education and work. He was a serious man, and in 1912, when this Magazine was founded, he was sixty-one years old. He lived only ten years from the establishment of U.L.T., in 1909, but during that ten years he worked incessantly with his associates, helping them to get at the core of the philosophy. Here, as in other things, he was simplicity itself. We have the record of how he worked and what he said in the volume, *The Friendly Philosopher*, containing his letters to co-workers and a number of his talks at Theosophical meetings.

Today, thirty-three years since the death of Mr. Crosbie, the United Lodge of Theosophists stands as a practical monument, not merely to "him," but to the lines of work which he revived and put into practice. Thirty-three years from Mr. Crosbie's death, and seventy-seven years from the founding of the Theosophical Society—these are cycles which give promise of stretching across the century to 1975. One more cycle should be added, that from the founding of U.L.T., amounting to forty-three years—the cycle of individual maturity. It covers considerably more time than the period from 1875 to 1909, and marks a slow but steady growth in number,



strength, and solidarity. U.L.T. has had its storms and troubles, to be sure. No living body that undertakes high objectives can exist without such trials, as the history of the Society in the early days—when the Society *was* a living body—shows plainly enough. But the work of the Movement has always continued—*nothing* has ever been able to interfere with the pursuit of the Objects of the Work, to change the direction of effort or to weaken the resolve of those who have placed Theosophy first in their lives.

For U.L.T., H.P.B., William Q. Judge, and Robert Crosbie are the real Founders of the Theosophical Movement. This claims for them nothing beyond what the record shows, and would not be claimed at all save for the fact that the *Movement*, as representing Theosophy at work in the world, requires the same kind of study that is needed for understanding the philosophy itself. Recognition of the Founders affords a special touch with the humanity of the Movement, and gives a necessary guidance through the maze of complexities of human nature which practical work of any sort always presents.

As the years go by, the need for appreciating the original spirit of the Founders will grow greater, not less. All outward signs point to increasing bewilderments in the days ahead. We live in a period of dying civilizations and the collapse of moral codes. The West—and we may speak, today, of the “old” West—has largely squandered the riches of its youth, and finds the panic of premature decrepitude difficult to bear. Both imported and domestic barbarisms have created an excess of uncertainties and insecurities among even the strongest of men of good will. Yet all theosophists have had plentiful opportunity to feel the thrill of a pregnancy in the world of deeper meaning and import than the multiplying disasters which seem so ominous to yesterday’s complacency, brought forward into the present. These theosophists have deep philosophical reasons for standing firm, for remaining undisturbed no matter what may come to pass.

This is the capacity and the responsibility which a knowledge of Theosophy gives to its students. This is the twofold potentiality of U.L.T. for work in the world. Each year of effort bears its own harvest of benefits to others, but each year is also a preparation for wider benefits in years to come.



## THOSE WHO DARE

IN each generation there are always a few who dare to aspire to genuine chelaship. Of those so laboring and aspiring, most fail, or so say the Teachers. It is inconceivable that this was said to dissuade any aspirant from attempting the great task—a task which is obviously, to one who knows human nature, the most difficult and stupendous that any living being can undertake. It has also been said, and it seems equally obvious, that those so striving need not have failed.

Why should this be obvious? Because, when in the great sweep of cycles, under Karmic Law, a being is brought in his evolutionary journey to a point where he contacts the teachings of the Adepts, and their philosophy arouses in him the necessary perception and aspiration for such an attempt, the possibility of *success* must be present, equally with the possibility of failure. How could it be otherwise? Therefore, when the Teachers point out to the aspirant how very few there are who succeed in this most difficult task, it must be by way of warning only, and intended to arouse caution, determination, and self-watchfulness in the mind and heart of the aspirant, rather than any form of discouragement.

The occult history of the Theosophical Movement, if written, would no doubt show how few are the aspirants who take to heart the warnings given, at the time when they are most needed. When the tempest roars, and the lightning's flash reveals only seemingly unsurmountable obstacles and new dangers on every hand, then is the time when the Teacher's words are forgotten, or, if remembered at all, it is thought that they could not possibly apply to the *unique* position in which the would-be chela finds himself. If at such crucial times it could be remembered that the personality—perhaps nearly all that he has thought himself to be—must be subjugated, must be reduced to a cypher, how different the outcome might be, and how much greater the hope for all humanity!

The dangers and obstacles always appear to the disciple to be centered outside himself, in the surrounding circumstances; in other beings; anywhere but within himself; whereas, if truth could be seen, they are all within the jungle-like wilderness of his own nature.



Suppose he does suffer what to him seems the worst kind of injustice at the hands of others; suppose his work for Theosophy is, or to him seems to be, impeded by others whom he has trusted: What in Heaven's name has that to do with his own attitude of mind and heart? Why do we suppose he was told that a "brave endurance of personal injustice" is one of the necessary requirements for the growth and development of Soul? Can he not see that it is *personal* injustice which he is suffering, while from the viewpoint of Soul, something quite otherwise may be involved?

A Master once wrote: "Our ways are not your ways." Is this not to say that their ways are not the ways of the world—those ways that we have been nurtured on for, alas, how many incarnations? It seems evident, then, that a higher viewpoint must be striven for, and not only striven for, but attained.

The greater the suffering of the personal self, from no matter what cause, the greater the opportunity; the nearer the Soul is to the great step. He is face to face with an opportunity which only fortune's favored soldiers may obtain. He may have long ago convinced himself that he is not working and struggling for anything for himself, but if this were in fact true, why then can he not let go of self in any and all of its disguises? If the old serpent of self be only scotched; if it is not destroyed utterly by the fire of will and aspiration, then, like the Phoenix of old, it will resurrect from the ashes and appear in new, unexpected, and perhaps unrecognizable vestures. Even the elements composing the lower self are immortal in their own way.

It must be realized by the aspirant that if he is to make himself worthy to be taught—if, indeed, he is to put himself in a position where it is possible for him to receive instruction at all—he must reform himself completely. He cannot reform any other, just as no other, however wise and holy, can reform him. (The word "reform" is worth considering. It will yield a far greater significance and validity to the disciple than the connotation ordinarily given it.) Not only must one literally "re-form" the principles of his nature, but a complete change of polarity is called for—a change from the polarity designated as egotism to that of an impersonal Egoism. The great Turba through which the disciple passes is but the womb of his spiritual reformation, regeneration and rebirth, which, if accom-



plished, lifts him far above the miasmas and fogs arising from matter and the personal ways of life. It permits him to see as Sages see, to feel as Sages feel, and to know the great heart of humanity even as Masters know it. From such a viewpoint his personal trials and tribulations fall into their rightful place and can be seen for what they really are, only accolades of the purifying process. As the cycles turn, he may again and again lose the great vision, but even though at times he may sink back temporarily into the slough of personal viewing he will not forget what he has seen and known. The events of the world of matter can never again to the same degree ensnare and blind him.

The labor of the disciple is twofold in nature: not only must he bear in mind and heart the warnings given him by Those who have preceded him on the path of Soul evolution, but he must lay hold on and use the instructions given on the positive side of the ledger. For instance, any one who tries to understand, assimilate, and apply the instructions of the teachers without employing the use of analogy and correspondence, will find that he has set for himself a well-nigh hopeless task. H.P.B. placed in the hands of her students a magic key when she said that it is only through the use of analogy and correspondence that the philosophy can be mastered, and a mastery of the philosophy is synonymous with the mastery of self. How else could it be, since we, and all things in nature, are living embodiments of the truths contained in the Sacred Science?

In writing to Mr. Sinnett, a Master said that Nature follows the same plan in giving birth to a solar system, a world, or a mosquito. It must follow that if the would-be chela forgets what he has learned of analogy and correspondence; if he fails to see that it is great Occult Nature itself which is at work in him, it will be impossible for him to view his problems impersonally. If, in consequence, he blames and condemns others for what he is passing through, then must his name appear on the long list of the many who have failed, and humanity be left with one less of those who dare, who will, who love and serve, forgetful of all else.

The disciple who succeeds is as a bright and shining hope for all humanity. He lights the path for many whom he may never know. Not only is he a hope for man, but for all the kingdoms below man. Such an one may say as Buddha said:



"For therefore ride I, not for men alone,  
But for all things which, speechless, share our pain  
And have no hope, nor wit to ask for hope.

\* \* \*

This will I do because the woeful cry  
Of life and all flesh living cometh up  
Into my ears, and all my soul is full  
Of pity for the sickness of this world."

Who are those who dare to enter upon a path which is not manifest save to the eye of Soul? For it is a path to be lighted only by the fire of daring burning in the heart—the pure white light of perfect altruism and utter self-consecration.

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### TIDES OF KARMA

The Land of Everlasting Peace is protected by dark and rocky coasts. The waves roll and lash against its forbidding shores, for the tides swirl more strongly there.

Once a swimmer has set out for that Land of Peace there is no turning back. The strong and resolute will try and try again to grasp those rocks, until with bruised and bleeding limbs he vanquishes the power of the waves. The weak or timid soul may try to stop, and turn in fear from those cruel and forbidding rocks, but irresistible as fate, the tides will catch him up and hurl him against the cliffs. The tide recedes; he hopes in vain that he will not be tried again.

The cruel black shores are barriers raised in past forgotten lives. The errors of the past will rise and rise again until the harm and suffering he had caused is met, accepted, and atoned within his heart. The dashing waves and currents are his Karma. When their pull is irresistible he must more strongly swim to face the errors of the past. When ebb tides come, he can recoup his strength, and gather his soul's forces for the fight which is to come—the struggle which must be won.



# "WHAT IS TRUTH?"

By H. P. BLAVATSKY

"*Truth* is the Voice of Nature and of Time—  
*Truth* is the startling monitor *within us*—  
Nought is without it, it comes from the stars,  
The golden sun, and every breeze that blows. . . ."  
—W. THOMPSON BACON

"... Fair Truth's immortal sun  
Is sometimes hid in clouds; not that her light  
Is in itself defective, but obscured  
By my weak prejudice, imperfect faith  
And all the thousand causes which obstruct  
The growth of goodness. . . ."  
—HANNAH MORE

WHAT is Truth?" asked Pilate of one who, if the claims of the Christian Church are even approximately correct, must have known it. But He kept silent. And the truth which He did not divulge, remained unrevealed, for his later followers as much as for the Roman Governor. The silence of Jesus, however, on this and other occasions, does not prevent his present followers from acting as though they had received the ultimate and absolute Truth itself; and from ignoring the fact that only such Words of Wisdom had been given to them as contained a share of the truth, itself concealed in parables and dark, though beautiful, sayings.\*

This policy led gradually to dogmatism and assertion. Dogmatism in churches, dogmatism in science, dogmatism everywhere. The possible truths, hazily perceived in the world of abstraction, like those inferred from observation and experiment in the world of matter, are forced upon the profane multitudes, too busy to think for themselves, under the form of *Divine revelation* and *Scientific*

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NOTE.—This article first appeared as the leading editorial in *Lucifer* for February, 1888. (Previously reprinted in THEOSOPHY, Vols. 3 and 27.)

\*Jesus says to the "Twelve"—"Unto you is given the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but *unto them that are without, all things are done in parables,*" etc. (Mark iv, 11.)



*authority*. But the same question stands open from the days of Socrates and Pilate down to our own age of wholesale negation: is there such a thing as *absolute truth* in the hands of any one party or man? Reason answers, "there cannot be." There is no room for absolute truth upon any subject whatsoever, in a world as finite and conditioned as man is himself. But there are relative truths, and we have to make the best we can of them.

In every age there have been Sages who had mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in *our* race, has, or could have given out, the whole and the final truth to another man, for every one of us has to find that (to him) final knowledge *in* himself. As no two minds can be absolutely alike, each has to receive the supreme illumination *through* itself, according to its capacity, and from no *human* light. The greatest adept living can reveal of the Universal Truth only so much as the mind he is impressing it upon can assimilate, and no more. *Tot homines, quot sententiae*—is an immortal truism. The sun is one, but its beams are numberless; and the effects produced are beneficent or maleficent, according to the nature and constitution of the objects they shine upon. Polarity is universal, but the polariser lies in our own consciousness. In proportion as our consciousness is elevated towards absolute truth, so do we men assimilate it more or less absolutely. But man's consciousness again, is only the sunflower of the earth. Longing for the warm ray, the plant can only turn to the sun, and move round and round in following the course of the unreachable luminary: its roots keep it fast to the soil, and half its life is passed in the shadow. . . .

Still each of us can relatively reach the Sun of Truth even on this earth, and assimilate its warmest and most direct rays, however differentiated they may become after their long journey through the physical particles in space. To achieve this, there are two methods. On the physical plane we may use our mental polariscope; and, analyzing the properties of each ray, choose the purest. On the plane of spirituality, to reach the Sun of Truth we must work in dead earnest for the development of our higher nature. We know that by paralyzing gradually within ourselves the appetites of the lower personality, and thereby deadening the voice of the purely physiological mind—that mind which depends upon, and is inseparable



from, its medium or *vehicle*, the organic brain—the animal man in us may make room for the spiritual; and once aroused from its latent state, the highest spiritual senses and perceptions grow in us in proportion, and develop *pari passu* with the “divine man.” This is what the great adepts, the Yogis in the East and the Mystics in the West, have always done and are still doing.

But we also know, that with a few exceptions, no man of the world, no materialist, will ever believe in the existence of such adepts, or even in the possibility of such a spiritual or psychic development. “The (ancient) fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”; the modern says, “There are no adepts on earth, they are figments of your diseased fancy.” Knowing this we hasten to reassure our readers of the Thomas Didymus type. We beg them to turn in this magazine to reading more congenial to them; say to the miscellaneous papers on Hylo-Idealism, by various writers.\*

For LUCIFER tries to satisfy its readers of whatever “school of thought,” and shows itself equally impartial to Theist and Atheist, Mystic and Agnostic, Christian and Gentile. Such articles as our editorials, the Comments on “Light on the Path,” etc., etc.—are not intended for Materialists. They are addressed to Theosophists, or readers who know in their hearts that Masters of Wisdom *do* exist: and, though *absolute* truth is not on earth and has to be searched for in higher regions, that there still are, even on this silly, ever-whirling little globe of ours, some things that are not even dreamt of in Western philosophy.

To return to our subject. It thus follows that, though “general *abstract* truth is the most precious of all blessings” for many of us, as it was for Rousseau, we have, meanwhile, to be satisfied with relative truths. In sober fact, we are a poor set of mortals at best, ever in dread before the face of even a relative truth, lest it should devour ourselves and our petty little preconceptions along with us. As for an absolute truth, most of us are as incapable of seeing it as of reaching the moon on a bicycle. Firstly, because absolute truth is as

\*E.g., to the little article “Autocentricism”—on the same “philosophy,” or again, to the apex of the Hylo-Idealist pyramid in this Number. It is a letter of protest by the learned Founder of the School in question, against a *mistake* of ours. He complains of our “coupling” his name with those of Mr. Herbert Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, and others, on the question of atheism and materialism, as the said lights in the psychological and physical sciences are considered by Dr. Lewins too flickering, too “compromising” and weak, to deserve the honourable appellation of Atheists or even Agnostics. See “Correspondence” in Double Column, and the reply by “The Adversary.”



immovable as the mountain of Mahomet, which refused to disturb itself for the prophet, so that he had to go to it himself. And we have to follow his example if we would approach it even at a distance. Secondly, because the kingdom of absolute truth is not of this world, while we are too much of it. And thirdly, because notwithstanding that in the poet's fancy man is

".....the abstract  
Of all perfection, which the workmanship  
Of heaven hath modelled. ...."

in reality he is a sorry bundle of anomalies and paradoxes, an empty wind bag inflated with his own importance, with contradictory and easily influenced opinions. He is at once arrogant and a weak creature, which, though in constant dread of some authority, terrestrial or celestial, will yet—

".....like an angry ape,  
Play such fantastic tricks before high Heaven  
As make the angels weep."

Now, since truth is a multifaced jewel, the facets of which it is impossible to perceive all at once; and since, again, no two men, however anxious to discern truth, can see even one of those facets alike, what can be done to help them to perceive it? As physical man, limited and trammelled from every side by illusions, cannot reach truth by the light of his terrestrial perceptions, we say—develop in you the *inner* knowledge. From the time when the Delphic oracle said to the enquirer "Man, know thyself," no greater or more important truth was ever taught. Without such perception, man will remain ever blind to even many a relative, let alone absolute, truth. Man has to *know himself*, i.e., acquire the *inner* perceptions which never deceive, before he can master any absolute truth. Absolute truth is *the symbol of Eternity*, and no *finite* mind can ever grasp the eternal, hence, no truth in its fulness can ever dawn upon it. To reach the state during which man sees and senses it, we have to paralyze the senses of the external man of clay. This is a difficult task, we may be told, and most people will, at this rate, prefer to remain satisfied with relative truths, no doubt. But to approach even terrestrial truth requires, first of all, *love of truth for its own sake*, for otherwise no recognition of it will follow. And who loves truth in



this age for its own sake? How many of us are prepared to search for, accept, and carry it out, in the midst of a society in which anything that would achieve success *has to be built on appearances, not on reality, on self-assertion, not on intrinsic value?*

We are fully aware of the difficulties in the way of receiving truth. The fair heavenly maiden descends only on a (to her) congenial soil—the soil of an impartial, unprejudiced mind, illuminated by pure Spiritual Consciousness; and both are truly rare dwellers in civilized lands. In our century of steam and electricity, when man lives at a maddening speed that leaves him barely time for reflection, he allows himself usually to be drifted down from cradle to grave, nailed to the Procrustean bed of custom and conventionality. Now conventionality—pure and simple—is a congenital LIE, as it is in every case a “*simulation of feelings according to a received standard*” (F. W. Robertson’s definition); and where there is any simulation *there cannot be any truth*. How profound the remark made by Byron, that “truth is a gem that is found at a great depth; whilst on the surface of this world all things are weighed *by the false scales of custom*,” is best known to those who are forced to live in the stifling atmosphere of such social conventionalism, and who, even when willing and anxious to learn, dare not accept the truths they long for, for fear of the ferocious Moloch called Society.

Look around you, reader; study the accounts given by the world-known travellers, recall the joint observations of literary thinkers, the data of science and of statistics. Draw the picture of modern society, of modern politics, of modern religion and modern life in general before your mind’s eye. Remember the ways and customs of every cultured race and nation under the sun. Observe the doings and the moral attitude of people in the civilized centres of Europe, America and even of the far East and the colonies, everywhere where the white man has carried the “benefits” of so-called civilization. And now, having passed in review all this, pause and reflect, and then name, *if you can*, that blessed Eldorado, that exceptional spot on the globe, *where TRUTH is the honoured guest, and LIE and SHAM the ostracised outcasts?* YOU CANNOT. Nor can any one else, unless he is prepared and determined to add his mite to the mass of falsehood that reigns supreme in every department of national and social life. “Truth!” cried Carlyle, “truth, though the heavens crush me for



following her, no falsehood, though a whole celestial Lubberland were the prize of Apostasy." Noble words, these. But how many think, and how many will *dare* to speak as Carlyle did, in our nineteenth century day? Does not the gigantic appalling majority prefer to a man the "paradise of Do-nothings," the *pays de Cocagne* of heartless selfishness? It is this majority that recoils terror-stricken before the most shadowy outline of every new and popular truth, out of mere cowardly fear, lest Mrs. Harris should denounce, and Mrs. Grundy condemn, its converts to the torture of being rent piecemeal by her murderous tongue.

SELFISHNESS, the first-born of Ignorance, and the fruit of the teaching which asserts that for every newly-born infant a new soul, *separate and distinct* from the Universal Soul, is "created"—this Selfishness is the impassable wall between the *personal* Self and Truth. It is the prolific mother of all human vices. *Lie* being born out of the necessity for dissembling, and *Hypocrisy* out of the desire to mask *Lie*. It is the fungus growing and strengthening with age in every human heart in which it has devoured all better feelings. Selfishness kills every noble impulse in our natures, and is the one deity, fearing no faithlessness or desertion from its votaries. Hence, we see it reign supreme in the world, and in so-called fashionable society. As a result, we live, and move, and have our being in this god of darkness under his trinitarian aspect of Sham, Humbug, and Falsehood, called RESPECTABILITY.

Is this Truth and Fact, or is it slander? Turn whichever way you will, and you find, from the top of the social ladder to the bottom, deceit and hypocrisy at work for dear Self's sake, in every nation as in every individual. But nations, by tacit agreement, have decided that selfish motives in politics shall be called "noble national aspiration, patriotism," etc.; and the citizen views it in his family circle as "domestic virtue." Nevertheless, Selfishness, whether it breeds desire for aggrandizement of territory, or competition in commerce at the expense of one's neighbour, can never be regarded as a virtue. We see smooth-tongued DECEIT and BRUTE FORCE—the *Jachin* and *Boaz* of every International Temple of Solomon—called Diplomacy, and we call it by its right name. Because the diplomat bows low before these two pillars of national glory and politics, and puts their masonic symbolism "in (cunning) strength shall this my house be established"



into daily practice; *i.e.*, gets by deceit what he cannot obtain by force—shall we applaud him? A diplomat's qualification—"dexterity or skill in securing advantages"—for one's own country at the expense of other countries, can hardly be achieved by speaking *truth*, but verily by a wily and deceitful tongue; and, therefore, LUCIFER calls such action—a *living*, and an evident LIE.

But it is not in politics alone that custom and selfishness have agreed to call deceit and lie virtue, and to reward him who lies best with public statues. Every class of Society lives on LIE, and would fall to pieces without it. Cultured, God-and-law-fearing aristocracy being as fond of the forbidden fruit as any plebian, is forced to lie from morn to noon in order to cover what it is pleased to term its "little peccadillos," but which TRUTH regards as gross immorality. Society of the middle classes is honeycombed with false smiles, false talk, and mutual treachery. For the majority religion has become a thin tinsel veil thrown over the corpse of spiritual faith. The master goes to church to deceive his servants; the starving curate—preaching what he has ceased to believe in—hood-winks his bishop; the bishop—his God. *Dailies*, political and social, might adopt with advantage for their motto Georges Dandin's immortal query—"Lequel de nous deux trompe-t-on ici?"—Even Science, once the anchor of the salvation of Truth, has ceased to be the temple of *naked* Fact. Almost to a man the Scientists strive now only to force upon their colleagues and the public the acceptance of some personal hobby, of some new-fangled theory, which will shed lustre on their name and fame. A scientist is as ready to suppress damaging evidence against a current scientific hypothesis in our times, as a missionary in heathen-land, or a preacher at home, to persuade his congregation that modern geology is a lie, and evolution but vanity and vexation of spirit.

Such is the actual state of things in 1888 A.D., and yet we are taken to task by certain papers for seeing this year in more than gloomy colours!

Lie has spread to such extent—supported as it is by custom and conventionalities—that even chronology forces people to lie. The suffixes A.D. and B.C. used after the dates of the year by Jew and Heathen, in European and even Asiatic lands, by the Materialist and the Agnostic as much as by the Christian, at home, are—a *lie* used to sanction another LIE.



Where then is even relative truth to be found? If, so far back as the century of Democritus, she appeared to him under the form of a goddess lying at the very bottom of a well, so deep that it gave but little hope for her release; under the present circumstances we have a certain right to believe her hidden, at least, as far off as the ever invisible *dark* side of the moon. This is why, perhaps, all the votaries of hidden truths are forthwith set down as lunatics. However it may be, in no case and under no threat shall LUCIFER be ever forced into pandering to any universally and tacitly recognized, and as universally practised lie, but will hold to fact, pure and simple, trying to proclaim truth whensoever found, and under no cowardly mask. Bigotry and intolerance may be regarded as orthodox and sound policy, and the encouraging of social prejudices and personal hobbies at the cost of truth, as a wise course to pursue in order to secure success for a publication. Let it be so. The Editors of LUCIFER are Theosophists, and their motto is chosen: *Vera pro gratiis*.

They are quite aware that LUCIFER's libations and sacrifices to the goddess Truth do not send a sweet savoury smoke into the noses of the lords of the press, nor does the bright "Son of the Morning" smell sweet in their nostrils. He is ignored when not abused as—*veritas odium paret*. Even his friends are beginning to find fault with him. They cannot see *why it should not be a purely Theosophical magazine*, in other words, why it refuses to be dogmatic and bigoted. Instead of devoting every square inch of space to theosophical and occult teachings, it opens its pages "to the publication of the most grotesquely heterogeneous elements and conflicting doctrines." This is the chief accusation, to which we answer—why not? Theosophy is divine knowledge, and knowledge is Truth; every *true* fact, every sincere word are thus part and parcel of Theosophy. One who is skilled in divine alchemy, or even approximately blessed with the gift of the perception of truth, will find and extract it from an erroneous as much as from a correct statement. However small the particle of gold lost in a ton of rubbish, it is the noble metal still, and worthy of being dug out even at the price of some extra trouble.

As has been said, it is often as useful to know what a thing *is not*, as to learn what it *is*. The average reader can hardly hope to find any fact in a sectarian publication under all its aspects, *pro* and *con*, for either one way or the other its presentation is sure to be biased,



and the scales helped to incline to that side to which its editor's special policy is directed. A Theosophical magazine is thus, perhaps, the only publication where one may hope to find, at any rate, the unbiased, if still only approximate truth and fact. Naked truth is reflected in LUCIFER under its many aspects, for no philosophical or religious views are excluded from its pages. And, as every philosophy and religion, however incomplete, unsatisfactory, and even foolish some may be occasionally, must be based on a truth and fact of some kind, the reader has thus the opportunity of comparing, analyzing, and choosing from the several philosophies discussed therein. LUCIFER offers as many facets of the One universal jewel as its limited space will permit, and says to its readers: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve: whether the gods that were on the other side of the flood which submerged man's reasoning powers and divine knowledge, or the gods of the Amorites of *custom* and *social falsehood*, or again, the Lord of (the highest) Self—the bright destroyer of the dark power of illusion?" Surely it is that philosophy that tends to diminish, instead of adding to, the sum of human misery, which is the best.

At all events, the choice is there, and for this purpose only have we opened our pages to every kind of contributors. Therefore do you find in them the views of a Christian clergyman who believes in his God and Christ, but rejects the wicked interpretations and the enforced dogmas of his ambitious proud Church, along with the doctrines of the Hylo-Idealist, who denies God, soul, and immortality, and believes in nought save himself. The rankest Materialists will find hospitality in our journal; aye, even those who have not scrupled to fill pages of it with sneers and personal remarks upon ourselves, and abuse of the doctrines of Theosophy, so dear to us. When a journal of *free thought*, conducted by an Atheist, inserts an article by a Mystic or Theosophist in praise of his occult views and the mystery of Parabrahmam, and passes on it only a few casual remarks, then we say LUCIFER has found a rival. When a Christian periodical or missionary organ accepts an article from the pen of a free-thinker deriding belief in Adam and his rib, and passes criticism on Christianity—its editor's faith—in meek silence, then it will have become worthy of LUCIFER, and may be said truly to have reached that degree of tolerance when it may be placed on a level with any Theosophical publication.



But so long as none of these organs do something of the kind, they are all sectarian, bigoted, intolerant, and can never have an idea of truth and justice. They may throw innuendoes against LUCIFER and its editors; they cannot affect either. In fact, the editors of that magazine feel proud of such criticism and accusations, as they are witness to the absolute absence of bigotry, or arrogance of any kind in theosophy, the result of the divine beauty of the doctrines it preaches. For, as said, Theosophy allows a hearing and a fair chance to all. It deems no views—if sincere—entirely destitute of truth. It respects thinking men, to whatever class of thought they may belong. Ever ready to oppose ideas and views which can only create confusion without benefiting philosophy, it leaves their expounders personally to believe in whatever they please, and does justice to their ideas when they are good. Indeed, the conclusions or deductions of a philosophic writer may be entirely opposed to our views and the teachings we expound; yet, his premises and statements of facts may be quite correct, and other people may profit by the adverse philosophy, even if we ourselves reject it, believing we have something higher and still nearer to the truth. In any case, our profession of faith is now made plain, and all that is said in the foregoing pages both justifies and explains our editorial policy.

To sum up the idea, with regard to absolute and relative truth, we can only repeat what we said before. *Outside a certain highly spiritual and elevated state of mind, during which Man is at one with the UNIVERSAL MIND—he can get nought on earth but relative truth, or truths, from whatsoever philosophy or religion.* Were even the goddess who dwells at the bottom of the well to issue from her place of confinement, she could give no more than he can assimilate. Meanwhile, every one can sit near that well—the name of which is KNOWLEDGE—and gaze into its depths in the hope of seeing Truth's fair image reflected, at least, on the dark waters. This, however, as remarked by Richter, presents a certain danger. Some truth, to be sure, may be occasionally reflected as in a mirror on the spot we gaze upon, and thus reward the patient student. But, adds the German thinker, "I have heard that some philosophers in seeking for Truth, to pay homage to her, have seen their own image in the water and adored it instead." . . .

It is to avoid such a calamity—one that has befallen every founder



of a religious or philosophical school—that the editors are studiously careful not to offer the reader only those truths which they find reflected in their own personal brains. They offer the public a wide choice, and refuse to show bigotry and intolerance, which are the chief landmarks on the path of Sectarianism. But, while leaving the widest margin possible for comparison, our opponents cannot hope to find *their faces* reflected on the clear waters of our LUCIFER, without remarks or just criticism upon the most prominent features thereof, if in contrast with theosophical views.

This, however, only within the cover of the public magazine, and so far as regards the merely intellectual aspect of philosophical truths. Concerning the deeper spiritual, and one may almost say religious, beliefs, no true Theosophist ought to degrade these by subjecting them to public discussion, but ought rather to treasure and hide them deep within the sanctuary of his innermost soul. Such beliefs and doctrines should never be rashly given out, as they risk unavoidable profanation by the rough handling of the indifferent and the critical. Nor ought they to be embodied in any publication except as hypotheses offered to the consideration of the thinking portion of the public. Theosophical truths, when they transcend a certain limit of speculation, had better remain concealed from public view, for the "evidence of things not seen" is no evidence save to him who sees, hears, and senses it. It is not to be dragged outside the "Holy of Holies," the temple of the impersonal divine *Ego*, or the indwelling SELF. For, while every fact outside *its* perception can, as we have shown, be, at best, only a relative truth, a ray from the absolute truth can reflect itself only in the pure mirror of its own flame—our highest SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS. And how can the darkness (of illusion) comprehend the LIGHT that shineth in it?

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Inspiration is the art of arts; the life of lives; the genius and skill of Deity, comprehending and energizing all knowledges, cultures, disciplines, by which souls are bred, edified, divinized. An inspired man becomes the creative Prometheus of natures. In the secrets of lives he breathes the deific spark into the human dust.

—A. BRONSON ALCOTT



## THE PATH OF DISILLUSIONMENT

**D**ISILLUSIONMENT seems to be the negative process through which we must pass in order to learn the nature of Reality. This may be an experience of frustration, as one is forced by circumstances to reject that which was cherished, or it may be an awakening to errors made in judgment of events and individuals. But whether it is an evolutionary process of awakening, or as Webster defines it, simply "freedom from illusion," perhaps an attempt should be made to determine *why* we are continuously disillusioned, and if such painful experiences are necessary to our development.

Led by the desire for security, harmony, and certainty, the lower personal mind places its faith in forms—seeking security in money and possessions, political systems, a job, or personal relationships. Mistaking authority and dogmatism for certainty, the lower mind may turn to sources outside for guidance. Yielding to pressures from individuals, groups, or society in general, the personal man erroneously relies on conformity for that harmony he so deeply desires. But, as the cycles turn, things, systems, persons and relationships change or disappear, leaving the man bewildered and disillusioned.

That certainty which has its basis in authority and the false harmony of conformity can never be more than the transitory patterns set by personal opinion. And because the *personal* opinion must always be a *conditioned* one, lacking the permanence or universality of principles, those who place their hopes and faith there must awaken time and again under the glaring and revealing light of disillusionment.

Real security, certainty, and harmony must first be reached *within*, born from a realization of that permanent essence which pervades and unifies all. Only then can one enter into the complex, contending relationships of daily life and remain sure, unafraid, and impersonal. Only those relationships which have their roots in the impersonal, permanent Self of all beings can be truly harmonious, enduring the petty egotism and selfishness of personalities. From this basis only can we hope to be able to perceive impartially and wisely the true nature of circumstances and individuals, thus freeing ourselves from deception and delusion.



To discourage reliance upon authority and the tendency to conformity, H.P.B. was emphatic in her petitions to "follow not me nor my path, but the path I show," *i.e.*, the path of principles. Ignoring her admonition, many, seeing only the personality of H.P.B. and the actions of that personality, became "disillusioned" in the course of events.

The same may happen to a student of Theosophy today who places his faith in any Lodge *as an organization* or in any person *as an authority*. For an organization or a person can never be more than a conditioned aspect of the real basis of unity and reality—the impersonal, unchanging Principle itself. The principles of compassion and impartial justice as embodied in the character of H.P.B. and Judge, and revealed in their writings, are the principles which must form the basis of Theosophical endeavor by individuals or united groups. *Methods* of dissemination will vary with individuals, but the principles remain constant—the only true and unchanging bases upon which a student may form relationships, from which he may proceed in acquiring knowledge, to which he must return again and again in order to free himself from the *ahankaric* tendency of identification with the desires and emotions of the personal nature which lead him along the path of disillusionment.

Because the goal is a realization of That which is indefinable and unconditioned, this painful process of learning in a negative way (learning what is *not* real, in order to comprehend what is real) would seem to be the only way in which the "fallen angels" may finally free themselves from the delusions of conditioned existence. For, despite its deviousness, this path does lead us surely toward the goal. Though it must take us through the deceptions, the antagonisms and conflicts of duality, through the illusory certainties of dogmatism and atheism, of idealism and scepticism, of emotionalism and asceticism—with each disillusionment suffered, a cycle may be completed, a lesson learned, a "bud of personality crushed out."

Hope and encouragement must arise from the discovery of the positive side of this process: disillusionment in things outside ourselves must always be an effect, the effect of a corresponding door being opened within. Only thus may we finally pass "through the seven portals to the other shore."



## NOTES ON THE KEY

IT should be of more than casual interest to note that H.P.B., in developing "The Fundamental Teachings of Theosophy" in Section Five, omits a systematic presentation of the three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*. The basic ideas, certainly, occur and re-occur, but not in the form and order with which students of *The Secret Doctrine* are most familiar. Since the *Key* was obviously intended as a book for new students of Theosophy who might feel lost in the vastness of correlation and synthesis supplied by *The Secret Doctrine*, some reflection upon the omission of a detailed statement of the Fundamentals may be in order.

If one has long assumed that the comprehension of Theosophy necessarily begins with "the Three Fundamentals," phrased *as such*, the fluidity of H.P.B.'s approach in the *Key* should serve as an excellent modifier of this idea. For, as every great theosophic teacher has said—and in a score of ways—"truth is not a man, nor a book nor a statement" nor any formulation that has been or ever will be devised. Perceptions of certain truths in respect to man's nature and his relation to the Cosmos awaken gradually, the initial point of departure differing with the individual and the immediate karmic circumstances.

This is clearly intimated in H.P.B.'s discussion of the qualifications for membership in the T.S., when she explains that an active interest in *any one* of the Three Objects gives one a full right to belong. And this breadth of approach can be applied with even greater justification to the "Three Fundamentals," in respect to the progressive nature of a man's awakening to the perception of all three seen as One. Usually *one* of the three "fundamental" areas of inquiry will call forth the strongest initial interest from a student. A scientist may be fascinated by mathematical common denominators which enable planets, suns and stars to be comprehended all together in terms of laws of motion—which are also laws of harmony. Physics may introduce to him the sense of the "boundless, omnipresent." Or he may approach the "First Fundamental" as does the biologist, Edmund W. Sinnott, when he speaks of an essential, uniformly pervasive life-stuff out of which all things came, and of which all things are composed.



Another, as archaeologist or zoologist, may inwardly thrill to the pulse of growing nature, and be acutely responsive to anything pertaining to the great "pivotal" doctrine of evolution.

For all these, it is the port of entry which is crucial. When attention is focussed upon a certain phase of the eternal quest for truth, the mind is more receptive to synthesizing the concepts in one area rather than in any other, as for instance, more receptive to the thought of Spiritual Beinghood than to the thought of Moral Law, or more receptive to the thought of Soul Evolution than to that of either Moral Law or Spiritual Oneness.

Thus it is clear that no summation of philosophy could possibly exist which would initially stand out in equal emphasis in all its parts. Always will there be special first points of contact with Theosophical essentials, special interests and development along one or more particular lines. We find, then, an explanation of H.P.B.'s omission of the same formulation of fundamental propositions as that used in *The Secret Doctrine* when she wrote the *Key*—and we simultaneously realize why neither H.P.B., nor Judge, nor, for that matter, Robert Crosbie, ever attempted to systematize the philosophy. Put simply, Theosophy has as great a scope psychologically as metaphysically and cosmologically. Were one formulation or order of presentation held to suffice, even for the "Fundamentals," a certain narrowness of horizon would inevitably result, since horizons are psychological realities.

With these reflections in mind, we may think of the introduction of any statement made to represent basic truths as being also a summation of thoughts already familiar. In truth, no man can ever understand a *completely* new idea. What he understands, with each progressive awakening, is an extension of that which he already knows. Thus, both in *The Secret Doctrine* and in the *Key*, H.P.B. gives abundant discussion to the Christian Deity *before* she formulates any "proposition" in respect to spiritual Reality. Had there been no Christian Deity, had the dominant "religious" conditioning of the West been d'Holbach's materialism, the preceding discussion would clearly have varied accordingly. One further implication also remains—that the actual phrasing of the proposition would likewise have varied, since that which is given is, at least in part, molded to contrast with the Christian idea of Deity.



The *concept* brought to focus by the first proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* is introduced immediately in the *Key* under "Fundamental Teachings." But the statement that "Theosophy teaches the existence of an infinite principle which is the root of all that exists," being extraordinarily difficult to grasp, is given some preparation. H.P.B. calls attention to the efforts of both religion and science to phrase an intuitively-felt connecting bond between man and the rest of the wide universe. The scientist seeks the "total of all finite agencies and forces" while the religionist seeks the total of all *spiritual* agencies and forces. Both are concerned with the problem of arriving at a unifying conception, and both scientist and religionist have imprinted their thoughts on our "cultural heritage," making the *study* of science and religion a portion of self-study.

In Section V of the *Key*, H.P.B. shows how the first proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* aids man in formulating a double synthesis—the synthesis sought by the scientists, and the synthesis sought by the religionists, and then a combined or greater synthesis of both:

In short, our Deity is the eternal, incessantly *evolving*, not *creating*, builder of the universe; that *universe itself unfolding* out of its own essence, not being *made*. It is a sphere, without circumference, in its symbolism, which has but one ever-acting attribute embracing all other existing or thinkable attributes—ITSELF. . . . When we speak of the Deity and make it identical, hence coeval, with Nature, the eternal and uncreate nature is meant, and not your aggregate of flitting shadows and finite unrealities. We leave it to the hymn-makers to call the visible sky or heaven, God's Throne, and our earth of mud His footstool. Our DEITY is neither in a paradise, nor in a particular tree, building, or mountain: it is everywhere, in every atom of the visible as of the invisible Cosmos, in, over, and around every invisible atom and divisible molecule; for IT is the mysterious power of evolution and involution, the omnipresent, omnipotent, and even omniscient creative potentiality.

The meaning here is extremely simple, and in no sense, really "abstruse." The Theosophic view is that of the "universe itself unfolding out of its own essence," not being "made" by either blind material forces or supernatural ones. Here is the *meaning* of the first Fundamental Proposition, even if not a full metaphysical statement, and hence, except for metaphysicians, offering a much more comprehensible point of orientation and departure.



The *meaning* of the Second Fundamental follows immediately, in the statement that this Deity of the Theosophists is *also* "the one law, giving the impulse to manifested, eternal, and immutable laws, within that never-manifesting, *because* absolute LAW, which in its manifesting periods is *The ever-Becoming*." If we now return to *The Secret Doctrine* itself, we shall have further evidence that the fundamental propositions as given in their purer, abstract form on pages 14-20 may be thought of as tools for *enlarging* concepts already introduced. Much of the Introductory is concerned with "the necessity of an absolute Divine Principle in nature." That part of the Proem preceding page 14 involves a consideration of the symbolisms which represent "the ever invisible spiritual soul of nature." Also, in turning to the scientific search for the unifying or connecting factor between the various grades and forms of matter, she treats of "one element and breath" reflected by the real existence of ether, the seven elements with their sub-elements being simply "*conditional* modifications and aspects of the ONE AND ONLY ELEMENT."

To repeat, then, it is obviously H.P.B.'s conviction that considerable preparation is needed for the bold statement of such highly metaphysical propositions as to what we call the "fundamentals." Can we wonder that inquirers cannot be expected to understand immediately a presentation of abstractions, even though those be "from *The Secret Doctrine*"? Theosophists who have actually studied H.P.B.'s works have not been thrust into this difficult condensation of thought all at once, but rather led to it gradually by the consideration of various problems which only some such generalized formulation can clarify. It is then a concept or a purview which H.P.B. is actually introducing, not a particular formula; again, statements given are almost as much a summation of things already discussed as a point of departure for other statements to follow.

Such considerations give partial justification for the view sometimes held by Theosophists that the "three fundamentals" do not *always* have to be considered in the order outlined on pages 14 through 20 of *The Secret Doctrine*.

After indicating that Law and Life are self-contained and self-containing, the conclusion can only be that the Higher Self in each man is the self-reliant maker of individual destiny. "Prayer," then, in the Christian sense, cannot be justified. H.P.B. next turns to the



second great question—the nature and conditions of individuality. The comprehension of Karma depends upon a knowledge of the interrelationships established by the various orders of being, and the “various orders of being” cannot be understood without an affirmation that each center of life and consciousness, in its highest nature, participates in the true “deity.” Thus is the Christian God supplanted, and the eager quest of the philosophically-minded directed towards an understanding of the term soul and *its* laws—the subject matter of the Third Fundamental Proposition.

“Law”—what do we mean by this? To say that the One Life is the One Law, is not a statement of the Second Fundamental, but the continuation of a statement of the first. The Second Fundamental, as stated in *The Secret Doctrine*, is a proposition covering the mode or manner in which law works. But in order to understand any such proposition, we have to know what manner of being we are—upon and through whom Law works. The question of individuality must be answered before “the working of law” can be grasped in any sense except as an abstraction. Until the question of individuality is answered, the ethical and moral implications of “law” can have no meaning. Law applies to everything, including ourselves, *but who are we?* The answer, apparently, is not to be clearly defined at this stage of development of the philosophy, for H.P.B., in Section V, moves from a question concerning the nature of soul to the story of the Buddha, relating how Gautama refused either to affirm or deny the soul. Yet in so doing, she focusses attention upon the fact that there is a mystery here for each one to penetrate for himself. We are, in other words, led from consideration of the implications of the First Fundamental to the question of individuality, but the very “non-answering” of this second, and, for many persons, most important question, is the answer which is perhaps most needed. This is a mystery, for the solution of which man may find his own inspiration. But a mystery, too, which he can solve when he learns sufficient of the laws of life.

Might not this be called practical logic—practical, because it is of considerable importance for each man to know whether the source of strength which may move his destiny is within or outside of himself? But then, after the affirmation of that strength *within* is made—after the “God question” is settled—man must still know *how* to



invoke his own inner power. Simply to say that the only true God is within does not explain how he may expect to "will" independently, and how much "free choice" actually exists. This is a crucial point: *does* man have real individuality, or is his real being only in terms of a vast universal principle, which gives him *identity* with all other living things, and none but an illusory individuality? There is only *one* spirit, but does this mean that there is but the one soul? If so, the appearance of individuality is to be shunned, since reabsorption into the One would be the only goal—and, actually, the only "true state." Men wish to know, however, about the power and strength of soul *as* individual soul; and they manifest an inward faith that such power exists. Once the heart-longing for an answer to the desire to believe that a wondrous kinship exists through all of nature has been satisfied, another part of the heart speaks, just as clearly. Man is but beast if he cannot think of the whole of mankind as well as of himself, yet if he cannot think of himself as an individual, think of his pilgrimage as being one of special significance for him because of having its own special lessons necessary for his further enlightenment, the word "progress" comes to stand for something mechanical, something without *spiritual* significance.

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#### NATURE'S REPROOF

The lesson is forcibly taught . . . that our life might be much easier and simpler than we make it; that the world might be a happier place than it is; that there is no need of struggles, convulsions, and despairs, of the wringing of the hands and the gnashing of the teeth; that we miscreate our own evils. We interfere with the optimism of nature; for whenever we get this vantage-ground of the past, or of a wiser mind in the present, we are able to discern that we are begirt with laws which execute themselves. . . .

Nature will not have us fret and fume. She does not like our benevolence or our learning much better than she likes our frauds and wars. When we come out of the caucus, or the bank, or the Abolition-convention, or the Temperance-meeting, or the Transcendental club into the fields and woods, she says to us, "So hot? my little Sir."

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON



## YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK— AND ANSWER

**I***T is said we bind ourselves to people by our love and hate. What can be said of someone trying to "work out" his Karma with someone he dislikes in order to break the bond of hate?*

Since we are beings of mind, the motive is the deciding factor in whether an act is "good" or "bad." But first, what is "working out" our Karma? Our karmic connection with a person represents lines of thought and action commenced at a previous time. These lines can be on the physical, mental, or spiritual plane of becoming. When we have acted consciously and objectively in a relationship with a constructive motive, we are on the road to terminating the *binding* lines.

We have many relationships of differing natures. Each relationship finds us involved to a greater or less degree, depending upon our state of mind and previous Karma. Since it is our *uncontrolled* feelings which involve us, it must be control of that part of our nature by something else which frees us. Therefore, nursing or even *allowing* a feeling of dislike merely keeps the lines of action in play. The only sort of act which leaves man "free" is a conscious, compassionate act, which is free from demands of selfishness; the *whole man, as a unit*, participates in the act. Thus this attitude must be held before any real progress can be made in untangling our Karma.

H.P.B. says in the *Key to Theosophy* that we do not forgive those whom we wrong. This could be the reason for the continued dislike felt toward others. Maybe we have wronged them in the past. It is difficult to admit, even to ourselves, that we are wrong. We may have a guilt-feeling which we try to get rid of by blaming others. And misunderstanding of oneself leads to hate.

It is impossible to see a thing clearly when consumed with hate. Our perspective is narrowed and we are looking "in"—at our own lower natures—instead of out, at the whole situation. Since it is impossible to go two ways at once, a person will often fail in attempts to "free" himself, merely involving himself more deeply. Such a person would be like one who says he is trying to see clearly, but who has not yet opened his eyes.



*What is (a) the scientific, as well as (b) the theosophical, basis for advocating abstention from alcohol? (c) How can we help the youth of today see the truth of the matter?*

(a) In history, we find various reform movements cropping up every so often, which insist on abstention from alcohol, and usually, on prohibition. Are such movements anything more than moralistic reactions to justify ourselves after allowing years of crime and evil-doing in our society? After a while we always seem to settle back in the same old rut. In the United States, Prohibition can be traced all the way back to 1773, when it became a state law in Georgia. Since then we find one prohibition law after another, first adopted, then repealed. The history of prohibition in other countries is similar. Iceland, Russia, Canada, and Finland attempted prohibition and then abandoned it. What seems to be important, however, is the fact that no matter how much evidence is shown as to the injurious effects of drinking alcohol people will not quit the habit, until *they* decide for themselves to quit.

According to a psychiatrist, Dr. J. L. Henderson: "The alcoholic's basic difficulty is not alcohol, but emotional immaturity, and treatment in order to be effective must be built up on this principle. . . ." Drinking by young people, then, seems to be due chiefly to a feeling of inadequacy and a desire to be a "he-man" or "one of the gang."

It seems reasonable to assert that a large percentage of modern-day youth are *aware* of the facts uncovered by science on the ill effects of alcohol, even though the majority of this group are not, apparently, impressed by the facts. This manifest lack of awe for what science has to say does not mean that there are deficiencies in the scientific basis or in the scientific method itself, but only that this method is *limited in scope* to a study of objective phenomena, and makes us draw the line between being aware of and "seeing the truth" in certain things; every experience is concerned not only with objective facts, but with moral and philosophical values as well. Thus, in a question including *values* and facts, science can offer at best a negative decree; for instance, "the intemperate use of alcohol may be considered an inadvisable practice since it produces injurious effects on the body," is a statement which is unimpressive, even though it includes appeal to self-interest. The reason given is also



weak, chiefly because it leaves out a positive alternative.

Thorough proof has been established by physiological research that *any* amount of alcohol taken internally robs a man's nervous and muscular systems of coordination, sensitivity, and stamina. Even more important than this is the dulling effect that alcohol has on the processes of good judgment and self-restraint—processes attributed by science to the brain. When alcohol reaches the stomach, the blood immediately begins to absorb it without any chemical change. Since the body has no way of storing it, alcohol must remain in the blood until it is burned in the cells or eliminated. Alcohol is called the "great illusion," for invariably the individual *feels* stronger, while the opposite is the case. This illusion has led many to believe that there is medicinal value in the use of alcohol as a stimulant, but scientific evidence goes to show that alcohol eventually reacts on the body as a depressant—actually lowering body temperature and resistance.

(b) The Theosophic view encompasses and transcends the scientific basis for abstaining from alcoholic beverages. According to Theosophy, the body, which experimental science is alone concerned with, is but part of man in his entirety. The physical and astral organs of man's form are the necessary channels through which the pilgrim soul expresses and seeks experience; such growth cannot take place when the channels are blocked and disabled—the precise effect of alcohol. Since the very purpose of man's existence, in theosophic terms, is defeated by the practice of drinking, H.P.B. found it appropriate to make one of the few categorical statements to be found in Theosophic writings. In the *Key to Theosophy*, she writes: "Wine and spirits drinking is only less destructive to the development of the *inner powers*, than the habitual use of hashish, opium, and similar drugs." Thus the paralyzing effects of intoxicants on the higher centers of the brain—a fact that science is well aware of—prevents the development of those faculties and powers which enable man to be the captain of his destiny, the master of life's situations, the "image of God."

(c) To "help the youth of today see the truth in the matter" means to point out the importance of Values dealing with what man is and what he is here for. This can be done in *positive*, humanistic terms, which strengthen and encourage each individual; values which place a



premium on self-reliance and integrity, not on group acceptance at the expense of character.

When H.P.B. said that all forms of alcohol have a "direct, marked, and very deleterious influence on man's psychic condition," she also gave the "scientific view." But she attaches importance to this fact on the basis that it is destructive to the development of man's *inner* powers, not only because of the change of physical condition. It is manifestly true to anyone that the drinking of alcohol dulls the control of whatever sort of agent it is which governs the actions of the body; the full power of reasoned, thoughtful choice is absent.

The Theosophical reason for advocating abstention from alcohol, then, is that it dulls man's power of choice. The "basis" of this objection and the thing that makes it important lies in the theosophical conception of the nature of man and his purpose in life. Theosophy says that man is before all else a chooser, a being who constantly makes his own future by means of every choice; that wrapped up in the nature of man is not only the power to become more than he is, but also the desire to become, and that therefore his future is the story of a progressive growth in understanding and wisdom—understanding of the world around him, of himself, and of the instruments he uses, and wisdom about the right way to use his knowledge for the good of all.

Theosophy suggests, then, that there is that within man which tends to make him more and more of a "perfected man"; that a perfected man is a free man, and his perfection is measured by the degree of freedom he possesses. The perfected man is free from the demands of his physical body, that is, he is in perfect control of its actions, he uses his instruments for his own purposes instead of being used by them for theirs. It is easy to see that the drinking of alcohol does not fit into this frame of reference, since it does not contribute to the forming of a perfected man.

People have tried to show the youth of today the "truth in the matter" for a long time and in endless ways, mostly to no avail. The evils of the thing itself have been much described. Perhaps the theosophical method must be, in this case as in so many others, to disseminate the fundamental principles of the philosophy. They seem to *invite* conclusions, rather than give conclusions, and this is probably always more successful, slow though the process certainly is.



## TIME MATURED

"Would'st thou become a Yogi of 'Time's Circle'?"

—*The Voice of the Silence*

THE doctrine of cycles has been called one of the most important in the whole theosophical system. The reason for this perhaps lies not in the fact that periodical impulses of ebb and flow are readily discernible by the student, but because, if studied, the doctrine leads him on through veil after veil of mystery unto ever-widening vistas of knowledge and understanding. Cycles are usually thought of as a phase of the universal Law of Karma, and therefore an aspect of the Second Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*. But it would be a mistake to suppose that for this reason cycles could be considered exclusive of either the First or the Third great Truth, or any single idea or tenet of the whole body of Esoteric Philosophy. Could there be cycles without manifestation, and could manifestation exist except within the bosom of Boundless Space and Limitless Time—aspects of the First Truth? Would the progressive perfections of the Third Fundamental Proposition, leading ultimately to conscious union with the One Spirit, have any meaning except they be acquired through *cyclic periods* of self-induced and self-devised efforts on the part of the Ego? Theosophy is a synthetic body of knowledge, perfect in each of its parts, each tenet resting upon and inseparable from every other tenet—no one aspect of it being fully comprehensible except in the light of the Whole.

Students of Theosophy sometimes get "stuck," as the saying goes, on some particular statement in the philosophy which, for the time, presents an insurmountable barrier to understanding. The more the subject is pursued, the deeper the mystery seems to grow—until, perchance, one happens upon a once seemingly unrelated idea which now fills in the void, and permits of further progress.

There is, for example, the perennially puzzling question of a certain phase of Adept power. It is said that in one high state of spiritual consciousness—called *Samadhana* in Sanskrit—the Yogi "can no longer diverge from the path of spiritual progress." In other words, when *Samadhana* is reached, the Yogi has become constitutionally in-



capable of choosing wrongly, or of deviating in any way from the true path. This teaching has often seemed a contradiction in the minds of some students. How can the perfected man, upon reaching the goal, give up his most precious possession—the Power to Choose? Is not free and unfettered Choice—even the right to choose evil, if that be his desire—the divine prerogative of the Spiritual Man? Is it not true that, in the final analysis, freedom depends for its very existence upon this power—that it be not limited, thwarted, or abridged in any way?

A study of Cycles should help toward the solution of the problem.

Cycles are said to be the return of impressions, the mathematical adjustment of effect to cause, wherein the maker experiences pleasure or pain. Metaphysically speaking, both the length and the moral impact of cycles are determined by the nature of the consciousness that experiences them. But for the ordinary man, with consciousness centered almost exclusively on the physical plane, they may seem definitively of long or short duration. Long cycles, from such a basis, would seem to be those in which the adjustment of effect to cause requires great periods of time for completion, some being so long that the connection between cause and effect is not perceived. In this case, people are inclined to resent the things that happen to them, to suppose that the effects came without causes, and that they themselves had no hand in producing them. Short cycles, on the other hand, would be those which appear to be embraced within small periods of time, where both cause and effect lie easily within one's range of perception and present the complete circle of "time matured." An example of this type of cycle is that of placing one's hand in the fire, and the immediate burn that results.

In the ultimate sense, however, no cycle can be considered apart from the subtle *moral* implications which transcend physical time and are ever present. Seldom perceived by the personal man, it is often these moral significances which persist as recurring causal mysteries behind objective cycles of long or short duration.

Such is the time-aspect of cycles for ordinary men. But for the Adept who has gained full consciousness on all planes, action and reaction are instantaneous. With consciousness centered on the spiritual plane, where matter responds immediately to thought, and necessitates no lapse of time between cause and its inevitable effect, Time has



ceased to be, and the "True" Yogi, it is said, sees all as present.

Karma is not subject to time, and therefore he who knows what is the ultimate division of time in the Universe knows Karma.

For all other men, Karma is in its essential nature unknown and unknowable.

But its action may be known by calculation from cause to effect; and this calculation is possible because the effect is wrapped up in and not succedent to the cause. (*Aphorisms on Karma.*)

To the adept, who knows the ultimate division of time in the Universe, cause and effect must be *one*. How can such a being violate the Law? Is it possible even for an ordinary human being in his right mind—seeing before his eyes what the effect will be—to deliberately put his hand into the fire? Can any mother, in her normal state of sanity, knowingly injure her child? Examples will occur to every thoughtful person to show that there are many things which even we, if the consequent effect is known, are incapable of doing. How much more so the Adept or Yogi, to whom the relationship of *every* cause to its appropriate effect is clearly seen! The all-knowing Sage is incapable of burning himself *or others* with any wrong act.

But what, we may ask, of the Power of Choice, in this case? Is it not possible still for the Adept to choose the path of evil *if he so desires*? The answer seems obvious. He does not so desire. He can no more choose to act evilly than the perfectly sane man in mortal life can choose to deliberately burn himself. His intelligence and common sense prevent him from doing so. Knowledge of Karma has led him to see that it is impossible to violate his good judgment without losing a portion thereof, that there can be no progress outside the Law, and that it is only because of ignorance or selfishness that men choose evil.

Many so-called free-thinkers, who insist most strongly upon their individual rights, are of the opinion that the freedom to choose, the freedom to think, the freedom to act, gives them the right to use their powers selfishly, even to the misfortune of others. Still others would like to manipulate the Law to suit their own personal conveniences, and to decide for themselves what the effect of a given cause shall be. Such individuals must eventually learn that Karma is not a toy with which to play; neither is it the will of an arbitrary God. It is the law of man's own soul, the equable law of all pure



souls, and its measures are meted out impersonally from the scales of equilibrium.

From a personal basis, man can never be free to do whatever he likes. Freedom is always balanced by responsibility, just as the power to choose is tempered by the integrity of the chooser. Nature does not issue her gifts undeservedly. Is it logical to suppose that any of the powers now in our hands can be used wantonly and unintelligently without a rebuff from impartial Law? It should be the constant aspiration that each act will take us nearer and nearer that state of consciousness in which we shall have become constitutionally incapable of choosing selfishly.

The old saying that "Man proposes, but God disposes," shows that every human being has it within his power to choose the nature of the causes he sows, but that once sown, "God," or the universal Law of Harmony, steps in and affixes the results. Theosophy proposes that there is no freedom outside the bounds of Law, just as there can be no permanent happiness which excludes the wellbeing of any living creature. The inability of the Yogi to diverge from the path of spiritual progress does not imply an infringement of the principle of liberty, nor a restriction upon his divine prerogative of Choice. It means only that by choosing to conform his individual Will to the universal Will, he has become *one with the Law*, and he may now proceed unerring to ever greater heights of perfection. The same thing is possible in respect to many things for the ordinary man in daily life, insofar as he works impersonally with Causes, and ceases to find fault with effects.

By calculation from cause to effect, man may learn to see in advance the whole circle of "time matured." Through adherence to the principle of Universal Brotherhood, he touches the heart of Law, whose one concession is to serve him who serves the Whole. In the depths of the soul where all are One, MAN is sinless, free, yet humble.

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Ethics is the maintaining of life at the highest point of development—my own life and other life—but devoting myself to it in help and love. And this ethic, profound, universal, has the significance of a religion. It *is* religion.

—ALBERT SCHWEITZER



# ON THE LOOKOUT

## FURTHERANCE OF THEOSOPHICAL OBJECTS

Tangible evidence of a natural karmic continuation of the Theosophical Movement along the broad lines proposed by the T.S. in 1875 is currently furnished by material found in *Philosophy East and West*, a quarterly published by the University of Hawaii Press. This "Journal of Oriental and Comparative Thought" had its origin in 1951, following an East-West philosophical conference held in Hawaii. Apparently, the seminars of this conference disclosed to attending Westerners enough of the profound content of Asian thought to inspire a desire for protracted study. One young philosophy professor from the University of California, for instance, a "Logical Positivist" who had studied under Carnap in Chicago, so far departed from his previous lines of purely materialistic assumption as to enroll in a course in metaphysics, and has since prepared himself as an instructor in new courses in Eastern philosophy.

## MEN OF PHILOSOPHIC EMINENCE

The Board of Advisory Editors for *Philosophy East and West* includes Edwin A. Burtt of Cornell, percipient author of *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*. Through the years Burtt has emphasized the truth of the Platonic dictum that "ideas rule the world," and has revealed the extent to which the dogmas of both materialism and authoritarian religion have conditioned the mind of our present age. Other Advisory Editors are Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan of Oxford (now India's ambassador to Russia), and Hu Shih of the National University of Peiping, China. Readers will also recognize the name of Filmer Northrop of Yale University, scholarly author of *The Meeting of East and West*, whose work in collaboration with Dr. Burr, also of Yale, gave support to the now familiar idea of an "electrical architect" within all organic forms—the "astral body," in Theosophical terms.

## THEOSOPHICAL FUNDAMENTALS

It is impossible to do justice to *Philosophy East and West* merely by quoting a few passages from various articles. The signal interest of the journal lies rather in its broad purposes, which include along



with its obvious support of the intent of the Second Object of the original Theosophical Society, unmistakable service to the "Universal Brotherhood" ideal of the First Object. There is also to be noted a capable and scholarly pursuit of the essential *meanings* embodied in the best traditions of both Occident and Orient.

Though seldom spectacular, articles in *Philosophy East and West* carry a relative profundity, and a vitality rare for the established journals in its field. Further, the reader will frequently be led to a new appreciation of those very philosophers of the past so heavily drawn upon by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*. One article of this sort (*Philosophy East and West*, July, 1951) is provided by Gi-Ming Shien, formerly professor of philosophy at the University of Chungking, and author of *The Essence of Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism*. He chooses for discussion passages bearing on the philosophical essentials covered by the Fundamentals of *The Secret Doctrine*, which have, therefore, a familiar ring for Theosophists. Gi-Ming Shien first quotes from Lao-tzu to emphasize Eastern profundity on the subject of Deity:

#### THE TAO—THE ONE

The Tao that can be expressed is not the unchangeable Tao. The name that can be named is not the unchangeable name. The nameless is the origin of nature (heaven and earth). The named is the mother of all things. . . .

The pattern of man is earth, the pattern of earth is heaven, the pattern of heaven is Tao, the pattern of Tao is spontaneity.

The movement of the Tao returns [to the source], but its function is weakness. All things in the world come from existence and existence from non-existence.

A supplementary quotation is then furnished from the writings of Plotinus:

Since the nature of the Hypostasis of the One is the engenderer of the all, it can itself be none of the things in the all; that is, it is not a thing; it does not possess quality or quantity; it is not an intellectual principle, not a soul; it is not in motion or at rest; not in space, not in time; it is essentially a unique form or rather no form, since it is prior to form as it is prior to movement and to the rest; all these categories hold only in the realm of existence and constitute the multiplicity characteristic of that lower realm.



It is shown that Confucius, although not a Taoist, "also recognizes this principle":

I [Confucius] would prefer not speaking. His student Tzu-kung, asks, "If you, O master, do not speak, what shall we, your disciples, have to record and follow?" The master replied, "Does the universe speak? The four seasons pursue their own course and all things are produced in their order; but does the universe say anything?"

Among the appliances to transform the people, sound and appearance are but trivial influence. It is said in another ode: "His virtue is light as a hair." Still a hair will admit of comparison of size. The doings of the supreme heaven [universe] has neither sound nor smell. [No size at all and equal to nothingness.] This is the perfect virtue.

### GOD AND LAW ARE ONE

Gi-Ming Shien continues, noting other parallels:

A similar idea is found in Plato, where the leading principle is the cause of all things by way of participation. Thus, in the *Phaedo*, Plato tells us that "there is an absolute beauty, goodness, greatness and the like . . ." and that there is "no way in which anything comes into existence except by participating in its own proper essence. . . ."

The unity and priority of this ultimate principle are formulated in China by Lao-tzu, as has been indicated above. Both Chuang-tzu and Huai-nan-tzu of the later Taoist school write of the priority of the Tao or the One. Thus, Chuang-tzu holds: "The Tao is not formed from any external thing; it creates itself. It existed before heaven and earth; indeed, the earth and heaven as well as the spirits and Gods were created by it."

Thus, the nature of unity and the priority of the ultimate principle itself are epitomized by the word *is*. This *is* symbolizes the very nature of the indivisibility and wholeness of Being. In a similar fashion, Plato asserts that the soul is not a harmony or totality and is different from the aggregation of its parts. It is absolute unity and is prior to all individuals.

We have shown, now, that unity is not totality, but is an indivisibility that is fundamentally different from totality. We have shown that unity is prior to individuality for it is the leading power or universal law of nature from which all things receive their existence and order.

### THE TEMPER OF SYNTHESIS

The prevailing mood of the contributions to *Philosophy East and West* seeks synthesis rather than distinctions and differences, a cul-



force of a developing Theosophical current in the latter. As a result, doubtless, of this and similar influences, many Western thinkers have been awakened to the necessity for comprehension of Eastern thought, and are reading philosophical and religious history in a different light today. Perhaps the somewhat pedantic approach to philosophy in this journal will gradually crumble away and the revival of the "love of truth" which the word philosophy implies be born again. In any event, all of such developments may be correlated with the extended interest in Eastern writings, particularly Buddhist scriptures, now in evidence among the more perceptive Western psychiatrists and psychoanalysts.

### SOME DYNAMICS OF KARMA

Theosophists have doubtless often speculated upon the karmic meaning of what insurance companies call "accident-prone" individuals. The William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation has recently published a study of the behavior patterns of so-called "accident prone" persons, and while this is a comparatively recent field of investigation, there seems already to be unanimous agreement among psychologists that some people literally *attract* accidents to themselves by subtle habits of thought and feeling. In an article in the February 1952 issue of *Psychiatry*, Lawrence L. LeShan writes:

The concept of accident-prone behavior has been present in the general psychological literature since 1926. At that time, Marbe demonstrated that the more accidents a man has had in the past the more likely he is to have another accident. The studies on this subject include hundreds of titles but, in general, can be divided into two classes: first, those that explore the existence and consistency of this type of self-destruction; and secondly, those that describe the behavior of accident-prone persons both in accident-producing situations and in their general life. Studies of the second type also include various papers exploring the psycho-dynamics of this type of disturbance.

### KARMIC DISABILITY

The results of these investigations give rise to some interesting speculations. One may wonder, for instance, if the psychiatric account of the accident-prone cannot be rendered to signify those who develop no depth of individuality, leaving themselves open to the currents of disharmony, of disorderliness and carelessness which



so strongly swirl through Kali Yuga. Men with these characteristics, in other words, may have no individual *resistance* to misfortune. Dr. LeShan writes of the accident-prone as persons who have only—

Superficial ties with other human beings. These persons do not show warm emotional involvements with others. Their primary group relationships are weak and superficial. They have many acquaintances but no close friends. They may be married but do not feel much responsibility or relatedness to their families. Accident-prones show marked anomie [disregard for law]; they are social isolates for all their wide circle of acquaintances and companions. They are regarded generally as jovial and friendly, good conversationalists, but they cannot permit others to come close to them.

### ROLE OF ELEMENTALS

The apparently malevolent destiny which pursues the accident-prone has obvious explanation, also, in the Theosophical doctrine of the Elementals. In *The Ocean of Theosophy*, Mr. Judge speaks of the *skandhas* which are shaped by the power of desire, and these, he says, "are the really active and important ones which control rebirths and lead to all the varieties of life and circumstance upon each rebirth." The principle involved is this:

They [the *skandhas*] are being made from day to day under the law that every thought combines instantly with one of the elemental forces of nature, becoming to that extent an entity which will endure in accordance with the strength of the thought as it leaves the brain, and all of these are inseparably connected with the being who evolved them.

Here, the importance of the doctrine of Karma is self-evident. How can the "accident-prone" individual gain the courage and endurance to change his elemental associations, save by recognizing that the malevolence of life does not belong to "life," but to himself, through his own past? A moving tale based upon the psychological aspect of the working out of this sort of Karma will be found in the *Book of Images* (p. 78).

### EFFECT OF "VICARIOUS ATONEMENT"

But even here, the modern psychiatrist comes very close to the truth, although in negative terms. In a discussion of accident-prone people from the viewpoint of "theological considerations," Dr. Le-



Shan observes:

There is one type which probably links the accident prone (as described in the preceding section of this paper) with the martyr, the ascetic, and the tragedy prone.

The person dramatically becomes helpless—before others or before fate—in an accident or in a tragedy. The basic statement seems to be: "I was punished and am now blameless as well as helpless. I am incapable of acting in an aggressive manner and so cannot be further punished. In addition, the target for my hostility is now punished by my pain. He must be sorry for me."

This theme of personal weakness, of abject impotence, is clearly related to the personal-God idea. Thus the case-book of the psychiatrist gives force—if further force be needed—to the comment of H.P.B. on the moral effects of such dogmas of Christianity as the Vicarious Atonement. In the second article of the series, "Fragments of Occult Truth," she wrote:

If we at times speak bitterly of popular modern Christianity, it is because we know that, with all its other ennobling and saving tendencies, on this all-important point it leads to the destruction of myriads of souls. For it leads to the belief that it signifies little what a man does, if he only believes that his sins are forgiven him, and that by relying on the merits of Jesus Christ he may escape the vengeance of the Lord. But there is no anthropomorphic Lord, no vengeance, no forgiveness; there is simply the action of a natural law impressed on the universe by the Absolute, simply a question of balance of affinities; and they, whose deeds and general tendencies are earthly, go down in the scale, rarely, very rarely, to rise again in their own identities; while those in whom these tendencies are spiritual pass upwards.

#### MENTIONS OF REINCARNATION

Since Lookout's discussion (in January) of various speculations about transmigration while the motion picture *You Never can Tell* was on exhibit, three dramatizations have appeared in which some aspect of the reincarnation philosophy figures. One of these, George F. Kaufman's *Fancy Meeting You Again*, played to New York audiences in January. The early closing of the play and its unfavorable review from the New York *Times* drama critic, Brooks Atkinson, may be considered a bit of poetic justice, since the reincarnation motif sought merely a comedy effect; yet it is always something of question



whether or not *any* popular reference to reincarnation may have its value.

#### THE SUPER-PERSONAL APPROACH

Mr. Atkinson summarizes the theme of *Fancy Meeting You Again* as follows:

The authors are considering the problems of a fashionable New York sculptress who has been trying to marry the same man for five thousand years. At present he is an art critic—entitled, as the sculptress remarks, to his own opinion, no matter how stupid it may be. In previous incarnations he has been a cave-man and a Roman shepherd—on each occasion a little less objectionable than his betters, but wily enough to take love without offering marriage. In his present incarnation he does offer marriage and a happy ending for the play.

#### EARNED AFTER-DEATH STATES

Opening in Los Angeles in March was John Preston's *Assembly Call*, an after-death-state play of serious philosophical intent. Mr. Preston, who lost his only son during World War II, was probably inspired by that tragic event to some deep reflection. *Assembly Call* conveys the thought that selfish grieving by the bereaved may actually interfere with the destiny of those who have been released from the body by death, keeping them from their own further labors of self-evolution. Mr. Preston evidently believes in the reality of communications through dreams with departed ones and, closest to the reincarnation philosophy, appears convinced that there are many stages of advancement after death, each needing to be *earned*.

#### PANDORA

Most reviews of *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*, a film starring James Mason and Ava Gardner, have intimated that, like the original Pandora's chest, this particular package of oddities should never have been opened—which might encourage the speculation that it is not karmically serviceable to use the reincarnation motif simply as a mystical device. Pandora, who in the play has lived before as the wife of James Mason, retains all of her physical characteristics, save memory of her prior existence, yet this memory is restored to her through the efforts of her husband (the "Dutchman"), with



whom she is reunited after his centuries of discarnate wandering over the seas. He was thus punished for his murderous jealousy, and the punishing was by "God," who apparently controls the strings responsible for the rebirths of mortals.

#### REINCARNATION A PUNISHMENT

While this of itself is sufficiently regrettable in plot structure, from a Theosophical point of view, another hardly-to-be-appreciated twist is furnished by the implication that the most successful goal for man is release *from* earth life. Both Pandora and the "Dutchman's" incarnations were for expiation of mutual difficulties, and while in a certain sense the cycle of necessity on earth may be regarded in some such light, it can readily be seen that the hope, promise, and *opportunity* in rebirth is the sort of emphasis most needed.

However, all of these dabbings with the concept of rebirth at least suggest an alternative to *orthodox* Christian salvation—or orthodox materialistic oblivion.

#### A PHILOSOPHER'S SUMMATION

Through the courtesy of the *Ladies' Home Journal* for March, readers are offered some excellent comments on immortality by William Ernest Hocking, often regarded as one of America's leading philosophers. His are very subtle thoughts, indeed, and may be correlated with the criticisms necessarily directed against a purely personal approach to the immortality idea as suggested by *Pandora* and *Fancy Meeting You Again*. A "longing" for the continuation of the personality, it is implied, *obliterates* the real meaning of immortality. The following passage is from Dr. Hocking's book, *Man's Destiny in Eternity*:

Many have come to the clear personal perception that—as they would put it—the true self cannot be destroyed by the crisis of death, for its position is such that it rides above that crisis. This conviction gives them a further answer to the question about the possibility of the free sacrifice of life for a cause, which we find so common today in the armies of materialistic societies. Indeed, that willingness to die is present wherever we have human nature at its best, as in the pursuit of new paths in medicine and in other phases of science and its applications. There never have been wanting men who were ready to die for the sake of man. For, as we now see, in freely rejecting life, there is a self that is rejected and a self that rejects. In rejecting life for the sake of a higher



good, the self that rejects unconsciously lays hold on what is more valuable, and more durable, than the life itself that is rejected.

#### INTEGRAL USE OF A GREAT IDEA

The reincarnation philosophy may be simply represented through unpretentious application. Take, for instance, an article on nervous tension by Dr. W. C. Alvarez, Emeritus member of the Mayo Clinic, whose approach to psychiatric disorders has Theosophical orientation. For Dr. Alvarez believes that sensitive nerves are but a small price to pay for increased sensitivity to deeper dimensions in our interrelationships with other human beings, and this is an important phrasing of the philosophy that all of life is for *learning*, for which no price is too high. It is natural, too, to find Dr. Alvarez mentioning the possibility of further lives to come, for growing and learning. In the *Los Angeles Times* for March 24, Dr. Alvarez writes:

A wise man will often turn his tense nerves into useful servants. With their help he may achieve success in life and may find much beauty in living.

Many a man has taken his stormy emotions, his great sensitiveness, his vivid imagination and his great reactivity—all of which often cause him pain and distress—and, combining them perhaps with a gift for music or writing or artistry, has become a great success as a composer, novelist or artist.

You and I should never feel ashamed of our nerves. We should be ashamed only if we do not try to control them. . . . Many musicians are so tense before a concert that they are almost wrecked by their emotions. As a violinist once told me, for hours after the concert she would be a nervous wreck, jittery and unable to eat or sleep. It was hard to suffer in this way, but without intense suffering and feeling she would not have played well. As she said, she would rather suffer in this way than be stolid and play without feeling; she was willing to pay in suffering for her success.

Many times I have cursed the sensitive and complaining nerves which my mother bequeathed me. But then I have said, "No. If I am to have another incarnation, I'll take those nerves again, rather than my father's placid, less bothersome ones."

Without my mother's nerves I would have missed most of the richness and beauty of life. I would not have had my enthusiasm, and with them my friendships with many gifted men and women.

And so I say to those of you who have tense, sensitive nerves, turn them to your advantage; use them for the enrichment of your life; use them for doing an ever better and finer job.



## REINCARNATION SYMBOLS

Joseph Egan's book, *Donn Fendler* (Egan-Wells, Wellesley, Mass.), recently come to the attention of the editors, offers another simple application of a reincarnation perspective. On the surface simply a detailed history of a lost twelve-year-old's wandering for nine days in a mountainous area of Maine, Mr. Egan's development of the story must be correlated with his belief that every human soul passes, like Ulysses, through many terrors and difficulties in the pursuit of self-reliance and deeper understanding. "Donn Fendler's" wanderings are our own, and the story of a lost boy on a mountain becomes the story of our own confused and inadequate understandings, confronted with the mountains of complexity in everyday living. Mr. Egan has thus expressed his own belief in reincarnation in a reply to a reader who wrote his appreciation of *Donn Fendler*:

By the way: I believe in reincarnation and have just completed a poem "The Flight of Dust Towards Deity." It gives a rational explanation of man's position on this cinder pile as a being in process of becoming perfected to the place where companionship on an equal level with Deity is not only a possibility but a certainty.

In summation, then, we may reflect that while the more spectacular attempts to make use of the "reincarnation concept" for dramatization may perform some kind of function in keeping the idea alive in the public eye, the most significant occurrences of the reincarnation *philosophy* may presently be more esoteric than exoteric—more a matter of ideative function than of exploitation.

## KARMIC OPPORTUNITIES

It is when reincarnation is used to symbolize the eternal hope of learning, and the eternal courage that one may easily find when he thinks that growth and learning have no interruptions, that the idea reaches its truest stature. For, after all, the great teachers of man who have taught reincarnation have been signally unconcerned with "the fate of the soul" in any other sense. Where the soul may go and where it may dwell after death are far less important than that every experience be seen as contributing to a self-induced pattern of learning.



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*"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect; yet belongs to each and all."*

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