

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

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But of all devotees he is considered by me as the most devoted who, with heart fixed on me, full of faith, worships me.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, VI. 47

ONCE AGAIN we approach our great day of the year — White Lotus Day. On that day in 1891 H. P. Blavatsky cast off the wonderful sensorium through which she had laboured for humanity for sixty years. She freed herself from a body ailing with the burden of the world's Karma which our “civilization” had put upon it. She had fulfilled the Mission on which she had been sent by Those whom she called her Masters and described as the Elder Brothers of the Human Race.

Students of Theosophy everywhere will commemorate the Day in remembrance not only of the Messenger but also of all those who served the Cause she served. And what would be the best way for such remembrance? Would not one of the ways be to look for the source of the quality which energized and inspired, for a short while or for long, all those who were her colleagues and her pupils — from W. Q. Judge and H. S. Olcott downwards? Two virtues stand out in her character — Devotion and Sacrifice.

It is clear to the students of the history of the Theosophical Movement that she offered herself from the first as a sacrifice on the Altar at which her Master worshipped. She said that He, the Compassionate One, had made her what she was. He and His Peers had fashioned her out of Their Divine Ideation; He and They had performed a true

yagna in preparing her for the Great Service. Their Spirit of Sacrifice had passed into her and sustained her whole incarnation as a Song of Sacrifice. That which had passed from Them to her made her devoted, a true *Bhakta*, of the type extolled in the closing verse of the sixth chapter of the *Gita* with which this article begins.

Devotion, concentrated, deep, profound, was the soul-mind of the Mage "known as H.P.B. to the world, but otherwise to us," wrote a Master. This devotion had two aspects — one towards her own Guru and His High-Hearted Colleagues. That was her personal devotion to Personages. The second was her devotion to Humanity. She loved the poor without disliking the rich; she loved the householder, herself without any home — for she lived in Akasha; she had no pride of caste though she had royal blood in her veins; nor had she the pride of sack-cloth and ashes though she described herself as "a pauper with possibilities." She blazed like the Sun radiating Wisdom, and with her generous sympathy she soothed like the gentle light of the Moon. She served the race, endeavouring to change its mind and its heart. The race has not yet found out that, from her, beneficence flowed into its consciousness; but it will, when 1975 dawns.

Let us then remember her for her Sacrifice and her Devotion. Let us kindle at her Sacrificial Fire the Light of Knowledge. Let us step into the flowing waters of her love which purifies and elevates. She was an enlightened one — let us follow the Path she showed.

As everyone must die at last, we will not say that her [H.P.B.'s] demise was a loss; but if she had not lived and done what she did humanity would not have had the impulse and the ideas toward the good which it was her mission to give and to proclaim. And there are today scores, nay, hundreds, of devout, earnest men and women intent on purifying their own lives and sweetening the lives of others who trace their hopes and aspirations to the wisdom-religion revived in the West through her efforts, and who gratefully avow that their dearest possessions are the result of her toilsome and self-sacrificing life. If they, in turn, live aright and do good, they will be but illustrating the doctrine which she daily taught and hourly practised.

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE NEW CYCLE

[We reprint here from *Theosophia* for Spring 1966 the English translation of certain passages from H.P.B.'s article originally written in French and printed in the first issue of *La Revue Théosophique* of Paris, dated March 21, 1889.— EDS.]

THE PRINCIPAL AIM of our organization, which we are labouring to make a real brotherhood, is fully expressed in the motto of The Theosophical Society and all its official organs: "There is no religion higher than Truth." As an impersonal Society, we must seize the truth wherever we find it, without permitting ourselves more partiality for one belief than for another. This leads directly to a very logical conclusion: if we acclaim and receive with open arms all sincere truth-seekers, there can be no place in our ranks for the vehement sectarian, the bigot, or the hypocrite, enclosed in Chinese Walls of dogma, each stone bearing the words: "No admission!" What place indeed could such fanatics occupy among us, fanatics whose religion forbids all inquiry and does not admit any argument, when the mother-idea, the very root whence springs the beautiful plant we call Theosophy, is known to be absolute and unfettered liberty to investigate all the mysteries of Nature, human or divine!

With this exception, the Society invites everyone to participate in its activities and discoveries. Whoever feels his heart beat in unison with the great heart of humanity; whoever feels his interests are one with those of every being poorer and less fortunate than himself; every man or woman who is ready to hold out a helping hand to those who suffer; whoever understands the true meaning of the word "Egoism," is a Theosophist by birth and right. He can always be sure of finding sympathetic souls in our midst. Our Society is actually a sort of miniature humanity where, as in the human species at large, one can always find one's counterpart.

If we are told that in our Society the atheist elbows the deist, and the materialist elbows the idealist, we would reply: What does it matter? Be an individual a materialist, *i.e.*, one who would find in matter an infinite potency for creation or rather for the evolution of all terrestrial life; or be he a Spiritualist, endowed with a spiritual perception which the former does not have — in what way does this prevent the one or the other from being a good Theosophist? Moreover, the worshippers of a personal God or a divine Substance are much more materialistic than the Pantheists who reject the idea of a carnalized god, but who

perceive the divine essence in every atom. Everyone knows that Buddhism does not recognize either one god or many gods. Yet the Arhat, for whom every atom of dust is as much replete with Svabhavat (plastic substance, eternal and intelligent, though impersonal) as he is himself, and who strives to assimilate that Svabhavat by identifying himself with the All, in order to attain Nirvana, must travel the same painful road of renunciation, of good works and of altruism, and must lead the same saintly life, though less egotistical in its motive, as the beatified Christian. What matters the passing form, if the goal to be attained is the same eternal essence, whether that essence manifests itself to human perception as substance, as an immaterial breath, or as *nothing!* Let us admit the PRESENCE, whether called personal God or universal substance, and recognize a cause if we see its effects. But these effects being the same for the atheist-Buddhist and for the deist-Christian, and the cause being invisible and inscrutable for the one as for the other, why waste our time in running after a shadow that cannot be grasped? When all is said, the greatest of materialists, as well as the most transcendental of philosophers, admit the omnipresence of an impalpable Proteus, omnipotent in its ubiquity throughout all the kingdoms of nature, including man; a Proteus indivisible in its essence, and eluding form, yet appearing under all and every form; who is here and there and everywhere and nowhere; is All and Nothing; ubiquitous yet One; the universal Essence binding, bounding, containing everything, contained in all. Where is the theologian who could go any farther? It is sufficient to recognize these truths, to be a Theosophist, for this recognition is tantamount to admitting that not only humanity — composed as it is of thousands of races — but everything that lives and vegetates, in short, everything that is, is made of the same essence and substance, is animated by the same spirit, and that, consequently, everything in nature, whether physical or moral, is bound in solidarity.

We have already said elsewhere, in *The Theosophist*, that “born in the United States of America the Theosophical Society was constituted on the model of its Motherland.” The latter, as we know, has omitted the name of God from its Constitution, for fear, said the Fathers of the Republic, that the word might one day become the pretext for a State religion; for they desired to grant absolute equality to all religions under the law, so that each form would support the State, which in its turn would protect them all.

The Theosophical Society was founded on that excellent model. . . .

Thus, every Branch, like every member, being free to profess whatever religion and to study whatever philosophy or science it prefers, provided all remain united in the tie of Solidarity or Brotherhood, our Society can truly call itself a "Republic of Conscience."

Though free to pursue whatever intellectual occupation pleases him the best, each member of our Society must, however, furnish some reason for belonging thereto, which amounts to saying that each member must contribute his part, small though it be, in mental or other labour for the benefit of all. If one does not work for others one has no right to be called a Theosophist. All must strive for freedom of human thought, for the elimination of selfish and sectarian superstitions, and for the discovery of all the truths that are within the reach of the human mind. That object cannot be attained more certainly than by the cultivation of unity in intellectual labours. No honest worker, no earnest seeker can remain empty handed, and there is hardly a man or woman, busy as they may think themselves to be, incapable of laying their tribute, moral or pecuniary, on the altar of truth. The duty of Branch and Section Presidents will be henceforth to see to it that the Theosophical beehive is kept free from those drones which keep merely buzzing. . . .

We are face to face with all the glorious possibilities of the future. This is again the hour of the great cyclic return of the rising tide of mystical thought in Europe. On every side we are surrounded by the ocean of universal science — the science of life eternal — bearing on its waves the forgotten and submerged treasures of vanished generations, treasures still unknown to the modern civilized races. The strong current which rises from the watery depths, from the depths where lie the prehistoric learning and arts swallowed up with the antediluvian Giants — demigods, though but mere outlines of mortal men — that current strikes us in the face and murmurs: "That which has been still exists; that which has been forgotten, buried for æons in the depths of the Jurassic strata, may reappear to view once more. Prepare yourselves."

We must prepare and study truth under every aspect, endeavouring to ignore nothing, if we do not wish to fall into the abyss of the unknown when the hour shall strike. It is useless to leave it to chance and to await the intellectual and psychic crisis which is developing with indifference, if not with crass disbelief, saying that at the worst the rising tide will carry us naturally towards the shore; for it is very likely that the tidal wave will cast up nothing but a corpse. The strife will be

terrible in any case between brutal materialism and blind fanaticism on the one hand, and philosophy and mysticism on the other — mysticism, that veil of more or less translucency which hides the eternal Truth.

But it is not materialism which will gain the upper hand. Every fanatic whose ideas isolate him from the universal axiom, "There is no religion higher than Truth," will see himself by that very fact rejected, like an unworthy stone from the new Archway called *Humanity*. Tossed by the waves, driven by the winds, reeling in that element which is so terrible because unknown, he will soon find himself engulfed. . . .

Yes, it must be so and it cannot be otherwise, when the artificial and chilly flame of modern materialism is extinguished for lack of fuel. Those who cannot become used to the idea of a spiritual Ego, a living soul and an eternal Spirit within their material shell (which owes its illusory existence to those *principles*); those for whom the great hope of an existence beyond the grave is a vexation, merely the symbol of an unknown quantity, or else the subject of a belief *sui generis*, the result of theological and mediumistic hallucinations — these will do well to prepare for the worst disappointment the future could possibly have in store for them. For, from the depths of the dark, muddy waters of materiality which, on every side, hide from them the horizons of the great Beyond, a mystic force is rising during these last years of the century. At most it is but the first gentle rustling, but it is a *super-human* rustling — "supernatural" only for the superstitious and the ignorant. The spirit of truth is passing now over the face of the dark waters, and in parting them, is compelling them to disgorge their spiritual treasures. This spirit is a force that can neither be hindered nor stopped. Those who recognize it and feel that this is the supreme moment of their salvation will be uplifted by it and carried beyond the illusions of the great astral serpent. The joy they will experience will be so poignant and intense that if they were not mentally isolated from their bodies of flesh, the beatitude would pierce them like sharp steel. It is not pleasure that they will experience, but a bliss which is a fore-taste of the knowledge of the gods, the knowledge of good and evil, and of the fruits of the tree of life.

But although the man of today may be a fanatic, a skeptic, or a mystic, he must become thoroughly convinced that it is useless for him to struggle against the two moral forces unleashed and in supreme contest today. He is at the mercy of these two adversaries, and no intermediary force is capable of protecting him. It is but a question of

choice, whether to let himself be carried along, without a struggle, on the wave of mystical evolution, or to writhe against the reaction of moral and psychic evolution, and so find himself engulfed in the Maelstrom of the new tide. At the present time, the whole world, with its centres of high intelligence and human culture, its focal points of political, artistic, literary and commercial life, is in a turmoil; everything is shaking and crumbling in its movement towards reform. It is useless to remain blind; it is useless to hope that anyone can remain neutral between the two contending forces; one has to choose either the one or the other, or be crushed between them. The man who imagines that he has chosen freedom, but who, nevertheless, remains submerged in that boiling cauldron, foaming with foul matter called social life, most terribly betrays his own divine Self, a betrayal which will blind that Self in the course of a long series of future incarnations. All of you who hesitate on the path of Theosophy and the occult sciences, who are trembling on the golden threshold of truth—the only one within your grasp, for all the others have failed you one after another—squarely face the great Reality which is offered you. It is to mystics only that these words are addressed, for them alone have they any importance; for those who have already made their choice they are vain and useless. But you, Occultists, Kabbalists and Theosophists, you well know that a Word, old as the world, though new to you, has been sounded at the beginning of this cycle, and the potentiality of which, unperceived by others, lies hidden in the sum of the digits of the year 1889; you well know that a note has just been struck which has never been heard by mankind of this era; and that a new Idea is revealed, ripened by the forces of evolution. This Idea differs from everything that has been produced in the nineteenth century; it is identical, however, with the thought that has been the dominant tone and the keynote of every century, especially the last—absolute freedom of thought for humanity.

Why try to strangle and suppress what cannot be destroyed? Why struggle when there is no other choice than allowing yourselves to be raised on the crest of the spiritual wave to the very heavens, beyond the stars and the universes, or to be engulfed in the yawning abyss of an ocean of matter? Vain are your efforts to sound the unfathomable, to reach the ultimate of this wonderful matter so glorified in our century; for its roots grow in the spirit and in the Absolute; they do not exist, though they *are* eternally. This constant contact with flesh, blood and bones, the illusion of differentiated matter, does nothing but blind

you; and the more you penetrate into the region of the impalpable atoms of chemistry, the more you will be convinced that they exist only in your imagination. Do you truly expect to find therein every Truth and every reality of existence? For Death is at everyone's door, waiting to close it behind a beloved soul that escapes from its prison, upon the soul which alone has made the body a reality; how can eternal love associate itself with the molecules of matter which change and disappear? . . .

But you, friends and readers, you who aspire to something more than the life of the squirrel everlastingly turning the same wheel; you who are not content with the seething of the cauldron whose turmoil results in nothing; you who do not mistake the deaf echoes, as old as the world, for the divine voice of truth; prepare yourselves for a future of which but few in your midst have dared to dream, unless they have already entered upon the path. For you have chosen a path that, although thorny at the start, soon widens out and leads you to the divine truth. You are free to doubt while still at the beginning of the way; you are free to decline to accept on hearsay what is taught respecting the source and the cause of that truth, but you are always able to hear what its voice is telling you, and you can always study the effects of the creative force coming from the depths of the unknown. The arid soil upon which the present generation of men is moving, at the close of this age of spiritual dearth and of purely material surfeit, has need of a divine omen above its horizon, a rainbow, as symbol of hope. For, of all the past centuries, our nineteenth has been the most criminal. It is criminal in its frightful selfishness, in its skepticism which grimaces at the very idea of anything beyond the material; in its idiotic indifference to all that does not pertain to the personal self, more than any of the previous centuries of ignorant barbarism and intellectual darkness. Our century must be saved from itself before its last hour strikes. For all those who see the sterility and folly of an existence blinded by materialism and ferociously indifferent to the fate of the neighbour, this is the moment to act; now is the time for them to devote all their energies, all their courage and all their efforts to a great intellectual reform. This reform can only be accomplished by Theosophy, and, let us add, by Occultism or the wisdom of the Orient. The paths that lead to it are many; but the wisdom is one. Artistic souls envision it, those who suffer dream of it, the pure in heart know it. Those who work for others cannot remain blind to its reality, though they may not always recognize it by its name. Only light and empty minds, egotistical and vain drones, confused by their own buzzing, will remain ignorant of the

supreme ideal. They will continue to exist until life becomes a grievous burden to them.

It must be distinctly remembered, however, that these pages are not written for the masses. They are neither an appeal for reforms, nor an effort to win over to our views the fortunate in life; they are addressed solely to those who are constitutionally able to comprehend them, to those who suffer, to those who hunger and thirst after some Reality in this world of Chinese Shadows. As for these, why should they not show themselves courageous enough to abandon their world of frivolous occupations, their pleasures above all and even their personal interests, except when those interests form part of their duties to their families or others? No one is so busy or so poor that he cannot create a noble ideal and follow it. Why, then, hesitate in clearing a path towards this ideal, through all obstacles, over every stumbling-block, every petty hindrance of social life, in order to march straight forward until the goal is reached? Those who would make this effort would soon find that the "strait gate" and the "thorny path" lead to the broad valleys of limitless horizon, to that state where there is no more death, because one feels oneself rebecoming a god! It is true that the first conditions required to reach it are an absolute disinterestedness, a boundless devotion to the welfare of others, and a complete indifference to the world and its opinions. In order to make the first step on that ideal path, the motive must be absolutely pure; not an unworthy thought must attract the eyes from the end in view, not a doubt or hesitation shackle the feet. There do exist men and women thoroughly qualified for this, whose only aim is to dwell under the aegis of their Divine Nature. Let them, at least, take courage to live the life and not conceal it from the eyes of others. No one else's opinion should be considered superior to the voice of one's own conscience. Let that conscience, therefore, developed to its highest degree, guide us in all the ordinary acts of life. As to the conduct of our inner life, let us concentrate our entire attention on the ideal we have set ourselves, and look *beyond*, without paying the slightest attention to the mud upon our feet. . . .

Those who are capable of making this effort are the Theosophists; all others are but members, more or less indifferent, and very often useless.

TOWARDS DISCIPLESHIP

The term "Universal Brotherhood" is no idle phrase. Humanity in the mass has a paramount claim upon us. . . . It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for mankind; and it is the aspiration of the *true adept*.

—MAHATMA K. H.

RECRUITS TO THEOSOPHY come from the great world outside. They belong to all strata of society. They are of diverse races and were born in widely separated continents. At one time or another they have been touched by the religious beliefs of various creeds, have owed allegiance to strange gods. Yet, they came — and are still coming in — a motley band of men and women, dissimilar in appearance and intellect, in language and beliefs, in cravings and achievements. Where had Theosophy touched them? In intellect? In emotional content? In its delineation of the Path towards spirituality? It may be any or all of these and much more, for behind an exterior that pleases and a content that reveals depth upon depth of mystery, there lies in Theosophy the promise of an ultimate goal — a knowledge and a fulfilment of the very aims for which humanity was born.

Theosophy offers this knowledge to achieve a very definite purpose. He who would discount that purpose and yet seek the profundity of the philosophy but cheats himself and is playing at blind-man's-buff — a dangerous game where the stake is the soul, his own as well as that of others. From the first, each aspirant is told that he is welcome if he is prepared to work in the cause of Brotherhood and the elevation of the Race. If he can pay his price in this coinage, then only does he become entitled to possess the Higher Wisdom. Even this condition does not deter the aspirants and they have come in by their hundreds and their thousands — the would-be martyrs, in a future incarnation, to the cause of Universal Brotherhood; each an aspirant to a nobler life, each a volunteer for years and lives of holy striving. May the burden of humanity's pain lie light upon their shoulders!

What is this Universal Brotherhood that is spoken of? What, translated into intelligent action, is this idea of the "elevation of the race"? Important questions these, and mostly unanswerable except by each one for himself. The Western thought of the 20th century may not agree with the Theosophical interpretations of these terms; but then

this Western thought is not going to agree with quite a few Theosophical propositions and those quite elementary at that. Yet there should be no great mystery attached to this inability of modern thought to grasp ancient wisdom. If a man wear tinted glasses, he may see objects in a colour which is neither of the objects seen nor of the glasses worn. His observation will thus go on varying with each new tint upon his glass. So long as the tint remains, his vision — at least of the colour content of objects — is not trustworthy. Data, however laboriously collected, with the limitation of tints is a waste and in some cases a very misleading and therefore a dangerous achievement. So too with our abstract notions. Universal Brotherhood looked at with tinted glasses of one colour may yield one definition. With another tint substituted, it may appear totally different; and since the tint combinations are endless, the views on Universal Brotherhood become endless in their variance.

In man, the tinting media can be found in his mind, his desires, his psychic and mediumistic propensities and even his physical make-up. Religious inclinations, scientific bigotry, fanaticism, and a general inability to think for oneself are additional bars to knowledge. The minds of men afflicted by any of these are not open nor receptive of true ideas. Several who come to Theosophy soon part company with it because of the great difficulty of transcending prejudices and set beliefs which adhere to the mind because of the faulty methods of modern education.

What then would Universal Brotherhood mean in practice? To understand its implications and the vast fields of its application, it can, for the moment, be seen in its ramifications within the brotherhood of co-disciples. Between one brother and another — if of course the brotherhood is not a mere sham — there exists the very real bond of a sympathetic tie. A brother is born into Theosophy because he forges a vital link between himself and others (whom he may not even have seen) by the acceptance of a common aim, purpose and teaching. He thus enters a brotherhood, has taken the first step, which probably millennia hence will make each unit of that brotherhood of one speech, one mind and one heart. This link of sympathy is no idle abstraction. Emotional, moral and psychic bonds are forged by it over the years, which in their turn lead to psycho-physiological changes in the make-up of each unit of the aspiring group. It is along the invisible nerve-channels which now bind brother to brother that will pass and repass continuously the magnetic currents generated and coloured, vitalized or weakened by

actions the entries of which each brother makes in his daily ledger of life. No brother can yield to a failing and not affect each of the others. No one can advance along the Path and not benefit the whole group.

If these channels of sympathy are a reality, and we are told unmistakably that they are, then several important considerations arise. The foremost of these is that a decline in effort, virtue or aspiration in any single brother would doubtless pass down the entire length of the sympathy channel and adversely affect each single aspirant who is connected to that channel. Backsliding and even an easing of the effort is ruled out, because with each forward step that a disciple takes, a wide chasm immediately opens up behind him. He dare not falter lest the precipice swallow him up and his failure leave an indelible scar on those others who have a vital interest in his advancement. For these others, too, it is a moment fraught with perils, because unless they prevent the brother from sliding back, they too may feel a tremendous drag upon their powers.

Stemming from this fact of an intimate and sympathetic ebb and flow between co-brothers, rules of conduct have to be framed by each one for himself. In such a relationship as this, the possibility of a brother working for the doing of harm to his co-brother becomes ridiculous if viewed in the correct perspective. Yet, how often do we not come across slander, reviling, unjust criticism, malice, jealousy, and in extreme cases even litigation springing up between brother and brother and making a mockery of the teachings! And the greatest casualty is not any one brother but Theosophy. Repentance and tears notwithstanding, the channels of sympathy have carried the lethal current of each such harmful act to everyone connected with the failing brother. Each must now share the stigma of his shame — the innocent as the guilty. Each must now strive to do all in his power to counter the effects of the stigma and to help rebuild the shattered harmony of his particular group.

It therefore becomes the solemn duty of him who has constituted himself a brother, not only to refrain from injuring a co-brother or hindering him on his way upwards, but to help him actively so that even the glimmer of an unworthy thought does not enter his mind. The living of the life must become a joint responsibility, easier of discharge because of the strong hands which share it. Backsliding and stoppage of effort by a brother is therefore not the concern of that brother alone. Each co-brother must devise ways by which to give instant succour

and help, and not wait for the failing brother to make an obsequious request. Further, and here humility is tested, each brother, however advanced, must be ready to receive advice and help, and not consider himself so exalted as to be not needy of either. In a large group of fellow aspirants, each has to support the other; each sooner or later will become needy of the support of that other.

This movement to and fro of psychical currents does not obtain among co-disciples only. The channel of sympathy extends to and includes the Teacher. He who is advanced enough takes upon himself the great self-sacrificing task of being a teacher. It is a position where one sets oneself up in a pillory. But this is not all. For, to assume the position of a teacher means that one deliberately links oneself to one's pupils by a common sympathetic channel. He who has conquered the ebullitions of his lower self has now to feel the vileness and the filth of earthly taints which for the time being mar his chelas' lives. The degree of self-sacrifice demanded is tremendous, for he slows down and delays his own progress to the ultimate goal by thus taking on himself the sins and faults of his pupils. It becomes his duty to set the example. It is his duty to make adjustments, to induce a greater and more enthusiastic effort and to lend a helping hand where help is deserved.

If the channel of sympathy can become a medium through which a disciple may feel the adverse effects of his brother's lapses, it can also become a conductor along which may pass the higher knowledge, the secret instruction. It is thus that help and spiritual guidance are transmitted to the disciple on the higher planes of his being at an hour when his spiritual needs and aspirations make him deserving of that help. The ideal of brotherhood between co-disciples extends itself to include the high Guru-Chela relationship. The Guru remains for all time the most precious link in the chain. The chelas are therefore expected to sacrifice their interests, even to forgo their advancement, so as to preserve the Guru from harm. They are his wards or vassals who enter upon that relationship to learn, among other things, the lessons of loyalty, humility, obedience and service. Such a bond forged among earthly brotherhoods (when free of taint, it portrays true love) establishes even at lower levels a replica in miniature of the great Brotherhood of White Adepts.

In a relationship such as is being considered, there do arise occasions when a brother as it were "gets on the nerves" of another brother. Rightly or wrongly, a brother may feel that an act of personal injustice

has been done against him. He may feel that the injury was intended. If under the agony of that wrong, the suffering brother insists on his right or desire to avenge the wrong, he sets up a violent psychic storm all down the lines of sympathy. The co-disciples — even those who are far apart and know nothing about the strife — are affected and for the moment all is confusion and chaos. In such a case the Guru can hardly influence a body of students who for long days are concentrated in their personal bickerings. Such co-disciples are like persons in high fever when a sort of haze descends upon the thinking apparatus, and the sufferers, not being able to extricate themselves, insulate their minds from all considerations save those which arise directly out of their own overpowering pain.

Therefore, between brothers, there can be no righting of wrongs by violent means, no enforcement of individual claims, no cures for a co-disciple's jealousy, resentment and vanity save along the lines of psychic sympathy and by means which do not violate the laws of harmony. Since it is the higher force alone which can subdue the lower, the true brother has to find the balm for his injury in the peace that pervades his soul. When he does this, he sends along the links of sympathy his contribution towards the re-establishment of psychic stability. The higher force generated on the planes of mind and soul possesses the potency of repairing the damage done to the lines of communication. The adjusting process may require time and effort, but the force of true altruism generated by the injured brother contributes not a little to the general well-being of the group, and therefore of himself.

It is such a relationship that has to be set up in group nucleoles the world over. Until this is done, no parliaments of nations, no machinery set up by the tainted mind of man will be capable of conferring a lasting peace upon humanity. The very fact that the League of Nations and the U.N.O. have not been able to stop violent human conflagrations demonstrates that within those well-intentioned organizations there were units who were not divorced from violence. The truth of the statement that hatred can be stilled by love alone has to be demonstrated to a doubting public by souls who dare to dream bold dreams.

The experience that a small brotherhood of co-students offers is not meant to be limited to the securing of one's own advancement nor even that of the group. Universal Brotherhood would be of little value if its beneficence did not reach out to the entire race of men. True, the measure of beneficence shared by each will vary with the receptivity of

the individual; still, in its own way, the effect, whether in one form or another, will be felt by all. Therefore, when the brother works in a group, he at the same time affects like-minded individuals outside the group by the potency of his example. In the words of the *Gita*, he has to try to bring the world to duty and benefit mankind. But his duty is not yet over. After he has reaped, he has to sow; and this is done by planting fair seedlings in clean places. The wisdom which he has won must now be made to percolate through to the great world outside. His own discipleship would be futile if the power and force of its lofty ideal were not strong enough to bring others to the path of discipleship. For this, he has to preach and to popularize the concept of Universal Brotherhood. Humanity in the mass still needs educating into an understanding that no human Soul is isolated and that the influence of one, if powerful enough, can affect the many. And though the world knows that the exaltation of a Buddha or a Jesus has brought millions nearer to salvation, it has still to learn the rationale of the very real links which bind man to man. The infinite potency of the human soul has to be demonstrated like any other problem of Euclid.

Even today, scattered around the habitable portions of our globe, there exist men high in development who assume birth for the sole purpose of achieving the spiritual regeneration of humanity. With their help, there still continue in this storm-tossed world schools and brotherhoods where the teaching is centred round the cultivation of the higher life. The pupil's training may require him to render service to men outside the precincts of the sanctuaries. Such an one, therefore, goes out into the cold harsh world so that he may touch a soul here and there and light its light and kindle its flame. He, on the way to a higher emancipation, lays aside for the time being his own chances of advancement and assumes to himself the torture of making his abode among men who hourly violate the laws of brotherhood. And the world, always ready to make martyrs of its prophets, sets him up in a pillory, calls him names, makes fun of his philosophy and crucifies him a hundred times over, figuratively, if not actually. Are there volunteers for such effort? Then let them come forward. Theosophy has need of such.

THOUGHTS ON "THROUGH THE GATES OF GOLD"

I

THIS LITTLE BOOK, from the same high source as *Light on the Path*, is intriguing. Its true author was described by H.P.B. as "one who became an *adept* only in 1886." It deals with our philosophy of life and the goal ahead, and its profound teachings, if taken to heart and applied, will help us to reach and to pass through those Gates of Gold which symbolize the final achievement of man as a human being.

In the Prologue the author states that every man has his philosophy of life, and, by way of example, we are given four such philosophies — that of the ignorant man who has some notion of what he wishes to get out of life and what is the easiest and best way to reach his goal; that of the man of the world who, unconsciously to himself, formulates his philosophy clearly and refuses to admit that anything can stand in his way; that of the man of thought and imagination who is less sure of himself and cannot clearly formulate his ideas on human life; and lastly, that of the true philosopher who has realized that the mystery of life cannot be approached by ordinary thought. Dimly, we all realize that there must be causes behind the effects we see; that there must be order, and not chaos, in the world; and that, pervading the discords we see and hear in life, there must be sublime Harmony.

The dim consciousness of all this haunts many men on earth, and they long for knowledge of the unknowable. As *Through the Gates of Gold* says:

Why long and look for that which is beyond all hope until the inner eyes are opened? Why not piece together the fragments that we have at hand, and see whether from them some shape cannot be given to the vast puzzle?

The book takes us step by step from the known to the unknown, pointing out the hindrances in ourselves and the keys to progress. It is not a book just to be read, or even re-read. It is a book to live by, day by day. It is a book where the author takes us, little by little, to further depths. Most important, we are made to face ourselves, and are told with unfailing accuracy of the faults we have to overcome and the virtues we need to acquire. Every effort is made in goading us to be true to the mode of living we have to adopt to reach the Gates of Gold. The book provides us, as it were, with both a picture of man's journey

through earth-life to the goal, and a chart for each of us to follow by self-analysis and strict observance.

In the first chapter, we have a well-known fact given to us in graphic form—pain and distress are "part of the heritage of men." Though we may have taken suffering for granted as part of life, few of us have probably recognized that it is our *heritage*; that is, that it is something which we cannot escape, which dogs us through life. The book uses strong terms to impress on us the fact that misery pursues us "with a positive and unbroken pertinacity . . . and he only is a philosopher, in any sense, who recognizes the fact that it is irresistible, and knows that like all other men he must suffer soon or late."

Human nature being what it is, it is no use trying to escape suffering, for any attempt to do so will destroy us. The only result of a determined effort *not* to suffer is to make us the embodiments of "chilly selfishness." Why is this so? Because at present there is no life for us without the sensations which come through our body and senses. Therefore, by determining that nothing shall make us suffer we become incapable also of feeling joy, and without feeling we cannot exist. Life is an "infinite series of sensations," and if we destroy the sensations, we also destroy the wish to live.

We can see that we must accept these facts if we would solve the mystery of life, the enigma of existence. Since it is we who feel, we have to begin by analysing ourselves, and by self-study have to ask the questions: What lesson have we learnt through pain and pleasure? What were the causes of these effects? We begin to realize that there must be a cause behind an effect, and if so, there must be a science of life by which we may know these answers. It follows that there must be those who have already obtained the answers. The book reminds us of a palpable truth: "The development of a science is only the discovery of what is already in existence." Dwelling on this truth, we can take hope.

It is obvious that as there is no escape from life, we must cease to live without an aim or goal—or else we shall become "lost and bewildered, and without hope . . . sceptical, disillusioned and weary." We must wish to find out the reason for living. Is it possible for us to know that reason, or at least make a guess as to the direction in which our goal lies?

Through the Gates of Gold leads us on to see the source of our sadness and weariness. We are told that weariness comes upon man

when any civilization has risen to its greatest height and man has gone as far as he can in it. There is nothing further he can do, and his hold weakens. After the climax of sensuous perfection is reached, stagnation sets in, despondency overwhelms him, and he falls back to barbarism.

We are told why this is so, why we do not look ahead and go still further. Some have done it, have seen the Gates of Gold and have passed through. These are the "elder brothers of the race." They have forged ahead and have left messages for us. But these messages are hard to decipher, for they are veiled and profound. But we learn that the sanctuary into which these men have entered is the sanctuary of their nature, and if we would follow them we must find this sanctuary in our own nature.

What we want of life fundamentally is "to exchange pain for pleasure," to find out how we can regulate our consciousness so as to experience the sensation which is most agreeable to us. We know that if we put our mind on any object or goal we shall achieve it in time. If, therefore, we would start this journey towards the Golden Gates, we would one day find ourselves there.

Why, then, do we not all strive for this? We are told — and do we not know it! — that it takes great courage to search the recesses of our nature "without fear and without shame," and find our very essence. That essence it is which opens the Gates before us.

Another reason why we do not pursue the goal is that we do not realize that this is actually the direction in which pleasure and satisfaction are to be obtained. Each man finds his chief delight in one or another layer of sensation, to which he turns throughout his life, "just as the sunflower turns to the sun and the water-lily leans on the water." Contact with external objects, however, does not bring real soul-satisfaction, for, "How can that which is external satisfy or even please the inner man — the thing which reigns within and has no eyes for matter, no hands for touch of objects, no senses with which to apprehend that which is outside its magic walls?"

We have to learn that these barriers which surround it are in fact limitless, for it is everywhere; it is to be discovered in all living things. Life is everywhere and the universe is a coherent whole.

Life is indeed meaningless unless it is universal and coherent, and unless we maintain our existence by reason of the fact that we are part of that which is, not by reason of our own being.

This is one of the most important factors in the development

of man, the recognition — profound and complete recognition — of the law of universal unity and coherence. The separation which exists between individuals, between worlds, between the different poles of the universe and of life, the mental and physical fantasy called space, is a nightmare of the human imagination.

Discrimination is necessary to distinguish between this nightmare, "the shapes of night," from "the active figures of day." Once this discrimination is obtained, man can stand on the height he has already reached and look for his next step, ready to take it.

But there arises another danger — indolence. When indolence rules, men are content with sensuous pleasures, and these do not bring satisfaction as a final goal of enjoyment. The gourmand and the drunkard, the man who loves bright sights and sounds and admirable surroundings, are all deluded by a mirage that oppresses the soul, and they fancy that, having once obtained a sensuous joy that pleases them, they can give themselves the utmost satisfaction by endless repetition. But there is "a law of nature as inexorable as that of gravitation — a law which forbids a man to stand still. Not twice can the same cup of pleasure be tasted; the second time it must contain either a grain of poison or a drop of the elixir of life." Those who pursue intellectual pleasures are also subject to the same law and have ultimately to reach that unhappy and disappointing state into which great men often enter.

But if, instead of indulging in indolence which dulls the soul, a man chooses the way of effort, then he

finds in his pleasures a new and finer joy each time he tastes them — a something subtle and remote which removes them more and more from the state in which mere sensuousness is all; this subtle essence is that elixir of life which makes man immortal. He who tastes it and who will not drink unless it is in the cup finds life enlarge and the world grow great before his eager eyes. He recognizes the soul within the woman he loves, and passion becomes peace; he sees within his thought the finer qualities of spiritual truth, which is beyond the action of our mental machinery, and then instead of entering on the treadmill of intellectualism he rests on the broad back of the eagle of intuition and soars into the fine air where the great poets found their insight. . . . he goes on and finds new and finer joys, more perfect and satisfying experiences, with every breath he draws in and gives out.

THE TRIPLE MANAS

IN *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 254 fn.), we learn that "*Manas* is triple . . . *i.e.*, as a principle *per se*, which gravitates, in its higher aspect, to Atma-Buddhi, and follows, in its lower nature, *Kama*, the seat of terrestrial and animal desires and passions."

Have we not here some good practical points for daily living? Left to itself, *Manas gravitates* to Atma-Buddhi. That is to say, it *tends towards* Atma-Buddhi, or Atma-Buddhi attracts it. As water runs downhill, so *Manas*, if not interfered with, is without effort drawn to Atma-Buddhi.

But the lower aspect of *Manas follows* *Kama*. To follow implies a kind of deliberate action. It is not *Kama* that attracts *Manas* by some natural law inherent in itself, but *Manas* follows the attractions of *Kama*, willfully and consciously.

So we have *Manas per se*, awareness or consciousness of itself and in itself; *Manas* gravitating to Atma-Buddhi; and *Manas* following *Kama*.

But "*Kama* is pre-eminently the divine desire of creating happiness and love," says *The Theosophical Glossary*; "and it is only ages later, as mankind began to materialize by anthropomorphizing its grandest ideals into cut and dried dogmas, that *Kama* became the power that gratifies desire on the animal plane." *Kama* in its spiritual form is "the first conscious, *all embracing desire* for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE FORCE, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE." Have we not here the key to the transformation of personal desires and emotions into universal desires and emotions, of personal love into universal love? *Manas*, instead of succumbing to the temptations of *Kama* in its degraded form, has to elevate it to its primeval spiritual form. Passion has to be transformed into compassion. Only then can we touch Buddhi. Perhaps if we think of *Kama* in this way we can make a friend of it and begin to sense the joy of feeling at one with the ALL.

We gain knowledge of the Self (the little self and the great SELF) by performing "loving deeds." Let us bring Buddhi out of the misty heights and see that by our loving deeds we are transforming the Kamic aspect of our nature into the Buddhic aspect.

Let us centre our Kama, our desires and feelings, on things spiritual, on the good of humanity, away from selfishness, and Manas will follow. In fact, we cannot so centre our Kama without the aid of Manas. "The inner and divine man" must adjust "his outer terrestrial self to his own spiritual nature. Till then the dark and fierce passions of the former will be at eternal feud with his master, the Divine Man. But the *animal* will be tamed one day, because its nature will be changed, and harmony will reign once more between the two. . . ." (*S.D.*, II. 268)

This is our present work, for "it is only in the actual *midway* Round" that man "develops in himself entirely the fourth principle as a fit vehicle for the fifth." (*S.D.*, II. 161-62)

THE MIND is merely a tool, instrument, or means, by which the soul acquires experience and knowledge. In each incarnation the mind is, as it were, new. It is a portion of the apparatus furnished to the soul through innumerable lives for obtaining experience and reaping the fruit of works performed. The notion that the mind is either knower or experiencer is a false one, which is to be removed before emancipation can be reached by soul. It was therefore said that the mind operates or exists for the carrying out of the soul's salvation, and not the soul for the mind's sake. When this is fully understood, the permanency of soul is seen, and all the evils flowing from false ideas begin to disappear.

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE HIDDEN SIDE OF NATURE

TO SUGGEST OPENLY among friends that there may be a "hidden side" to nature causes many a sceptical eyebrow to rise. Some may exclaim: "Surely you cannot be either serious or scientific! It must be mysticism that you are referring to. Possibly literary or poetic fancy, or some kind of theological vagary!" Others may retort: "Superstition! It's all wishful thinking!" A few who will not let you get away with what appears like an unusual statement may ask in return: "Just what do you mean by a 'hidden side'? We know that air is invisible, and that we can't see light or sound waves, but only detect them when they strike a responsive surface." And to others, more thoughtful still, this proposition suggests further questions: "What is 'hidden'? What is meant by 'nature'? What can be known of this 'hidden nature' beyond the records and findings of science?"

The axiomatic presentation of the concept that "Law is everywhere" may give rise to questions such as: "Are you sure?" "What about cataclysms and accidents, sudden good fortune without any obvious precedent effort; good lucks, bad luck, and all those mysterious and inexplicable events that come, as it were, like a bolt from the blue?" Others still nod their heads wisely and say: "Yes, you mean like night and day, the tides, the seasons; or like water wets, and fire burns. Mathematics has its many laws, and so do physics, chemistry and engineering. But biology — well, when we get there we begin to wonder, because no one knows for certain when life started, or whether human life is of the same kind as that of the animals." Then, when one suggests that there are accurate laws operating in the realms of morals and ethics and human relations, one really begins to meet with stiff opposition: "Prove that! Just show how a bad action brings a bad result if you do it secretly!" "We have been taught that man rose from savagery to our present civilization; our ancestors were the apes, and their laws, the laws of the jungle. Nature is 'red in tooth and claw.' What's wrong about that? Everywhere we see that it is the fittest who survive!"

To make others understand, it is necessary to define some terminology and clarify some concepts. It is best to start with non-controversial points and then deal with the disputatious ones. So one starts again: "Science shows us that in all the aspects of nature hitherto explored there are laws and patterns whereby similar things happen again. Not the identical things, but, rather, there is repetition by analogy."

"Explain that," a friend says, "and give illustrations."

"Well, we know that mathematics and geometry and physics and chemistry, as also electricity, heat, light and sound, are all definable in terms of forces and energies that can be consistently measured. We know also that for all people and at all times and in all countries the laws that operate are the same. From this we can derive the idea that there is universality of law in nature's departments, and that plants, animals and humans are all subject to laws. It is possible, though, that those laws are more difficult to define. Broadly speaking, before any action can take place there has to be a causal something — a force behind the act. This leads us to the idea that the cause or the force is both inherent in and different from the action itself."

"Clarify that further," said another friend.

"Well, then," I rejoined, "let me offer an example. Raise your hand. . . . Fine. Now, how did you do that?"

"I heard your order."

"A cause?" I inquired.

Pause and silence for a while, then a reluctant "Yes."

"So you heard the order, your ear carried the sound vibrations to your brain and you turned these into an intelligible command. Then you considered whether it was right or useful to obey it."

"Yes, that is true," said the friend.

"Then?"

"Well, then I decided to do what you asked and moved my hand."

"Let's proceed slowly; it's not that easy," I said. "Something in you, your 'I', heard, considered and decided. Then, having decided that this was fair, you instructed your brain to initiate an action along the nerves to the muscles of the hand, and thereafter the physical hand was raised. That, in a sense, proves the action of the invisible side of nature," I added.

Our friends gave that some thought. "What is a force or an energy?" continued. "Can you see or describe it? Or can our scientists describe only the phenomena that it produces? The forces, the energies — heat, light, sound, magnetism, electricity, etc. — are all detectable in their effects on the sensitive aspects of matter, but an *effect* is not the force itself. From the effect we infer the existence of the force. In itself it remains as incapable of real definition as, for instance, your feeling of friendliness, or of anger, or of love can be defined, except in terms of

approximations to something else.”

Several raised objection to the last statement, saying that these feelings could be detected and defined and that psychologists were able to measure them. Further, that advertisers and politicians, for instance, were able, through the use of words, sounds, pictures and colours, to influence many others.

In response, I raised a counter-question, “Have you ever seen a feeling, or can you measure its depth or shallowness? Is it hidden, or is the effect alone visible?” I further asked, “What is a thought? What is a decision?”

After a bit of consideration, someone suggested, “It is a plan for future or present action based on past experience, on memory of the kind of results that we got when we acted in similar circumstances in the past.”

“Very true,” I said, “Also, let us add that the thinking which we do now is the result of the *past* (in terms of our experience and the knowledge which we have acquired through that or from the study of others’ thoughts); of the *present* (in which we have to act), and of the *future* — because we are trying to anticipate what effect any action or word of ours *now* will produce for benefit or otherwise *then*.”

All agreed that this was fair. I added, “This is all done in the *hidden side* of *our* nature — our mind — which we alone are aware of and cannot fully reveal to anyone else. Now let me draw your attention to another and more significant fact: Have you ever thought about the *pattern* of things? I mean the formation of crystals; the location of the various organs in the human body and why each performs its own particular function and none other; why plants of a species follow the rules of formation and the chemistry of that species; and so on — why for every department of nature there are recognizable patterns?”

“Do you mean, what makes iron, iron, and water, water, and air gaseous, and so on?” asked one of my friends.

“Yes, that’s right; that’s what I’m after. What is it that holds things together, makes for cohesion and dispersion, and serves as a kind of ideal model around which physical atoms, or cells, can aggregate to form a colony and to perform definite functions?”

My friends puzzled over that for a while, until one of them asked, “Do you think it could be electrical, now that they’ve found that there

are potential differences inside the cells and that different parts can be influenced by minute currents to alter their chemical constitution and change into new things?"

"Why not?" chipped in another. "Consider the sub-atomic particles of various kinds of electrical potency that have been detected in recent years."

"Think also of the ways in which packs and herds of animals come together in their natural surroundings," added a companion who was a student of sociology. "Recently, it was found that monkeys had a definite pattern of social behaviour and that each member of a troop had to fit into a social hierarchy. Infringements were punished, and changes were brought on only through troop readjustments which affected all the members, so that the troop pattern — now I'm using your terms," he added, addressing me — "though a definite one, was changeable within its own limits."

"All right," said the original objector, "so now we will concede you have made a point. We see that there is an inner side to many aspects of nature and to ourselves. We'll agree that if you change the electrical potential of a cell you can change its pattern and constitution. Are you inferring that the whole of nature is run by changes in electricity and magnetism?"

"What else?" I rejoined. "Have you an alternative suggestion?"

"Yes, I have," he said seriously. "I think that our thought is electrical and we use it to make our body do things. Then the effects of our doings affect others and our surroundings. We build dams, explode nuclear bombs in the air and underground, grow crops, wage wars, create industries, pollute the air and the rivers, and generally change our environment more than we realize. Perhaps our disturbing nature's balance is what eventually causes calamities and catastrophes. I hear they are thinking of spreading some kind of fine dust in the space immediately above our equator, and if that is ever done, they say it will redistribute the warmth from the equator towards the poles, while reducing the heat in torrid regions; but, have they considered that the melting of the polar ice in the north and south would so raise the level of the oceans that many populated areas of the earth would be submerged? It is said that there is enough water held in solid ice there to raise the level of the oceans of the world by about half a mile or more. What a calamity could be created!"

“And all that,” I added, “could result from a single decision taken by a single person at some point of crisis for the world; the distress of millions could result from such a thing.”

“I think that we are doing this all the time,” said another of the group. “Consider the decisions that I make — to go somewhere, to eat or drink certain things, to read, to think, to feel — and the whole time the many millions of cells and atoms in my body have to do just what I want to. I guess that if I go too far they can rebel and get tired, or sick, or limbs and organs can deteriorate before their time, or become deformed or non-functional — which would be their way of resisting, would it not?” We all agreed that this seemed to be true.

“But I should like to ask about the ‘I’ you have been telling us about,” said another. “What is it? Why do we always say ‘I’ and then seem never to be able to define it accurately or reasonably? You say that nature has a hidden side; if anything was ever hidden it is this ‘I.’”

“Can’t you be sure of two things at least?” I asked. “One: you are here; you exist, you are doing the thinking — now and here! That, at least, is one thing you can be sure of, no matter how difficult it is to define exactly what that sense of identity, that consciousness, that perceiver, is.”

“Agreed.”

“Then the next thing you can be absolutely sure of as existing is the universe around you, small and great, infinitesimal and infinite, visible and invisible.”

Thinking for a while, my friend said, “I know that my perceiver within is not to be located, and I have always had the same sense of identity as far back as my memory goes. My body, my thoughts, my feelings, change, but I remain. Would you call this ‘I’ the spirit?”

“Words again,” murmured a neighbour. “How would you define ‘spirit’?”

“Well,” I said, “would you agree that it is hidden and invisible? Also potential, just as thought is potential to an action? There is in us the originator of thoughts, the experiencer of life’s events, the awareness of the nuances of emotion, and the final bar of justice.”

“That I cannot understand!” exclaimed my neighbour. “Why justice?”

“Well, consider an electro-active nature, a universe sensitive to the alterations that we cause in it in terms of our living. Do you think

it would not respond to thoughts and feelings that are inimical and inharmonious or the reverse?"

"What do you mean by 'inharmonious'?" asked another.

"Is not harmony the expression of the action of law? If we agree that the universe around us is not inimical but rather well regulated, and co-operative rather than entirely competitive and destructive, then would you not say that 'harmony' is the best way to express a way of living that sees that all necessary things are done by the self-willed individual?"

"So now you are going to give him 'self-will' too!" jibed another.

"Right," I answered. "Who makes your decisions? Your feet or your head? Your appetite or your knowledge of what is the right kind of diet? Finally, when you do make a decision, do *you* execute it or does someone else? I know that the deterministic school would like us to blame our environment and our parents for what we are, but even one belonging to that school cannot be blind to the fact that here and now we can *choose* to do the exact opposite of what we know innately is fair and just." I added, after a pause, "I know that justice is difficult to define. Don't our legal codes say in their detail that which the great religious reformers have always said? — Be fair to others. Don't infringe upon their rights. Don't appropriate what is not yours and is not earned fairly by you. Be truthful. Be bold and free, while at the same time using your discrimination and developing your capacity to serve others."

"Now I can see why this sensitive invisible nature you have been telling us about doesn't need any law courts. It records, judges and executes its decrees on all of us all the time, whether we know it or not. I guess there is no escape for us. And what we commonly speak of as 'chance' or 'luck' is not so at all but is the effect of what we have sown before. Well, that makes living easier," my friend said, rising. "I think I've learned a lot in this session. I guess we have a lot to learn still, and there must be those who have passed this way before and are now ahead of us — like the great men who come back as a gesture of service, you know, the ones you once mentioned as being great reformers and brothers to all of us little men who are struggling to become greater men and to do our duties."

SHANKARA, THE TEACHER

[In the Hindu month of Vaishakh (this year from April 17 to May 16) fall two important Jayantis — that of Gautama, the Buddha, and of Shankara, the Acharya. According to Theosophical teachings, the missions of these two Adept-Reformers were very intimately related, and any difference between them was one of form rather than of substance. In *The Secret Doctrine*, both are termed “Sixth Rounders,” allegorically.

H.P.B. described the Buddha as “the greatest Man-Reformer ever known,” and stated that if the “simple, humane and philosophical code of daily life” left to us by him “should ever come to be adopted by mankind at large, then indeed an era of bliss and peace would dawn on Humanity.” His grand successor, Shankaracharya, she called an Avatara in the full sense of the term, “an Adept of Adepts.” Says *The Secret Doctrine*:

“Sri Shankaracharya, the greatest Initiate living in the historical ages, wrote many a Bhashya on the *Upanishads*. But his original treatises, as there are reasons to suppose, have not yet fallen into the hands of the Philistines, for they are too jealously preserved in his *maths* (monasteries, *mathams*). And there are still weightier reasons to believe that the priceless Bhashyas (Commentaries) on the esoteric doctrine of the Brahmins, by their greatest expounder, will remain for ages yet a dead letter to most of the Hindus, except the *Smartava* Brahmins.” (I. 271-72)

“Let him [*i.e.*, any European who would undertake to solve the problem of existence] read and study the sublime teachings on the subject of Soul and Spirit, of Shankaracharya (*Viveka Chudamani*).” (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 569-70)

The article on Shankaracharya reprinted here is from the *Oriental Department Paper* for March 1894. It is followed by one of Shankara’s treatises, “The Awakening to the Self,” reprinted from another *Oriental Department Paper*, that for July 1894. The issuing of these Papers was started in Mr. Judge’s time, under the authority and direction of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, in order to carry out in part the second of the three objects of the Theosophical Movement. This second object was thus expressed by H.P.B. in *The Key to Theosophy*: “To promote the study of Aryan and other Scriptures, of the World’s religion and sciences, and to vindicate the importance of old Asiatic literature, namely, of the Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian philosophies.”—Eds.]

THE UPANISHADS, Buddha, and Shankara: these are the three great lights of Indian wisdom. The Upanishads far away in the golden age; in the bright dawn that has faded so many ages ago. Buddha, the Awakened One, who, catching in his clear spirit the glow of that early dawn, sought to reflect it in the hearts of all men, of whatever race, of whatever nation; sought to break down the barriers of caste and priestly privilege; to leave each man alone with the Universe, with no mediator between. But scattering abroad the rays of wisdom, Buddha found that the genius of each man, of each race, could only reflect one little beam; and that in thus making the light the property of all men, the purity and completeness of the light might be impaired.

Then followed Shankaracharya — Shankara the Teacher — who set himself to the preservation of the light; to burnishing the casket that held the lamp of wisdom. Busying himself chiefly with India, he saw that the light must be preserved, as far as its completeness and perfection were concerned, within the Brahman order, where the advantages of heredity, of ages of high ideals and rigid discipline could best secure the purity of the light; could best supply a body of men, fitted by character and training to master the high knowledge, to sustain the moral effort that made the glory of India's Golden Age.

This task of fitting the Brahman order to carry the torch of wisdom was undertaken by Shankara the Teacher in three ways. First, by commenting on the Great Upanishads and the *Bhagavad-Gita*, he rendered the knowledge of the Golden Age into the thought and language of the Brahmans of his day. Second, by writing a series of preparatory works, of catechisms and manuals, he made smooth the path of those who would take the first steps on the path of wisdom. Thirdly, by a system of reform and discipline within the Brahman order, he did all that sound practice could do to second clear precept.

The system formed by Shankara within the Brahman order largely continues at the present day. The radiant points of this system are the monasteries founded by the Teacher, where a succession of teachers, each initiated by his predecessor, carry on the spiritual tradition of the great Shankara unbroken.

Of commentaries on the Upanishads and the *Bhagavad-Gita*, many, perhaps, were written in a gradual series leading up from the simple truths to the more profound mysteries; so that, with one after another of these treatises in hand, the learner was gradually led to the heart of the mystery which lies "like a germ of generation" well concealed

in these matchless theosophic documents. These commentaries were followed by others, the work of Shankara's pupils; and though these works of explanation are very numerous, all those that are published seem to belong to the earlier stages of learning, and leave the deeper passages and problems of the Upanishads still unsolved.

But the other part of Shankara's work, the manuals and catechisms for learners, are complete and perfect. They really teach, quite plainly and lucidly, the first steps on the path of Wisdom; they point out, with clear insistence, the qualities that are necessary to make these first steps fruitful; qualities without which the learner may remain, hesitating and halting, on the threshold, through lack of the force and sterling moral worth which alone make any further progress possible.

Nor are these necessary qualities difficult to understand. They are not queer psychic powers that only flatter vanity; they are not mere intellectual tricks that leave the heart cold; they are rather the simple qualities of sterling honesty, of freedom from selfishness and sensuality — which have formed the basis of every moral code; the virtues so common and commonplace on the lips, but not quite so common in the life and character.

These treatises of Shankara speak to the common understanding and moral sense in an unparalleled degree. They are an appeal to the reason that has hardly ever been equalled for clearness and simplicity by the sages of the earth. Their aim is Freedom (*Moksha*), "Freedom from the bondage of the world." This aim speaks to everyone, awakens an echo in every heart, appeals to the universal hope of common humanity.

But it is not enough for the mind to follow the lucid sentences of Shankara. "Freedom from the bondage of the world" demands something more. "Sickness is not cured by saying 'Medicine,' but by drinking it; so a man is not set free by the name of the Eternal, but by discerning the Eternal." The teaching must be woven into life and character if it is to bear fruit; it is not enough to contemplate the virtue of freedom from selfishness and sensuality in the abstract. . . .

THE AWAKENING TO THE SELF

SHANKARACHARYA'S ATMABODHA

This awakening to the Self is recorded for those whose inner darkness has been worn away by strong effort, who have reached restfulness, from whom passion has departed, who seek perfect Freedom.

Among all causes, wisdom is the only cause of perfect Freedom; as cookery without fire, so perfect Freedom cannot be accomplished without wisdom.

Works cannot destroy unwisdom, as these two are not contraries; but wisdom destroys unwisdom, as light the host of darkness.

At first wrapped in unwisdom, when unwisdom is destroyed the pure Self shines forth of itself, like the radiant sun when the clouds have passed.

When life that was darkened by unwisdom is made clear by the coming of wisdom, unwisdom sinks away of itself, as when water is cleared by astringent juice.

This world is like a dream, crowded with loves and hates; in its own time it shines like a reality; but on awakening it becomes unreal.

This passing world shines as real, like the silver imagined in a pearl-shell, as long as the Eternal is not known, the secondless substance of all.

In the real conscious Self, the all-penetrating everlasting pervader, all manifested things exist, as all bracelets exist in gold.

Just like the ether, the Lord of the senses, the Radiant, clothed in many vestures, seems divided because these are divided, but is beheld as one when the vestures are destroyed.

Through this difference of vesture, race, name, and home are attributed to the Self, as difference of taste and colour to pure water.

Built up of fivefold-mingled elements through accumulated works is the physical vesture, the place where pleasure and pain are tasted.

Holding the five life-breaths, mind, reason, and the ten perceiving and acting powers, formed of unmingled elements, is the subtle vesture, the instrument of enjoyment.

Formed through the beginningless, ineffable error of separateness, is the causal vesture. One should hold the Self to be different from these three vestures.

In the presence of the five veils, the pure Self seems to share their nature; like a crystal in the presence of blue tissues.

The pure Self within should be wisely discerned from the veils that surround it, as rice by winnowing, from husk and chaff.

Though ever all-present, the Self is not everywhere clearly beheld; but it shine forth in pure reason like a reflection in a pure mirror.

The thought of difference arises through the vestures, the powers, mind, reason, and nature; but one must find the Self, the witness of all this being, the perpetual king.

Through the busy activity of the powers, the Self seems busy; as the moon seems to course through the coursing clouds.

The vestures, powers, mind, and reason move in their paths under the pure consciousness of the Self, as people move in the sunshine.

The qualities of vestures, powers, and works are attributed to the spotless Self through undiscernment, as blue to the pure sky.

Through unwisdom, the mental vesture's actorship is attributed to the Self, as the ripple of the waves to the moon reflected in a lake.

Passion, desire, pleasure, pain move the mind; but when the mind rests in deep sleep they cease; they belong to the mind, not to the Self.

Shining is the sun's nature; coldness, the water's; heat, the fire's; so the Self's nature is Being, Consciousness, Bliss, perpetual spotlessness.

The Self lends Being and Consciousness, and mind lends activity. When these two factors are joined together by undiscernment, there arises the feeling that "I perceive."

The Self never changes; and mind of itself cannot perceive; but the Self through error believes itself to be the habitual doer and perceiver.

The Self is believed to be the habitual life, as a rope is believed to be a snake; and thus fear arises. But when it is known that "I am not the habitual life but the Self," then there can be no more fear.

The Self alone lights up the mind and powers, as a flame lights up a jar. The Self can never be lit by these dull powers.

In the knowledge of the Self, there is no need that it should be known by anything else. A light does not need another light; it shines of itself.

Putting all veils aside, saying, "It is not this! It is not this!" one must find the real unity of the habitual Self and the Supreme Self, according to the words of wisdom.

All outward things, the vestures and the rest, spring from unwisdom; they are fugitive as bubbles. One must find the changeless, spotless "I am the Eternal."

As I am other than these vestures, not mine are their birth, weariness,

ness, suffering, dissolution. I am not bound by sensuous objects, for Self is separate from the powers of sense.

As I am other than mind, not mine are pain, rage, hate, and fear. The Self is above the outward life and mind, according to the words of wisdom.

From this Self come forth the outward life and mind, and all the powers; from the Self come ether, air, fire, the waters, and earth, upholder of all.

Without quality or activity, everlasting, free from doubt, stainless, changeless, formless, ever free am I the spotless Self.

Like ether, outside and inside all, I am unmoved; always all-equal, pure, unstained, spotless, unchanged.

The ever-pure lonely one, the partless bliss, the secondless, truth, wisdom, endless, the Supreme Eternal; this am I.

Thus the steadily-held remembrance that 'I am the Eternal' takes away all unwisdom, as the healing essence stills all pain.

In solitude, passionless, with powers well-ruled, let him be intent on the one, the Self, with no thought but that endless one.

The wise through meditation immersing all outward things in the Self, should be intent on that only Self, spotless as shining ether.

Setting aside name, colour, form, the insubstantial causes of separateness, the knower of the supreme rests in perfect Consciousness and Bliss.

The difference between knower, knowing, and known exists not in the Self; for through its own Consciousness and Bliss it shines self-luminous.

Thus setting the fire-stick of thought in the socket of the Self, let the kindled flame of knowledge burn away the fuel of unwisdom.

By knowledge, as by dawn, the former darkness is driven away; then is manifest the Self, self-shining like the radiant sun.

Yet the Self, though eternally possessed, is as though not possessed, through unwisdom. When unwisdom disappears, the Self shines forth like a jewel on one's own throat.

Separate life is conceived in the Eternal by error, as a man is imagined in a post. But the pain of separation ceases when the truth about it is perceived.

By entering into real nature, wisdom swiftly arises. Then the un-wisdom of "I" and "mine" disappears, as when a mistake about the position of north and south is set right.

The seeker after union, possessed of all knowledge, sees with the eye of wisdom that all things rest in the Self; and this Self is the One, the All.

Self is all this moving world; other than Self is naught. As all jars are earth, so he beholds all as the Self.

Perfect Freedom even in life is this, that a man should shake himself free from all the limits of his disguises, through the essence of Reality, Consciousness, Bliss, just as the grub becomes the bee.

Crossing the ocean of glamour, and slaying the monsters, passion and hate, the seeker for union, perfect in peace, grows luminous in the garden of the Self.

Free from bondage to outward, unlasting pleasures, and returning to the joy of the Self, he shines pure within like the flame in a lamp.

Even when hidden under disguises, let the Sage stand free from them, like pure ether. Though knowing all, let him be as though he knew nothing; moving untrammelled like the air.

Let the Sage, shaking off his disguises, merge himself utterly in the all-pervading One; as water in water, ether in ether, flame in flame.

The gain above all gains, the joy above all joys, the wisdom above all wisdoms — let him affirm that it is the Eternal.

When this is seen, there is no more to see; when this is attained, there is no more to attain; when this is known, there is no more to know — let him affirm that this is the Eternal.

Upward, downward, on all sides perfect; Being, Consciousness, Bliss; the secondless, endless, everlasting One — let him affirm that this is the Eternal.

Through the knowledge that nothing is but the Eternal, the unchanging One is beheld by the wise; the aboriginal, partless joy — let him affirm that this is the Eternal.

As partakers in the bliss of that partless, blissful One, the Evolver and all the powers enjoy their bliss as dependants.

Every being is bound to the Eternal; every movement follows the Eternal; the all-embracing Eternal is in all, as curd is in all milk.

Nor small nor great nor short nor long, nor born nor departing, without form, attribute, colour, name — let him affirm that this is the Eternal.

Through whose shining shine the sun and all lights; but who shines not by any's light; through whom all this shines — let him affirm that this is the Eternal.

All present within and without, making luminous all this moving, the Eternal shines forth glowing of red-hot iron.

The Eternal is different from the moving world — yet other than the Eternal is naught! What is other than the Eternal shines insubstantial, like the mirage in the desert.

Things seen and heard are not other than the Eternal. Knowledge of reality teaches that all this is the Eternal, the Being, Consciousness, Bliss, the secondless.

The eye of wisdom beholds the ever-present Consciousness, Bliss, the Self; the eye of unwisdom beholds not, as the blind beholds not the shining sun.

The personal life, refined through and through by the fire of wisdom, which right learning and knowledge kindle, shines pure as gold, freed from every stain.

The Self, rising in the firmament of the heart — sun of wisdom, darkness-dispersing, all-present, all-supporting — shines forth and illumines all.

He who, drawing away from space and time, faithfully worships in the holy place of the divine self — the ever-present, the destroyer of heat and cold and every limit, the stainless, eternally happy — he all-knowing, entering the All, becomes immortal.

(Thus the Awakening to the Self is completed.)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

With the spread of a one-world civilization in recent times, the need for interreligious understanding has become an urgent one. Arthur Osborne, in his article "Comparative Religion as a University Discipline" (*The Mountain Path*, January 1969), states that the attitude of each religion claiming a monopoly of truth is now no longer tenable and may well lead men and women to decry all religions as equally untrue. In the present state of the world, he writes,

it is no use telling people that only one religion is valid, because too much knowledge of other religions is available. . . . What is needed is to impart understanding of them and show how different structures can be erected on the same substratum of truth, or different mountain paths can lead to the same peak. That is to say, it is urgently necessary to impart not merely information but understanding about the various religions. In this domain there is no such thing as "the facts of the case." Facts can be very misleading. What is needed is to understand the viewpoint from which each religion starts. It is like a group of white-robed dancers on a stage. If one section of the audience sees them through a screen of blue cellophane, another green and another red, most people in each section will really believe that the dancers are the colour they see and that the other section must be perverse to argue otherwise. . . .

Although the teaching of comparative religion has become urgently necessary in our age, it may not be at all easy to find people competent to teach it. Mere factual information is obviously not enough. It is the attitude of mind of the teacher that is more important. . . .

Ramakrishna said that, coming upon a mango-grove a sensible man will not waste his time counting trees and branches and leaves but will pick and eat a mango. People who talk about comparative religion can be classified at large into leaf-counters and mango-eaters; it is the latter that are needed. What is needed is someone who can appreciate not only a mango but an apple or a peach as well, not someone who argues that because a mango is sweet an apple must be sour.

So the conclusion is that adequate teaching of comparative religion at the universities is urgently necessary but might not be very easy to organize. One possibility in a multireligious country like India might be to split the discipline up among

exponents of different religions, each one lecturing on his own religion. But then there is the danger that it might strike the students as being like a bazaar with each shopkeeper crying up his own wares. It would be better if one single mango-eater with an appreciation for apples and peaches also could be found.

The second object of the Theosophical Movement — *viz.*, “to promote the study of Aryan and other Scriptures, of the World’s religion and sciences, and to vindicate the importance of old Asiatic literature, namely, of the Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian philosophies” — has too often been considered as an academical proposition. Although subsidiary in a sense to the first object — Universal Brotherhood — it is obviously an auxiliary clause for the furtherance of such brotherhood. It is true that as far as the outer public is concerned the interest in Eastern religions has increased, and that the philosophies of the East are better known through translations of the ancient texts and the popularizing of these. But the interest too often is academical and philological. To what extent the activity of translation and study is due to the impulse of the Theosophical Movement can probably never be known. What H.P.B. in her lifetime foresaw as *necessary* for the welfare of humanity, is now beginning to be perceived by others, and comparative religion is being recommended as a vital study, vital for the welfare of mankind.

British anthropologist Dr. Edmund R. Leach affirmed recently that “the scientist can now play God in his role as a wonder-maker.” He went on to point out that the scientist had reached a stage when he must be “the source of his own morality.”

In an article, “Have Scientists the Right to Play God?” (*The Times of India*, February 16), Shri P. R. Gupta states that, in the context of the changing social values created by science and technology, it is necessary for every man to understand the essence of science, its methods and its spirit that are forming the basis of a universal culture. Contrary to the popular image, he writes, science is not meant just to provide modern man with a vast array of earthly comforts. It can not only create and preserve, but also has within it seeds of mass destruction.

A public opinion survey was conducted recently in the United States to evaluate the popular image of science as communicated through the mass media. When people were asked what it means “to study scientific-

cally," barely four per cent cited "an open-minded approach." Many stressed the experimental approach; others emphasized analysis, referring to it as a deep-seated study. For some, science is no more than just a powerful and convenient technological tool. That "science will find a way out" is a dangerous illusion to nurture, writes Shri Gupta. He quotes the noted scientific humanist Dr. J. Bronowski as saying:

We have fallen into the habit of opposing the artistic to the scientific temper; we even identify them with a creative and critical approach. In our society which practises the division of labour, there are, of course, specialized functions as a matter of convenience and only so the scientific function is different from the artistic. In the same way, the function of thought differs from and complements the function of feeling. But the human race is not divided into thinkers and feelers, and would not long survive the division.

Shri Gupta writes about the spirit of science:

When properly understood, science makes man humble in his ignorance and smallness. As it learns one answer, it also learns several new questions. As the sphere of scientific knowledge grows larger, its contact with the world of ignorance is much larger....

Contrary to the popular belief, science does not exclusively deal with "facts," often equated with truth. Mere acquisition of knowledge and storage of facts do not promise understanding. As the noted Soviet scientist Ivan Pavlov has remarked: "Do not become a mere recorder of facts. But try to penetrate the mystery of their origin."

Despite the astounding technological triumphs of science and the ultrafine precision of scientific calculations, science is silent about certain spheres of man's activities; for example, on the nature of man and his destiny; his free will and his consciousness.

It is often contended that science has no room for faith. When one examines the basic foundations of science, one finds that they rest on certain premises that: there is orderliness in nature; this order is discoverable by man; and scientific thought is capable of comprehending the variety and subtlety of nature. In many respects these premises are somewhat akin to the tenets of all religions that: there is a divine order; it can be discovered by, or "revealed" to, man; and moral concepts are capable of dealing with the ethical problems of man,

A scientist is commonly, and usually erroneously, pictured as a completely cold, objective, logical person, without emotion or pride or prejudice. While the findings of science are ethically neutral, the activity of science is not so. Science shares much with other creative arts....

Of the many characteristics of scientific activity, the central core is intellectual curiosity — to observe, to explore, to speculate, to ask questions, to seek answers to many riddles about man and his world. As it has been said, to ask well is to know much, and to doubt is to discover....

The importance of creation and imagination in the scientific approach is often missed in the collection of the so-called laws and other bric-à-brac that is often mistaken for science. While accurate observation is essential in science, it is subsidiary to the disciplined imagination which seeks understanding by looking at facts in new ways and provides new insights — the liberating concepts — that mark major milestones in the growth of science and strengthen technology in the process....

Many scientists recognize that the scientific method is one way — perhaps an important way — of viewing the world. There are, however, other ways equally laudable: the artistic approach, the meditative approach, the intuitive approach and so on. To believe that science can alone solve all the problems of mankind is to believe in magic and that too of a very unattractive kind that denies place to human spirit.

There is a point beyond which science admittedly cannot go, and faith — call it religion, or by any other name — must show the way beyond.

What is a scientist's responsibility with regard to the use made of his discoveries? Should he insist on being told exactly what purpose his research is meant to serve? Should he allow himself to be controlled by politicians, and let them make what use they may of his discoveries? These are some of the questions underlying an unusual demonstration which was staged recently in the U.S. Many faculty members of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology held a "research stoppage" day last month. Their main aim was to protest against the heavy involvement of American scientific research in defence programmes.

They also called on scientists in other universities and research

establishments to join them in discussing this problem. The response seems to have been quite encouraging. "Misuse of scientific and technical knowledge presents a major threat to the existence of mankind," reads their manifesto. The war in Viet Nam is clearly at the back of their minds. They are also worried about the Government's plans to set up a costly anti-ballistic missiles system. Other matters of concern are the development of weapons for chemical and biological warfare and the growth of the nuclear stockpile. Instead of spending so much on defence, say the dissenters, the money should be used to improve man's economic and social environment.

That everything in nature has a light and a dark side, a right and a wrong use, has always been known to the observant. There is not an ingredient, not an essence, but can prove both life-giving and death-dealing.

A striking example of this fact is afforded by the medicinal use that is now being made of snake venom, than which few natural poisons are deadlier. A bite from a cobra or a krait can kill a man within hours. But the venom, if administered in a certain quantity, can also cure. This has been known for centuries. Charaka and Vagabhatta, the two eminent physicians of ancient India, used snake venom to treat certain illnesses. Homoeopathy too has for long been using snake poison for the cure of heart diseases and their ailments with wonderful results.

Till recently, modern allopathic medicine had tended to look upon such cures with disdain. A change now seems to be taking place and scientists are beginning to discover some of the remarkable uses of snake venom (*The Times of India*, February 26). In the U.S., for instance, cobra venom has been chemically separated and one of its ingredients has been found useful in the formation of blood-vessel tissue. British scientists have succeeded in using some of the poison to help patients suffering from thrombosis. There is also evidence to show that venom from some snakes can help to cure certain nervous diseases. So great is the demand for snake venom that it now fetches about Rs. 1,500 a gram.

Enough has been learned to emphasize the old expression that one man's meat is another man's poison. *Deus est Demon inversus*.
