

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. 41, No. 6

17th April 1971

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

[This article by H. P. Blavatsky was first published in *The Theosophist* for May 1885 and was reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for August 1960.—EDS.]

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI's well-known lines:

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Does the journey take the whole long day?

From morn till night, my friend

are like an epitome of the life of those who are truly treading the path which leads to higher things. Whatever differences are to be found in the various presentations of the Esoteric Doctrine, as in every age it donned a fresh garment, different both in hue and texture to that which preceded; yet in every one of them we find the fullest agreement upon one point—the road to spiritual development. One only inflexible rule has been ever binding upon the neophyte, as it is binding now—the *complete* subjugation of the lower nature by the higher. From the Vedas and Upanishads to the recently published *Light on the Path*, search as we may through the bibles of every race and cult, we find but one only way—hard, painful, troublesome, by which men can gain the true spiritual insight. And how can it be otherwise, since all religions and all philosophies are but the variants of the first teachings of the One Wisdom, imparted to men at the beginning of the cycle by the Planetary Spirit?

The true Adept, the developed man, must, we are always told, become—he cannot be made. The process is therefore one of growth through evolution, and this must necessarily involve a certain amount of pain.

The main cause of pain lies in our perpetually seeking the permanent in the impermanent, and not only seeking, but acting as if we had already found the unchangeable in a world of which the one certain quality we can predicate is constant change; and always, just as we fancy we have taken a firm hold upon the permanent, it changes within our very grasp, and pain results.

Again, the idea of growth involves also the idea of disruption: the inner being must continually burst through its confining shell or encasement, and such a disruption must also be accompanied by pain, not physical but mental and intellectual.

And this is how it is, in the course of our lives. The trouble that comes upon us is always just the one we feel to be the hardest that could possibly happen — it is always the one thing we feel we cannot possibly bear. If we look at it from a wider point of view, we shall see that we are trying to burst through our shell at its one vulnerable point; that our growth, to be real growth, and not the collective result of a series of excrescences, must progress evenly throughout, just as the body of a child grows, not first the head and then a hand, followed perhaps by a leg, but in all directions at once, regularly and imperceptibly. Man's tendency is to cultivate each part separately, neglecting the others in the meantime — every crushing pain is caused by the expansion of some neglected part, which expansion is rendered more difficult by the effects of the cultivation bestowed elsewhere.

Evil is often the result of over-anxiety, and men are always trying to do too much, they are not content to leave well alone, to do always just what the occasion demands and no more; they exaggerate every action and so produce karma to be worked out in a future birth.

One of the subtlest forms of this evil is the hope and desire of reward. Many there are who, albeit often unconsciously, are yet spoiling all their efforts by entertaining this idea of reward, and allowing it to become an active factor in their lives, and so leaving the door open to anxiety, doubt, fear, despondency — failure.

The goal of the aspirant for spiritual wisdom is entrance upon a higher plane of existence; he is to become a new man, more perfect in every way than he is at present, and if he succeeds, his capabilities and faculties will receive a corresponding increase of range and power, just as in the visible world we find that each stage in the evolutionary scale is marked by increase of capacity. This is how it is that the Adept becomes endowed with marvellous powers that have been so often de-

scribed, but the main point to be remembered is, that these powers are the natural accompaniments of existence on a higher plane of evolution, just as the ordinary human faculties are the natural accompaniments of existence on the ordinary human plane.

Many persons seem to think that adeptship is not so much the result of radical development as of additional construction; they seem to imagine that an Adept is a man, who, by going through a certain plainly defined course of training, consisting of minute attention to a set of arbitrary rules, acquires first one power and then another; and, when he has attained a certain number of these powers is forthwith dubbed an adept. Acting on this mistaken idea, they fancy that the first thing to be done towards attaining adeptship is to acquire "powers" — clairvoyance and the power of leaving the physical body and travelling to a distance are among those which fascinate the most.

To those who wish to acquire such powers for their own private advantage, we have nothing to say; they fall under the condemnation of all who act for purely selfish ends. But there are others, who, mistaking effect for cause, honestly think that the acquirement of abnormal powers is the only road to spiritual advancement. These look upon our Society as merely the readiest means to enable them to gain knowledge in this direction, considering it as a sort of occult academy, an institution established to afford facilities for the instruction of would-be miracle-workers. In spite of repeated protests and warnings, there are some minds in whom this notion seems ineradicably fixed, and they are loud in their expressions of disappointment when they find that what had been previously told them is perfectly true; that the Society was founded to teach no new and easy paths to the acquisition of "powers"; and that its only mission is to rekindle the torch of truth, so long extinguished for all but the very few, and to keep that truth alive by the formation of a fraternal union of mankind, the only soil in which the good seed can grow. The Theosophical Society does indeed desire to promote the spiritual growth of every individual who comes within its influence, but its methods are those of the ancient Rishis, its tenets those of the oldest Esotericism; it is no dispenser of patent nostrums composed of violent remedies which no honest dealer would dare to use.

In this connection we would warn all our members, and others who are seeking spiritual knowledge, to beware of persons offering to teach them easy methods of acquiring psychic gifts; such gifts (*laukika*) are indeed comparatively easy of acquirement by artificial means, but fade out as soon as the nerve-stimulus exhausts itself. The real seership and

adeptship which is accompanied by true psychic development (*lokottara*), once reached, is never lost.

It appears that various societies have sprung into existence since the foundation of the Theosophical Society, profiting by the interest the latter has awakened in matters of psychic research, and endeavouring to gain members by promising them easy acquirement of psychic powers. In India we have long been familiar with the existence of hosts of sham ascetics of all descriptions, and we fear that there is fresh danger in this direction, here, as well as in Europe and America. We only hope that none of our members, dazzled by brilliant promises, will allow themselves to be taken in by self-deluded dreamers or wilful deceivers.

To show that some real necessity exists for our protests and warnings, we may mention that we have recently seen, enclosed in a letter from Benares, copies of an advertisement put forth by a so-called "Mahatma." He calls for "eight men and women who know English and any of the Indian vernaculars well"; and concludes by saying that "those who want to know particulars of the work and *the amount of pay*" should apply to his address, with enclosed postage stamps! Upon the table before us lies a reprint of *The Divine Pymander*, published in England last year, and which contains a notice to "*Theosophists who may have been disappointed in their expectations of Sublime Wisdom being freely dispensed by HINDOO MAHATMAS*"; cordially inviting them to send in their names to the Editor, who will see them, "after a short probation," admitted into an Occult Brotherhood who "teach *freely* and WITHOUT RESERVE all they find worthy to receive." Strangely enough, we find in the very volume in question Hermes Trismegistus saying:

Herein is the only way which leads to Truth, which, indeed, our ancestors trod, and by which they arrived at the attainment of the Good. This way is beautiful and even; nevertheless, it is difficult for the soul to walk therein so long as she is immured within the prison of the body. . . . *Therefore, abstain from the crowd, so that by means of ignorance the vulgar may be kept within bounds, even through fear of the unknown.*

It is perfectly true that some Theosophists have been (through nobody's fault but their own) greatly disappointed because we have offered them no short cut to Yoga Vidya, and there are others who wish for practical work. And, significantly enough, those who have done least for the Society are loudest in fault-finding. Now, why do not these persons and all our members who are able to do so, take up the serious study of mesmerism? Mesmerism has been called the Key to the Occult

Sciences, and it offers peculiar opportunities for doing good to mankind. If in each of our branches we were able to establish a homeopathic dispensary with the addition of mesmeric healing, such as has already been done with great success in Bombay, we might contribute towards putting the science of medicine in this country on a sounder basis, and be the means of incalculable benefit to the people at large.

There are others of our branches, besides the one at Bombay, that have done good work in this direction, but there is room for infinitely more to be done than has yet been attempted. And the same is the case in the various other departments of the Society's work. It would be a good thing if the members of each branch would put their heads together and seriously consult as to what tangible steps they can take to further the declared objects of the Society. In too many cases the members of the Theosophical Society content themselves with a somewhat superficial study of its books, without making any real contribution to its active work. If the Society is to be a power for good in this and other lands, it can only bring about this result by the active co-operation of every one of its members, and we would earnestly appeal to each of them to consider carefully what possibilities of work are within his power, and then to *earnestly set about carrying them into effect*. Right thought is a good thing, but thought alone does not count for much unless it is translated into action. There is not a single member in the Society who is not able to do *something* to aid the cause of truth and universal brotherhood; it only depends on his own will, to make that *something* an accomplished fact.

Above all we would reiterate the fact that the Society is no nursery for incipient adepts; teachers cannot be provided to go round and give instruction to various branches on the different subjects which come within the Society's work of investigation; the branches must study for themselves; books are to be had, and the knowledge there put forth must be practically applied by the various members: thus will be developed self-reliance and reasoning powers. We urge this strongly; for appeals have reached us that any lecturer sent to branches must be practically versed in experimental psychology and clairvoyance (*i.e.*, looking into magic mirrors and reading the future, etc., etc.). Now we consider that such experiments should originate amongst members themselves to be of any value in the development of the individual or to enable him to make progress in his "uphill" path, and therefore earnestly recommend our members to *try* for themselves.

IN MEMORY OF H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE COMMON TASK of great spiritual Teachers is to awaken people from their mental torpor. The power of their Individuality asserts itself and makes of some men their devoted adherents, of others strong opponents and even relentless enemies. Is not this well known in the lives of even Krishna and Buddha? This phenomenon did not fail to manifest itself as a result of H. P. Blavatsky's activities. Like her illustrious predecessors, she aroused violent criticism from the dogmatic and the sectarian in every field. Again, antagonism from those who, clinging to selfishness, were in the darkness it creates, and thought naught of their evil ways: they were of the earth, earthy. The vast majority, neither good nor evil, but a mixture of both, was swayed now to this side, now to the other, anon to praise and flatter, and anon to blame and condemn.

Our age is one in which historic events have been taking place at a great speed; harvests of edible and poisonous stuffs alike have been bumper; and the struggle between plenty and poverty has been growing fierce with the cycle's increasing speed. The result has been loss of discrimination on the part of large numbers in every sphere of thought and action. The few politicians, journalists, and priests have exploited the poor in earthly goods as in heavenly knowledge. On the field of battle where ideas and ideals were fighting the fictions and falsehoods of the dogmatic theologians, the materialistic scientists and the superstitious spiritists, came H. P. Blavatsky with the fire of ancient knowledge in one hand to consume the errors of the exploited and the exploiter alike, and with manna for soul nourishment and spiritual enlightenment in the other, which at least a few would imbibe. The result of her advent is known to history, but the result of her Mission?

H. P. Blavatsky went behind the veil men call death 80 years ago, in 1891. Her influence is still alive in the world: her provoking personality is still being talked about; the Light she radiated is still rejected by some, ignored by the many, but protected with devotion by an ever-increasing number. Her Mission is not over; its leaven is still at work. What is still going on is a vital process; in the midst of it all, how is one to evaluate and to judge? What is the basis for a dispassionate evaluation of her life-work?

The first step for a just appreciation of a spiritual Guru is to seek his real status in his Teachings. There is a time-honoured principle and its proper application gives one a starting-point: "From the Teaching

to the Teacher." It is legitimate, especially in view of the history of the birth, growth, concretization, decay and death of religions and religious cultures, that a person should inquire and make sure of the *bona fides* of a spiritual Teacher. What better method is there than the fair one used in a properly constituted court of justice where incorruptible purity obtains? No one is judged guilty unless the guilt is proven. The greatest care is taken in sifting the evidence of the accused. It is this method which any honest mind can and should adopt if he desires to understand and to evaluate the Mission of H. P. Blavatsky. We who have fearlessly adopted this method say to those who wish to pass judgment on her — "Ladies and Gentlemen, pray examine by all means the motive and methods of her activities, but examine them with intellectual honesty. Put her in the witness-box; question her about the incriminating documents — her books and articles. Do this in opening your case for the prosecution." This is what we mean when we quote the principle — "From the Teaching to the Teacher." This, and it is not all, will enable any seeker to obtain a reliable insight into the profundity or superficiality of the mind and character of any Teacher. Such a procedure, however, demands attentive and persevering study, and the *hoi-polloi* never make the necessary effort, but always continue to listen to eulogies or condemnations, little caring where the Truth lies.

The throb of her compassionate heart, the magnitude of her giant mind, are alive in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky, and the earnest student can meet the *real* H.P.B. in those Teachings. Steadfast and daily study of her works has proven to many, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the consistency of her Theosophy. In her books and articles runs the unbroken thread of perfect uniformity. Not only a seeming conformity, but a real and illuminating consistency is there. The seeds sown by her in 1877 in *Isis Unveiled* are made to sprout and brought to fruition in *The Secret Doctrine* published in 1888.

As an illustration of this striking characteristic, the mark of the true Teacher, take her attitude to Those who sent her to reproclaim the Eternal Verities. No other doctrine she promulgated, no other assertion she made, brought her so adverse a criticism and so great a personal anguish and suffering as the teaching she asserted in the teeth of opposition — the existence of the Mahatmas. She knew from the beginning that she but courted martyrdom in giving out this holy truth. She had nothing to gain and everything to lose. She could have quietly fathered the credit of being a profound genius — possessor of mines of knowl-

edge, of puzzling and provocative magical powers, and of literary charm also. Why did she not remain silent, especially when she saw signs of opposition? She gave out this teaching, particularly for the sake of a few who would profit thereby, and cheerfully took the onus and the burden on herself. From first to last, amid devotees who understood or friends who could not understand, amid the doubting and scoffing public, she reiterated this teaching.

Here are two quotations, chosen among numerous, on this point. The reader can judge for himself. The Preface to her first monumental work, *Isis Unveiled*, opens thus: "The work now submitted to public judgment is the fruit of a somewhat intimate acquaintance with Eastern adepts and study of their science." And in the very last article she penned, "My Books," dated April 27, 1891, which appeared in her magazine *Lucifer* after her death on May 8 of that year, referring to *Isis Unveiled* she writes: "Every word of information found in this work or in my later writings, comes from the teachings of our Eastern Masters."

From start to finish, ever did she disclaim any authority as a revealer of mystic lore or an inventor of occult wisdom. She said that she was but "a window through which the Light came," "the humble mouthpiece of the Teachers," "the pupil and servant of the Eastern Gurus."

What depth of true humility was hers! And more — what sacrifice! For such statements awoke in the hearts of some the memory of the sacred institution of the Guru, forgotten or profaned in the modern world. Not mock-modesty or sentimental self-pity, but the humility and the sacrifice of the Spirit — another invariable mark of the real Teacher. Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

Be humble, if thou would'st attain to Wisdom.

Be humbler still, when Wisdom thou hast mastered.

And again:

The wheel [of the Good Law] revolves for all, the humble and the proud. The "Doctrine of the Eye" is for the crowd; the "Doctrine of the Heart" for the elect. The first repeat in pride: "Behold, I know"; the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess: "Thus have I heard."

She was herself one of "the elect" who in humbleness had garnered, and ever low confessed: "Thus have I heard."

This mark of the elect expresses itself forcefully in the quotation from Montaigne which she was so fond of using. We find it in the Intro-

ductory to *The Secret Doctrine* which was first published in 1888: "...to the public in general and the readers of the 'Secret Doctrine' I may repeat what I have stated all along, and which I now clothe in the words of Montaigne: Gentlemen, 'I HAVE HERE MADE ONLY A NOSEGAY OF CULLED FLOWERS, AND HAVE BROUGHT NOTHING OF MY OWN BUT THE STRING THAT TIES THEM.'" And she adds with her characteristic humility, so refreshing in these days of self-claimants and boastful "originators": "Pull the 'string' to pieces and cut it up in shreds, if you will. As for the nosegay of FACTS — you will never be able to make away with these. You can only ignore them, and no more."

In her last article, already quoted from, the same words of Montaigne are again used. Speaking of "the fundamental doctrine, the philosophical conclusions and teachings" which she had ever proclaimed, "from first to last," she states:

Nothing of that have I invented, but simply given it out as I have been taught; or as quoted by me in the *Secret Doctrine* from Montaigne: "I have here made only a nosegay of culled (Eastern) flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the string that ties them."

This was at the close, after years of pain and anguish in the self-sacrificing labour of her disinterested service of humanity. It was just a few days before her death, and she exclaimed: "Is any of my helpers prepared to say that I have not paid the full price for the string?"

Consistency and humility — two luminous excellences of spirituality. The same quotations from her writings given above will show to the reader a third spiritual qualification of the *real* H. P. Blavatsky — unswerving devotion to and trust in her Guru. In December 1886, in an article entitled "The Theosophical Mahatmas," she wrote:

For thirty-five years and more, ever since 1851 that I saw any Master *bodily* and personally for the first time, *I have never once denied or even doubted Him*, not even in thought. Never a reproach or murmur against Him has escaped my lips, or entered even my brain for one instant under the heaviest trials.

And further on:

Unswerving devotion to Him who embodies the duty traced for me, and belief in the Wisdom — collectively, of that grand, mysterious, yet actual Brotherhood of holy men — is my only merit, and the cause of my success in Occult philosophy.

From this article we must quote the last sentence in which H.P.B. declares her love for our India:

... on that country (India) I call all the blessings of my heart. All my love and aspirations belong to my beloved brothers, the Sons of old Aryavarta — the Motherland of my MASTER.

Side by side with this genuine feeling of H.P.B. for India, it is gratifying to quote the words of a Hindu Brahmana embodying his recognition of her greatness and his sincere reverence for her as a person. And here we might add that in a real court of justice the reliability of witnesses, friendly or otherwise, is also fully considered. In determining the status of H.P.B., what has been said not only by her foes, but also by her friends, should be taken into account and each, foe or friend, himself be judged on the basis of what he himself states. This, then, is what Rai B. K. Laheri said in *Lucifer* for June 1891:

Those who call H.P.B. "a fraud" are much mistaken, they do not know her. I would be glad to give up everything I have in this world to become such a fraud, if anybody will come forward to teach me. Is it not sufficient for the Westerns to know that a proud Brahmin, who knows not how to bend his body before any mortal being in this world, except his superiors in relation or religion, joins his hands like a submissive child before the white *Yogini* of the West? Why so? Because she is no longer a Mlechchha woman; she has passed that stage; and every Hindu — the purest of the pure amongst the Brahmins — would be proud and delighted to call her Hindu and a mother — there is no doubt about it. India cannot forget her, has not forgotten her.

India cannot forget her, indeed, for she loved and served India devotedly and ardently, and wished for it a return to its ancient spirituality.

What is written above will clearly show to any intelligent and impartial reader how consistently H.P.B. credited the Source from which she derived her knowledge, and those who may care to do so will fathom the depth of that Source by comparing the philosophy which she gave with any philosophy, ancient or modern. Old, forgotten truths were given out; desecrated mystical and religious symbols were explained; Eastern and Asiatic culture was held up to public view and people saw its stately grandeur. But turn now from H.P.B., the Teacher, to H. P. Blavatsky, the woman.

We need mention only two qualities to appreciate her personality —

her deep generosity and her dauntless courage.

She was the very incarnation of kindness. Not only for the Cause of the Ancient Wisdom-Religion did she sacrifice; not only to her friends did she give out of the store of her knowledge so generously, but she ever helped the unknown stranger, bestowing sympathy and care on the poor and the submerged. She practised what she preached about real charity. She writes in *The Key to Theosophy*:

The Theosophical ideas of charity mean *personal* exertion for others; *personal* mercy and kindness; *personal* interest in the welfare of those who suffer; *personal* sympathy, forethought and assistance in their troubles or needs.

Again and again, poor as she was at times, she took the last morsel out of her mouth to feed one poorer than herself. Did she not travel steerage on one occasion, crossing the Atlantic from Europe to America in the most uncomfortable condition to share her ticket with a miserable immigrant woman and her children?

Nay, more still. Even to her worst and most fiendish enemies she never refused a helping hand. She housed and fed the notorious Mme. Coulomb, a serpent ready to bite and poison the hand that fed her, but a starving serpent and so entitled to the love and protection of H.P.B.'s compassion. Similarly, when Solovioff, the Russian, brought his brilliant but soulless mind to H.P.B., out of pity she risked her all to save him, hoping against hope that he might escape the doom which threatened him. Alas! her hopes were in vain, for long-seated treachery and conceit proved too strong for him and they engulfed him to his ruin.

In both these instances she knew from the very first that in each an Iago was entrenched who very likely would emerge and deal a treacherous blow. But she knew that such would only wound her person, and could never touch her philosophy.

Among her virtues of kindness to friends, generosity towards enemies, charity for the needy, was moral courage. This, we may say, was the common factor both in public as in private life. Hers was the courage of the true Warrior-Soul. Stern and exacting whenever necessary, she fought her battles against prejudices, conventionalities, pettinesses of the narrow-minded and the mean-hearted.

Well did she know what to expect from the fierce world; but that did not deviate her one inch from the straight and narrow path. From

the beginning of her Mission she foresaw the array of critics who would unite against her and her sacred work. In the Preface to *Isis Unveiled* she states:

Our work, then, is a plea for the recognition of the Hermetic philosophy, the anciently universal Wisdom-Religion, as the only possible key to the Absolute in science and theology. To show that we do not at all conceal from ourselves the gravity of our undertaking, we may say in advance that it would not be strange if the following classes should array themselves against us:

The Christians, who will see that we question the evidences of genuineness of their faith.

The Scientists, who will find their pretensions placed in the same bundle with those of the Roman Catholic Church for infallibility, and, in certain particulars, the sages and philosophers of the ancient world classed higher than they.

Pseudo-scientists will, of course, denounce us furiously.

Broad Churchmen and Freethinkers will find that we do not accept what they do, but demand the recognition of the whole truth.

Men of letters and various *authorities*, who hide their real belief in deference to popular prejudices.

The mercenaries and parasites of the Press, who prostitute its more than royal power, and dishonour a noble profession, will find it easy to mock at things too wonderful for them to understand; for to them the price of a paragraph is more than the value of sincerity. From many will come honest criticism; from many — cant. But we look to the future.

The contest now going on between the party of public conscience and the party of reaction, has already developed a healthier tone of thought. It will hardly fail to result ultimately in the overthrow of error and the triumph of Truth. We repeat again — we are labouring for the brighter morrow.

And yet, when we consider the bitter opposition that we are called upon to face, who is better entitled than we upon entering the arena to write upon our shield the hail of the Roman gladiator to Caesar: MORITURUS TE SALUTAT!

Hers was the fearless, disinterested, steadfast proclamation of "Truth high seated upon its rock of adamant, alone eternal and supreme."

Although she was proclaimed at the end of 1885 to be "one of the most accomplished and interesting impostors in history," yet she lived for five more years during which she wrote several important books

and scores of instructive essays. Recently her Teachings have gained recognition among foremost thinkers. Attacks on her personality have become spasmodic, while all over the world her Philosophy is being systematically studied, and, what is more, the number of her pupils is on the increase.

The sentiments in the following lines are as true today as when they were expressed at the time of her death:

Blavatsky sleeps, that wondrous soul who shed
Its strength and beauty spendthrift for the world,
Spite all the hard and cruel malice hurled
From foolish lips that knew not what they said;
Who taught us hope when hope had all but fled,
Who gave us joy when life was living death,
Whose tender message sweeter than the breath
Of soft blown music, charmed and comforted.
But for a space that dauntless Spirit sleeps
Stripped by life's autumn of its leaves of pain;
Some happier spring will call it forth, again
To flash Truth's torch across earth's darksome deeps;
We cannot, brothers, in our grief's dismay,
Grudge this brief respite on the bitter way.

THE gradual assimilation by mankind of great spiritual truths will alone revolutionize the face of civilization, and ultimately result in a far more effective panacea for evil than the mere tinkering of superficial misery.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE LONG, LONG TRAIL

Regard earnestly all the life that surrounds you.

Learn to look intelligently into the hearts of men.

Regard most earnestly your own heart.

For through your own heart comes the one light which can illuminate life and make it clear to your eyes.

—*Light on the Path*

IN a footnote in the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, Madame Blavatsky says: "The Occultists, having most perfect faith in their own exact records, astronomical and mathematical, calculate the age of Humanity, and assert that the latter (as separate sexes) has existed in this Round just 18,618,727 years (as in 1888), as the Brahmanical teachings and even some Hindu calendars declare." During all this time, souls have trodden the same old path — have stumbled, fallen, wandered into by-ways, failed, succeeded, played truant as wayward children oft-times do, and damned or redeemed themselves. In his attempt to reach the luminescence ahead, man has always had his quota of successes and failures, of moments of doubt and of faith, of glory and of gloom. It were therefore foolish to imagine that the soul's progress curve will plot a straight ascending graph. The immutable law of evolution decrees that man has to ascend by his own self-induced and self-devised ways and means checked by Karma. These checks are no arbitrary obstacles put by a jealous god to trip the unwary. The path is not being made difficult by cruel deliberation. These checks are of the man's own making. They too were self-induced and self-devised and in part represent his self-made destiny. They represent the harvest of those deeds done which were not pleasing to the nameless Lord within.

All this — the sowing of the seeds by the personal man, their blossoming and the measure of time between sowing, ripening and reaping — is what is called Karma. At each stage is a guiding intelligence at work, for Karma, if it takes count of deeds and defaults, also takes the motive of the man into account. Philanthropy may be a cloak that hides selfishness; friendliness may be assumed to extract profit out of the circumstance; ethics may be pursued and mortification imposed on oneself for self-glorification and the applause of mankind. Karma sees all this, Karma evaluates all this. For good it renders good; for evil, justice. Many have failed to perceive this aspect of Karma which weighs motives and metes out justice, and so failing have seen in it only the

automotive aspect that transforms the seed into the sapling and the tree. It is this wrong thinking that puts blinkers on man's eyes and hides from him the sanction and the force that lies behind ethics. This attitude to Nature's Law poisons life and makes it bitter, inducing the man to think that there is nothing left for him but to put up a futile resistance against the decrees of a vengeful god.

All men act through the instrumentality of what they call their mind. This mind is perpetually acting, perpetually generating thought. It is its nature that it can be enamoured of good just as it can be enamoured of evil. Thus thought, good or bad, precedes all action. When thought and action arise or manifest, they do not do so in isolation and are no longer the especial property of the man. Thought, as it arises, becomes a vibration that enters into and energizes or ensouls a vast congeries of sentient lives. These lives have an intelligence of their own and feel the stamp of him who defiles them. By laws of supernature, these lives go out from the man supercharged with the message of his thought. It is true that they run his errands. But sooner or later they will come home to roost. They may react on the man immediately. On the other hand, like certain seeds of forest growths, they will take years to sprout and grow. If the impress which these lives carried was ignoble, they will come back in the form of Karmic checks. When they thus precipitate as undesirable effects, they become palpable; but men cannot trace them back to their source, for they are not subject to analysis by the instruments and agencies known to our century. They may bring on a mild reaction — a tendency or an obstacle on the path — which can be readily overcome. On the other hand, they may come like avenging furies with the force of tornadoes at sea when the soul is tossed hither and thither and fears for its safety. This, only in regard to the thoughts of man: his broodings of mischief and evil and unbrotherliness which find no outlet in human action, but which remain only as fancies spun in the fabric of a brooding mind. Man in his ignorance reasons that since he has not translated thought into action, he has successfully bottled it up, safe from mischief, and that for that reason there should be no basis for chastisement. That such an argument is fallacious is easy of discernment.

In the rare cases of the artist and the poet who contemplate nature in the abstract and, in the words of Shakespeare, give to airy nothings a local habitation and a name — except for these, the thoughts of men weave a fantasy around other men, picturing them in circumstances and a locale fashioned according to the fabric dreamt up. Such thoughts, unbeknown to the thinker, carry his venom — if venom it be — and pour

it into the person thought of. It is in this sense that the coveting of another's possessions becomes ruinous to the one who covets. The results of wrong thoughts and the retribution which must follow are both inevitable. The thought hurled by the thinker cannot but recoil like the boomerang on the mind which hurled it.

When action follows upon a thought, a circuit is completed between the thinker-actor, the lives which he uses for his thought and action, the person or persons for whom the thought and action were generated, as also all others who by physical proximity or psychic affinity get affected by the action. When the man evokes anger, jealousy, hatred or carnal love, arousing these in another by his actions, he opens himself up as a target for attack by lives which have the stamp of the same or similar emotion. They enter his make-up through doors now left ajar by himself for their entry. They then reactivate past memories in those organs in him which vibrate to their touch, and the passional nature is aroused to fresh activity by past memories and the benefits obtained from past misdeeds. It is not as if on entry the lives start up an immediate commotion. They may have to bide their time for manifestation till a suitable cycle in the life of the thinker-actor provides the opportunity. Then at the right cue they troop out upon the stage and play their several parts, affecting him in his physical health, producing a deformity, beclouding his reasoning, lashing his passions to bursting point, or deranging his mind. The intensity of attack may be mild or lethal, depending on the intensity of the thought which propels these lives. To the average man, it is a chance disturbance or a major calamity. In most cases he does not know what has hit him, and not knowing, bows his knees to strange gods and stranger rites.

When a man views his life in this larger perspective, he realizes that it is he himself who has decreed the good and the bad that come to him. He understands that if he reaps the corn planted by him, he is compelled to weed out the poisonous growths that trespass on his garden. He has to acknowledge that the bad and wrong things which clutter his life have not only been deserved but have been desired by him at one time or another. The injustices that one meets, the hatreds, the jealousies, the oppositions that come cruelly from one's own household — these can no longer be regarded as impositions of a cruel providence. They are his own progeny of a yesteryear. They represent the retarding agents which he once hugged to his bosom and nurtured and which now beset his path where their very presence defiles. Yet, if he has learnt how to live through the unclean places of a lifetime, he will find that these have no

longer the power to raise the devil in him, nor make him deviate from his fixed purpose. The past wrong cannot be easily erased, as it were, with a sponge. It will at each appropriate cycle produce its checks to progress. The fog may blot out all sight of the path for agonizing periods of time; yet one thing is sure — it must lift. The ripple of effect, like the great tidal wave, has to be allowed to run its course. In such dark moments that try men's souls, the disciple has to search for the instruction which is written there expressly for him. It provides to him the opportunity to redeem the past wrong and to help nature actively to restore broken harmony.

To take up such a stance towards life requires a planning, a pre-meditated gathering and marshalling of forces to guard the weakened spots, the vulnerable parts of the battlements that hedge in the soul from the depredation of worldly forces. Sentry duty has now to be enforced round the clock. Each approaching thought or act has to be scrutinized, its credentials checked, its entry into the stronghold permitted or rejected with discretion. But the duty of the sentry is only one of several functions that the General must direct. His is the responsibility to plan strategy and counter-strategy, offence and defence. He has to envisage the subtle yet swift assault that the opposing forces will mount on his stronghold. He has to judge the strength and number of the tremendous armaments that will be thrown against him in the fray. He has to realize and face tremendous odds and yet remain firm in his resolve. If he trembles, if he loses his faith in the highest, he is lost and his stronghold will fall and he will become a slave till death releases him from his bondage. Just as in the game of chess each move is to be planned not only for its immediate effect but for its strength which will be apparent only several moves ahead, so too in this glorious fight where the holy life is at stake. The wakeful pilgrim has to be watchful of attack and yet so plan his strategy that success must ultimately be his.

When the man feels and understands his new responsibility, he is already one step ahead of the vast majority. He glimpses, however hazily, the larger life, and just because he is ahead of his fellows, they have a claim on him to share his hard-earned knowledge with them. Whilst fighting his own battles, the student is called upon to search for him who knows still less than he, and, having found him out, to make him hear the law. The missionary stage must evoke in him the missionary zeal — a craving so acute that he has perforce to say with St. Paul: "Even if I preach the Gospel, I can claim no credit for it; I cannot

help myself; it would be misery to me not to preach.”

The path may grow more thorny, the clouds more threatening, as on he goes, but he is no longer despondent because he perceives his own life as something which he has with pain created so as to rise above pain. In the moments of peace that flood his Soul, he realizes the sway in himself of an impersonal, intelligent force, and feels its embodiment in that secret part of him — his eternal heart. As he draws near to that centre, he finds peace and harmony and a certainty of knowledge that comes through an awakened intuition. A voice speaks to him where there is none to speak — the voice of the Most High. He has to understand its idiom, follow its behests, obey its commands. The General orders. The soldier obeys even if it means a ride into the gaping jaws of death.

Thus is a *Kshatriya* born.

ONCE the Exalted One was staying at Kosambi, in Simsapa Grove. Taking up a handful of simsapa leaves, He said to the brethren: “Now what think ye, brethren? Which are more, these few simsapa leaves that I hold in my hand, or those that are in the simsapa grove above?”

“Few in number, Lord, are those simsapa leaves that are in the hand of the Exalted One: far more in number are those in the simsapa grove above.”

“Just so, brethren, those things that I know by my super-knowledge, but have not revealed, are greater by far in number than those things that I have revealed. And why, brethren, have I not revealed them? Because, brethren, they do not conduce to profit, are not concerned with the holy life, they do not tend to repulsion, to cessation, to calm, to the super-knowledge, to the perfect wisdom, to Nibbana. That is why I have not revealed them.

“Then what, brethren, have I revealed? That This is Ill, brethren, has been revealed by me: that This is the arising of Ill: that This is the ceasing of Ill: that This is the approach to the ceasing of Ill. And why have I revealed it? Because, brethren, it conduces to profit . . . to Nibbana.

“Wherefore, brethren, do ye exert yourselves to realize ‘This is Ill, this is the arising of Ill, this is the ceasing of Ill, this is the approach to the ceasing of Ill.’ ”

—*Samyutta Nikaya*, v. 437

THE PURANAS

(PHILOLOGY *versus* SYMBOLOGY)

[Reprinted from *Lucifer* for April 1891.—EDS.]

[Professor M. N. Dvivedi, on receiving an invitation to the Oriental Congress at Stockholm in 1889, wrote the following paper and sent it, together with copies of his books, to the General Secretary of the Congress. After very considerable delay our brother learnt that his paper had been unfortunately "mislaid." It is, however, "*Lucifer's*" office to bring to light lost and hidden things, and he is rejoiced to give yet another proof of his utility in the service of fair play.—EDS., LUCIFER]

I

THE ADVENT of *Sanskrita* on the field of European linguistic studies marks an era of great importance in the history of the world. The rapidity of advancement in every field of research during the last fifty years is equalled only by the solidity and vastness of the results achieved, every department of life clearly exhibiting the effects of this achievement. But it has been so much the fashion to extol the present at the expense of the past that a patient hearing is hardly accorded those who claim the relics of ancient learning to be deserving of more than the passing interest of mere curiosity. Science having determined that man, the apex of evolution, has descended from his pitheccid ancestry since only the quaternary period, the possibility of secondary or even tertiary man can hardly be looked upon as anything more credible than a fairy tale; and yet I wish to direct the reader's attention to a subject connected with some of these fairy tales, the Indian *Puranas*, which speak of humanity as existing at a period entirely beyond recognized historical and geological limits. As every myth has some foundation in truth, I venture to hold that underneath the tales of the *Puranas* precious truths lie embedded in strata not yet reached by the delvers in Philology and Comparative Mythology.

The sciences of Comparative Philology and Mythology have no doubt achieved grand results, each in its own department, but the problem of the beginnings of religion and civilization is still where it ever was. The hope of demonstrating the basis of a universal religion, the crying necessity of the day, is as distant as that of finding out a universal language. Why is it so? Are the questions so hopelessly beyond solution by philosophy and research? It appears to me there is something so intrinsically

wrong with the methods followed by Comparative Philology and Comparative Mythology that results which, with the materials at our command, ought to have followed long since, have still eluded our grasp. It is remarkable that investigation in almost every department of nature is tending to a certain uniformity, and that the present need is only a careful dovetailing of the various results into a systematic whole. Comparative Philology and Comparative Mythology have no mean share in the grand total. But it is time for reverend doctors of divinity to burst open the shells of their creeds; it is time for philologists and mythologists to penetrate more deeply into phonetic similarities and solar-myths; it is time for sceptics and scientists to break through the charmed circle "this much and no more." The object of all research ought to be to bring man close to man and nature, and this can be done only when universality replaces sectarianism.

All arts and sciences have their idols, as Lord Bacon well remarks. Though the age of idolatry is nearly at an end, the one great idol which continues to command homage from Orientalists, as well as labourers in other fields of knowledge, is the chronology of the Old Testament. All logic has been sacrificed at the altar of this deity. When geology has now clearly demonstrated the existence of our earth alone for millions and millions of years; when the existence of submerged continents (say, Atlantis and Lemuria) is established on historical evidence; when even the theory of cycles would derive ample confirmation from the theory of the occasional disturbance in the inclination of the earth's axis, as the only possible explanation of the sudden changes on the face of the earth from Pole to Pole; and, lastly, when the Old Testament itself is shown to be a dead-letter rendering of the Hebrew Kabala and the Assyrian and Babylonian tiles and tablets — when all this has been proven and acknowledged, there remains no reason whatever to regard as mere fictions of primitive fancy books which declare our earth to be as old as time, and put forth the theory of cyclic *Kalpas*, *Yugas* and *Pralayas*. Again, when eminent anthropologists are inclined to admit the existence of Miocene and even Eocene man, besides utterly repudiating the theory of simian descent, and when Astronomy too has almost all its great names, from Copernicus to Flammarion, in favour of the plurality of inhabited worlds, there appears, indeed, little justification for one who would flippantly hold up to ridicule records showing man to be the descendant of his ancestral prototypes or *Pitris* in other planets, and making his development and progress greatly dependent on sidereal influences. But apart from these considerations, even internal evidence

does not justify the conclusion that the *Vedas* and *Puranas* are mere fairy tales conceived for the amusement of primitive human beings. The advanced condition of society and civilization described in several important and well-known passages, the highly metaphysical tone of various hymns, are all strong arguments against any such inference. It hardly stands to reason that men who, by the very nature of the circumstances, are not allowed to be Huxleys, Hæckels, or Spencers, can be Shakespeares, Wordsworths, nay even Kants and Berkeleys! If the *Suktas* of the *Veda* cannot be shown to be hallucinations of wild imagination, the *Puranas*, which are assumed to be compositions of an entirely modern period, can hardly be such. The gross imagery of myths and fictions is neither the result of a disease of language nor of the love of exaggeration. Dr. Goldstucker has already opposed his powerful influence to this mode of giving preference to the fictions of modern imagination over the real interpretations of Vyasa, Sayana, and other ancients. It is simply ridiculous to put forth seriously that the great Vyasa so far misunderstood the import of the Vedic Vishnu and his Trivikrama¹ as to fabricate, in his puerile love of exaggeration, an ugly dwarf actually trampling the demon Bali under his tiny foot. Instances of this kind may be multiplied without number, but the one before us is sufficiently illustrative of the current method of explaining difficulties. All this is the result of our having credulously accepted the dead letter of Old Testament chronology, with its natural corollary that the present must be, and is, the first humanity and the first real civilization with which our earth has ever been blessed.

That erudite labours extending over more than a century show such absurd conclusions is due to the inadequate method adopted, and to the prejudices and preconceptions which are allowed to sway learned opinion.

¹ As the *Puranic* myths may be unfamiliar to many of our readers, we have thought it advisable to add one or two notes of explanation. The story of Vishnu and his *Trivikrama*, or "three strides," and the "demon" Bali runs as follows. The "demon" Bali, curiously enough, is said to have been an exceedingly good and virtuous Daitya King, who defeated Indra, humbled the Gods and extended his sovereignty over the three worlds, by his *devotion and penance*. In fact he was a pious and holy ascetic, like many other "demons" in the *Puranas*, for the Asuras, as *The Secret Doctrine* has already explained at length, are divine Egos, *fallen* into matter or incarnated in human forms, the Christian myth of the "Fallen Angels" having the same significance. Accordingly the Gods appealed to Vishnu for protection, and the Deity manifested himself in the Dwarf Avatara in order to restrain Bali. Thus he approached Bali and craved the boon of three steps of ground. Bali at once granted his request, and the God stepped over heaven and the upper earth (air) in two strides; but in consideration of Bali's goodness, he stopped short and left to him Patala, esoterically the earth. (See *The Secret Doctrine* I. 112.)

I hold that the *Vedas* are the historical record of a past humanity, containing many useful hints and lessons for our use; that the *Upanishads* are the key to the understanding of these records; and the *Puranas* are the broad, clear light by which to read and decipher the *Vedas*. Orientalists have not found it easy to demonstrate their theories, nor is language always a certain proof that the principal *Upanishads* are subsequent to the hymns of the *Vedas*, and that the *Puranas* are mere fictions of modern priestcraft. If it can be shown that the *Puranas* are but easy commentaries on the *Vedas*, and that the *Vedas*, in their turn, are not the first expression of primitive thought, all our present theories on the subject-matter of either must undergo radical changes. We should not be averse to change where conservatism can be maintained only at the sacrifice of truth. I have unfortunately very little time to substantiate the above statements in detail, but I hope to lay before you certain facts which may form the possible data of at least a consistent hypothesis.

It is, however, not possible just now to place before you all points of importance in the *Upanishad* literature, and to read the *Vedic Suktas* and the *Pauranika Kathas* according to them. In order to illustrate the force and meaning of the argument, I shall adduce only a few of the many remarkable instances. Let us begin with the history of creation as given in the *Puranas*. The universe or cosmos in that undifferentiated condition which cannot be described in words, and which is beyond even the ether or protyle of modern science, is described in the *Upanishads* by the significant term *Sat*, *Esse*, further explained as *avyakrita*, that which is not differentiated or defined, and *Brahma*, that which comprehends All. *Brahma* is assumed to be self-conscious, and is therefore called *Purusha*, the sacrifice of whose members is symbolic of creation or evolution. The *Vedic Purusha* is the *Upanishadic Sat*, called *Nara* in the *Puranas*. *Nara* is a synonym of *Purusha*. This explanation will help us to the true meaning of many a *Pauranika* "fairy-tale" connected with *Nara*. When the indescribable *Nara* begins to assume some definite form — when, in fact, without as yet being perfectly differentiated, it becomes a tangible something co-extensive with space — it is called *Nara*, that which is born of *Nara*. *Nara* means water according to *Manu*, and water is, no doubt, the most convenient and suggestive symbol of the all-pervading but undifferentiated cosmic substance. The original *Nara* having evolved *Nara* out of itself, becomes *Narayana*, the one lying in the waters, in fact, over them.

The original *Nara* is the *Narayana* in its manifest aspect, and is the first manifestation of cosmic energy. *Narayana* has for his support or

couch a serpent under the waters. The serpent, in this case, is a very significant symbol, as will appear from the names *Shesha*² and *Ananta* given to it. The word *Shesha* means remainder, and has reference to the fact that evolution in every new *Kalpa* proceeds from the *Shesha* or residua of the preceding *Kalpa* — a fact having its exact parallel in the seeds, birds, and animals of Noah's ark at the Deluge. The name *Shesha* alludes to a period of time; *Ananta* alludes to eternity. *Ananta* means the endless, and endless time represented by a circle is fitly symbolized by the coil of a serpent biting his own tail. Hence undifferentiated cosmic matter beginning to differentiate into form, from the residua of a previous *Kalpa*, or from the dark womb of eternity, is symbolized by *Narayana* brooding over the waters (*Nara*), on his couch of the *Shesha* or *Ananta*.

As the serpent is a symbol of eternity, so is the lotus of self-generation, in almost every ancient religion. Evolution always proceeds by differentiation, called *Vach* in the *Veda*, and *Shabda* in the *Upanishad*, and corresponding to the *Verbum* or *Logos* of the New Testament. That this differentiation is spontaneous is hinted at in several places in the *Upanishads*, and indeed clearly by Shankara in his *Bhashya* on the *Sutra*, *Ikshaternashabdham*. Thus, therefore, the lotus springing from the navel of *Narayana* with the self-existent *Svayambhu* on it, symbolizes the visible cosmos spontaneously emanating from the indistinctness of spatial extension. This *Svayambhu* is called *Hiranyagarbha* as well. *Hiranyagarbha* means the golden foetus or the golden egg, which again is an appropriate symbol of the mysterious process of double emanation of matter and spirit or body and life, from a formless, and if you like lifeless, something within. Again, *Hiranyagarbha* is but another name of what is called *Sutratma* in the *Upanishads*. *Sutratma* is that latent life which runs like a thread of gold through the entire cosmos, in its ethereal or airy, the subtlest form (*Linga-deha*). *Hiranyagarbha*, therefore, is, in the *Puranas*, a symbol of the first manifestation of life. When this

² *Shesha* is represented as a serpent with a thousand heads, which is said to be the couch and canopy of *Vishnu*, when he sleeps during his intervals of creation. Sometimes *Shesha* is shown as the supporter of the world and sometimes as the upholder of the seven *Patalas* (hells, earths, etc.). Whenever he yawns, there are earthquakes. At the end of the *Kalpa* he vomits forth fire and so destroys all the creation. At the Churning of the Ocean (of Space), *Shesha* was twisted round the Mountain *Mandara*, and used as a great rope to cause it to revolve. The Gods were at the one end of the rope and the Demons at the other. The hood of *Shesha*, the thousand-headed cobra, is called the "Island of Jewels," and his palace is said to be "jewel-walled." But these gems are not of the earth, as the merest tyro in symbology will at once perceive; they are the Jewels of Wisdom and Self-knowledge.

cosmic life differentiates into many forms, by the corresponding differentiation of its material counterpart, the *Svayambhu-Hiranyagarbha* becomes *Prajapati*, the actual lord of beings, the creator proper. This *Prajapati* is the symbolic father of the various *Kumaras* and *Manus*, the progenitors of man. But of this hereafter.

Prajapati is called *Brahma* as well. Now *Brahman* (neuter) is the great noumenon, and is the source or support of all phenomena. Hence *Brahma*, the unmanifest neutral noumenon, becomes, when differentiated into form, the manifest personal *Brahma*. But we must not forget that *Brahman* (neuter) is also a name of the *Veda* and that deity which is the symbol of the visible cosmos naturally becomes the father of all secret knowledge (*Veda*). *Vach*, the original differentiation, is identified with *Brahma*, the first Logos, from its other meaning referring to the *Veda*. As the *Vedas* are four in number, so has *Brahma* four faces; but there is, indeed, a reason well known to the *Tantrikas* for this conception. Why the first Logos is four-faced, why in fact it represents a square, is easily understood when we remember that the square is the sign of material perfection. And cosmic evolution has, with *Brahma*, reached the point of perfection, material perfection, at any rate.

We may here enter upon a short digression. *Vach* is synonymous with the *Veda*, and is the ineffable name revealed to the initiate through the *Veda* and the *Upanishads*, as the source of all knowledge and power. If *Brahma*, the symbolic father of *Vedic* lore, is shown in love with his symbolic daughter *Vach*, or the supreme mystery of which the cosmos is the most invincible and visible proof, the myth presents nothing of that phallic element which many are inclined to see in it. That *Brahma* being guilty of incest, in this symbolic sense, should lose his share of sacrifice (*Yajna*) is quite plain and natural, after this explanation; for formalities and dead-letter worship have nothing whatever to do with real esoteric knowledge (*Jnana*).

That *Brahma* is an emblem of the manifest cosmos is borne out by yet another statement in the *Puranas*. The periods of cosmic activity and rest are described as the days and nights of *Brahma*. Each of them is called a *Kalpa*, during which fourteen *Manus* are said to succeed one another. The period from *Manu* to *Manu* is called a *Manvantara*; *Manu* means that which has *Manas*, the mind. To determine the place of the mind or the thinking faculty in cosmic evolution, will involve much detail foreign to the present inquiry. It is enough to understand that *Manu* means beings endowed with mind; and we know that that

being in whom the mind enjoys equal sway with matter is none other than man. *Manu* is, therefore, a symbol of humanity in general. *Brahma* as *Prajapati* is his father. When the *Puranas*, with their theory of cycles, speak of several Manus and several humanities as having preceded the present one, they need not be regarded as declaring anything different from those researches of geology which demonstrate the existence of submerged continents, and their respective humanities with their corresponding civilizations. And if, again, they derive man from *Manus* and *Pitris*, and thus repudiate the theory of simian descent, notwithstanding their clear acceptance of the theory of filiation, by the perhaps more logical theory of reincarnation, they are not quite without support from eminent anthropologists, who regard the species "homo" as *sui generis*, and therefore entirely independent.

—MANILAL N. DVIVEDI, F.T.S.

(*To be concluded*)

HISTORY teems with examples of the foundation of sects, churches and parties by persons who, like ourselves, have launched new ideas. Let those who would be apostles and write infallible revelations do so; we have no new church but only an old truth to commend to the world. Ours is no such ambition. On the contrary, we set our faces like flint against any such misuse of our Society. If we can only set a good example and stimulate to a better way of living, it is enough. Man's best guide, religious, moral and philosophical, is his own inner, divine sense. Instead of clinging to the skirts of any leader in passive inertia he should lean upon that better self — his own prophet, apostle, priest, king and saviour. No matter what his religion, he will find within his own nature the holiest of temples, the divinest of revelations.

—*The Theosophist*, March 1881

FOR EVER FRESH, THOSE VERNAL BLOOMS!

LETTER 6

DEAR VIJAY,

What grand news, all the more so for being totally unexpected! I never dared hope you could escape from your manifold responsibilities to make the three days' journey to see me, and that for three more I should have you as my dear and welcome guest. What talks to look forward to, what sharing of old memories — and old jokes! But you must not feel tied to me for every moment of the day. This is a holiday which I am sure you need badly. You must take some of our beautiful mountain walks and sit and meditate now and then by the waterfalls. Your company will be so much more a joy to me if you get some personal pleasure and refreshment from your stay, though it warms my heart that you should say you would go twice as far for the sake of what you call "a good flow of talk" with your old (and alas, now sadly house-bound) friend.

But I have enjoyed our exchange of letters. Our talks will be all the better for having been led up to thus. We know our minds are in wondrous close accord, don't we? — which was not always the case at college. I recall some keen arguments when we really sharpened our young wits upon each other! But it is a different matter now that we are come to "the eternal verities." We are pursuing truth together, not trying to score a point. Let us try, while we have the opportunity, mutually to clarify what may still seem obscure to us, and also, since we are, I hope, among "those who desire to enter into the work itself for the good of humanity," let us try to turn our talks to good account by making us more able to explain Theosophy clearly to any who may inquire of us in future, since, as Mr. Judge says, "a weak reasoner or an apparently credulous believer has not much weight with others." He reminds us sharply that merely "to babble out words does not help on the evolution of humanity."

By this time, I dare hope, we have both made tolerable progress in the effort to "divest ourselves of the illusions of the material life," and both, I trust, believe firmly that "the results to be reached by following the doctrines of Theosophy, relating, as they do, to our real life, will be as definite, as visible, as important as any that science can point to" in the realm of physics. We believe also that impatience is foolish and that "for the present it is enough for the student to study the path

to devotion, which, when found, will lead to that belonging to knowledge." We are not so unwise, or so over-confident, as to expect to be favoured with sudden illumination or revelation, still less with strange astral happenings such as "the sudden ringing of distant fairylike bells."

No, Mr. Judge has taught us better. He has warned us that on that "path of devotion" we shall be slow, plodding pilgrims for a while, often discouraged "in consequence of the calls of the senses, hereditary defects, and wrong habits that never permit us to do as much as we would wish to do." None the less he gives us cheer, using once again his favourite illustration of archery. The archer has found out "that the bow often seems to alter with the weather or other earthly changes, and will on some days do much better work than on others. The same thing is found by the observing theosophist, who comes to know that he too is subject from time to time to changes in his nature which enable him to accomplish more and to be nearer the spiritual condition. But the string of the bow must always be strung tight; and this, in spiritual archery, is the fixed determination to strive always for the goal."

I am glad to hear that you have at last got a copy of *Vernal Blooms*, though you say that, so far, you have only had time to turn over the pages generally. I gather you were looking for some practices likely to be helpful in your theosophic life, but Mr. Judge is not given to "listing" these so that they catch the eye readily. But if you bring the book here with you and read it slowly you will find it abounds in sage, helpful suggestions. Let me draw your attention to two. The first is definitely a guide to the inner life: "Put yourself at once in line with the Divine ways, in harmony with the Divine laws. More light, more wisdom, more spirituality must necessarily come to one thus prepared, thus expectant." The other is a brief and perfect rule for outward conduct: "Fulfil faithfully and conscientiously every known duty." But, as I have said already, one does not merely *read*, or even study, W.Q.J. One *associates* with him — through the printed word, it is true — for the sake of osmosis. So doing, you will absorb something of his own qualities, but as the impress he makes on you will be in your innermost depths, "this change," as he says himself, speaking of spiritual progress generally, "it is very obvious, cannot come about at once nor in the course of years of effort." The watchword, therefore, friend, is Patience. It is the right one for all of us.

Still, even as we learn, we may serve others. What am I but the veriest tyro in Theosophy, yet you say my letters (could I but think

it!) have been helpful to you, which makes me deeply glad. In so far as they were a means of passing on to you the teachings of Mr. Judge, I am very ready, my dear Vijay, to believe that, but even so I only use them as an example in order to show you that from the very first, as we study and assimilate Theosophy, we can share its treasures with others, however feeble the hands with which we hold out the jewels.

Mr. Judge tells us that if we wish to be useful coterminously with our own progress, then in the first place “the ideas of Theosophy should be mastered, and once that is done it will be easy to express those in the simplest possible terms.” Surely we can all of us do as much? And what an infinitesimal repayment is it of the debt we owe H.P.B., who revived *Theosophia* — DIVINE WISDOM — in our era in spite of “unmerited slander, implacable malice, uninterrupted misunderstanding, constant work, and no worldly reward.” Let us remember how she strove “to seek out and educate a few who, appreciating the majesty of the Secret Science and devoted to ‘the great orphan Humanity,’ could carry on her work with zeal and wisdom,” so that a Society might be founded “whose efforts — however small itself might be — would inject into the thought of the day the ideas, the doctrines, the nomenclature of the Wisdom-Religion, so that when the next century should have seen its 75th year the new messenger coming again into the world would find the Society still at work, the ideas sown broadcast, the nomenclature ready to give expression and body to the immutable truth, and thus to make easy the task which for her since 1875 was so difficult and so encompassed with obstacles.”

Remembering all this, who could withhold the little meed of service it might lie within his power to give, and whose heart could fail to respond to the earnest hope of Mr. Judge, who wrought with such devotion throughout his own too-brief life-span, “that at least a small nucleus of Universal Brotherhood may be formed before we of this generation are all dead”? It *was* formed — it grew — and he did not pass away without “a knowledge of the fact that by our unity the smallest effort made by us will have tenfold the power of any obstacle before us or any opposition offered by the world.”

Now, Vijay, I have indeed no more to say. And what need when you and I will meet so shortly? — you and I, my friend, the late-born lowliest followers of her who was the servant of the Masters. Deeply did she care for her co-worker William Quan Judge, and we have proved, have we not, how worthy he was of her regard? Thanks be for those

Vernal Blooms for ever fresh, thrice welcome in this age of spiritual aridity!

One last extract and I close. It is a dual quotation since W.Q.J. records it in recalling a personal talk with H.P.B. in London. Sitting before her writing desk, she said to him: "We are not working merely that people may call themselves *Theosophists*, but that the doctrines we cherish may affect and leaven the whole mind of this century. This alone can be accomplished by a small earnest band of workers, who work for no human reward, no earthly recognition, but who, supported and sustained by a belief in the Universal Brotherhood of which our Masters are a part, work steadily, faithfully, in understanding and putting forth for consideration the doctrines of life and duty that have come down to us from immemorial time."

That charge is laid now upon *us*. "Falter not!" is H.P.B.'s adjuration.

Until we meet — *Namastae!*

Your friend and fellow-student,

NARAHARI

EVERY mode of thought and of living may be called a rite gone over by each one as his conscious or unconscious religion.

—W. Q. JUDGE

PROSPECTUS OF "THE THEOSOPHIST"

[The first number of H.P.B.'s magazine, *The Theosophist*, appeared in October 1879, within less than a year after her arrival in India. Contributions were invited and obtained from writers of ability and repute on the various subjects afforded by Eastern philosophy and religion, and these, with H.P.B.'s own articles, soon made of the magazine a forum which attracted attention far and wide. We reprint here the Prospectus of this "monthly journal devoted to Science, Oriental Philosophy, History, Psychology, Literature and Art."—Eds.]

THE RAPID GROWTH of the Theosophical Society — a body which was organized at New York, United States of America, in 1875, to promote the study of universal arcane philosophy, and especially the secret sciences of Oriental nations — and the transfer of its executive offices to Bombay — render necessary the publication of the present journal. While the chief officers of the Society were in America, it was always easy to secure from an enterprising and attentive public press as wide a circulation as could be desired for anything of importance that they had to say. But in India the case is different; and six months of experience have shown that the best interests of the Society demand the publication of a journal of its own. Besides, the correspondence between the Executive and the Society's branches in various European countries, and with the Aryan, Buddhist, Parsi, and Jain scholars who take a deep interest in its work and are anxious to aid it, has so increased that, without such a journal as *The Theosophist*, it will be extremely difficult to keep the communication unbroken.

With no wish to undervalue the services which have been rendered to the world, during the past fifty years, by the eminent men who, through learned societies, and in their individual capacities as travellers, authors, professors, journalists and lecturers, have disclosed so much about ancient Eastern religion, philosophy, science, archaeology and philology, the Theosophical Society, nevertheless, believes that it has found a most important field of exploration hitherto unoccupied. It is that of the secret wisdom concealed under the popular and often repulsive myths of the nations of antiquity; the philosophical origin of much that is now considered as foolish superstitions; the key, in short, to all that appears upon the unattractive surface. One need only glance at the contradictory explanations of the wisest Western scholars as to the literature, inscriptions, monuments and traditions of the East, to per-

ceive that they have been misled by the dead letter of appearances and their inability to discover the hidden spirit which has been covered over — and so long lost, except from the sight of a few privileged souls. It is also evident that many of them have shown a disposition to disparage the knowledge of modern educated natives of their ancestral history and beliefs, and to belittle their capability to assist in the labours of science. The pandits and priests of India, Ceylon, China and other Eastern countries have been chilled by an assumption of haughty superiority, and, it is said, sometimes exasperated by the mistranslation and misconception of their most revered writings. The charge is also made that precious works entrusted to Western hands as a temporary loan have disappeared, or been mutilated, under the pretext of accident; and that, in alleged translations, vital passages have been deliberately suppressed through interested motives. One reason for the establishment of *The Theosophist* is that native Oriental scholars may have a channel through which they can claim from an enlightened age a just verdict upon the true merits of the religions, philosophies, sciences, and arts that their ancestors bequeathed to mankind. That there has been very little hearty co-operation between them and Western Orientalists should cause no surprise when it is remembered that they could not enter the society of many Europeans on those terms of equality to which they felt that their learning and dignity of ancestral lineage entitle them. When their help has been asked it has often been made to appear that they were receiving a favour rather than conferring one; and European professors, set over native pandits to instruct native youth in Sanskrit and the vernacular tongues, have not scrupled to affirm that Europeans alone were competent to explain the meaning of their authors. The organization of the Theosophical Society was a protest against this spirit, and the founders of the present journal declare their veneration for the ancient sages of all religions, and respect and brotherly affection for all their worthy modern representatives.

The key to what is mystical and baffling in ancient philosophy, mythology, psychology, and folklore, is in the possession of men of this class, who, being in sympathy with the objects of the Society, and some of them its Fellows, have intimated their willingness to reveal much that under ordinary conditions is inaccessible.

The Theosophist will abstain from all political discussion, such being entirely outside the limits of its plan. The social, mental and moral conditions of the present generation as compared with those of their ancestors offer, however, an ample field for intelligent criticism, and will

receive attention. The paper will always cordially support and ask European and American sympathy for every effort by the native governments, as well as European, to spread education, introduce useful arts, and better the condition of the native population. To this end, it will lay before its Eastern subscribers the latest news about important discoveries, improvements and inventions.

For a number of years different Governments have been searching for ancient manuscripts with which to enrich their national libraries and museums, and while many have been found, far more are believed to remain undiscovered.

A recent report of the Royal Asiatic Society, speaking of the collection of Hindu workers, observed that: "Many parts of the Dekkan, however, have up to this time remained completely unexplored, and still promise a plentiful harvest to future investigators; although, in many cases, *it will, no doubt, require the utmost care to overcome the suspicion and superstitions* of the Brahmanas. Of the Namburis in Malabar, for instance, a most interesting, though very retired and secluded class of Brahmanas, we know next to nothing; yet they are said to be staunch followers of the Vedic religion, *and to have in their possession a great many old Vedic MSS.*" These manuscripts are in the safe keeping of guardians whose fidelity to their trust is beyond the reach of temptation. But there is reason to hope and believe that, from time to time, translations and perhaps facsimiles of them will be given through the pages of this journal.

Among the Western fellows of the Theosophical Society who will contribute to these columns are eminent literary and scientific men, authors, journalists and professors fully competent to treat upon the topics above enumerated.

Among the Eastern, the names of the distinguished Swami, Dayanand Saraswati, Pandit, Founder of the Arya Samaj, and Supreme Chief of the Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj, our Vedic Branch; of the erudite High Priest of Adam's Peak, Ceylon, and President of the Sanskrit, Pali and Elu College of Colombo, the Rev. H. Sumangala; and the eminent Buddhist controversialist, the Rev. Mohattiwatte Gunananda (both Counsellors of the Society); of the learned High Priest of Sylalinbarana Vihare, at Dodandua, the Rev. Piyaratana Tissa Terunanse; and others of distinction, indicate the very high order of Oriental Scholarship that will contribute to the instruction of the *Theosophist's* subscribers. Translations of important Sanskrit and Pali works,

hitherto beyond reach, will form a leading feature of the journal. The attempt of Swami Dayanand Saraswati to revive the pure monotheistic philosophy of the Aryans, and the plan and purposes of the Arya Samaj movement, will receive the attention they deserve; as will, also, the reformatory endeavours of the Brahma, Prarthana, and other Hindu Society, some of whose most respected leaders will, we hope, contribute.

The Theosophist will be a journal of not less than 20 pages; royal quarto size; double columns; printed in large, clear type, on the best English paper; and will appear at the beginning of every month. The subscription prices will be as follows: To subscribers in any part of India, Rs. 6 per annum; in Ceylon, Rs. 7; in the Straits Settlements, China, Japan, and Australia, Rs. 8; in Europe and the United States, Rs. 10. The above rates include postage. No name will be entered in the books or paper sent until the money is remitted; and the paper will be invariably discontinued at the expiration of the term subscribed for. Remittances should be made in Money-orders, Hundis, Bill cheques (or Treasury bills, if in registered letters), and made payable to the Proprietors of *The Theosophist*, 108 Girgaum Back Road, Bombay, India.

As few extra copies will be printed, persons who wish to secure a complete file should forward their subscriptions by the 15th of September at latest.

Correspondence (which may be in Hindi, Guzerati, Marathi, or in any modern European language) will be welcomed from any qualified person who is interested in the work of the journal, and, if suitable, will be carefully translated, edited and published.

HENRY S. OLCOTT,

President of the Theosophical Society

OFFICE OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,

108 GIRGAUM BACK ROAD,

BOMBAY, *July 1879*

AN OPTIMIST sees an opportunity in every difficulty; a pessimist sees a difficulty in every opportunity.

—ANONYMOUS

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The world is facing many problems today, one of the most harrowing of which is that of drugs. Increasing varieties of habit-forming drugs are consumed by more and more people in more and more countries. The United States was the first to be hit by the drug wave, and from there the evil has spread — especially among the teen-agers of most of the industrialized countries, and to a lesser extent throughout the rest of the world. Under the title "The World's Tragic Fix," a recent issue of *Réalités* examines reactions to the drug problem in various parts of the world, describes the properties and effects of the drugs concerned, and investigates suggestions for a cure.

The word "drug" has no precisely defined meaning. There are more than 500 products that are regularly used and can result in psychological escape or damage, notable among them being heroin; morphine derivatives; amphetamines, or stimulants; the hallucinatory, "psychedelic" drugs (mescaline, psilocybin and synthetic substances such as LSD 25); Indian hemp or cannabis derivatives (bhang, ganja, marijuana, hashish, etc.). Different drugs produce different effects and different hazards; but they all tend to lead to alienation and enslavement as they become a daily habit, and their impact upon a person's psychological makeup shows itself in an impairment of his consciousness, his alertness and lucidity.

The article outlines the research that is going on:

Research suggests that a high proportion of addicts had suffered from psychiatric troubles before they ever started taking drugs. From this it would seem to follow that certain kinds of individual are particularly vulnerable to these chemical substances. Though not everything is yet known about the impact of these drugs, they are clearly capable of precipitating and bringing to the surface in an acute form the latent mental instability and fragility of certain individuals. The real danger of marijuana and of the 500 other products consumed today for the same purpose lies in their capacity for launching a young man or woman into a vicious circle, whose probabilities are unpredictable and whose consequences may be impossible to avert. The difficulties confronting a young man trying to adapt his mind to the requirements of a highly industrialized technological society are conducive both to these sudden breakdowns and displays of instability, and to the increasingly widespread trends to "opt out" of society.

Marijuana, like all the other drugs and products which generate drunkenness, oblivion, dissociation, euphoria or feelings of escape, are sought after because they may seem to offer a cure for all this distress and anguish. In fact they only precipitate a condition which eventually becomes incurable.

When two teen-agers try smoking marijuana cigarettes, why does one of them abandon the experiment more or less immediately because he gets no fun out of it, while the other follows the inexorable process whereby step by step he becomes an addict? This is the heart of the problem of physiological and psychological predisposition to drugs. Some people are obviously more susceptible to drug addiction than others.

The effect of drugs on the body, and especially on the central nervous system, expresses itself through biochemical changes. These are still only imperfectly understood, and research is going on to try to define them more precisely. But it already seems likely that two human bodies may react with very different degrees of "receptivity" to the same drug.

On the other hand, more is known about psychological predisposition. Narcissistic types, particularly preoccupied with their own reactions and their own sensations, and ill-adjusted to their social group or family; people with an exceptionally emotional temperament; people prone to depression; individuals who arouse a certain mistrust in everyone else, who are sensitive about the impression they ought to produce, and sensitive to the setbacks or snubs (exaggerated out of all proportion) which they encounter — all these types of people run the risk of being attracted by the sense of refuge and tribal warmth symbolized by collective drug-taking. It is among these groups that the most serious accidents and consequences occur. . . .

As for the effects of the drugs themselves, a kind of "chemical intoxication" threatens the body and mind of the addict. It divorces him from the real world, kills his ambition, and leads him towards a kind of social suicide.

An analysis of the drug cult throughout the world shows the extreme difficulty of finding an effective answer to it. . . . The following question arises: is it necessary to resort to repressive measures, and, if so, where should one draw the line? Has society the right to prevent an individual from doing whatever he chooses with his body and mind, even if it may lead to his self-destruction? The answer is clearly affirmative. Even Baudelaire, the most famous of drug addicts, once said: "Imagine a society in which every citizen was intoxicated with hashish? What citizens!

What warriors! What lawmakers!"

There are, however, limitations to what can actually be achieved by repressive measures. For one thing, such measures may make adults feel that they are absolved from the distasteful duty of searching their consciences to discover the deep social causes of the drug phenomenon. Moreover, if our society continues to concentrate all its concern on teenagers' drugs and chooses to "forget" that favourite among several drugs used by adults — alcohol — the gulf between adults and teen-agers would simply be widened. Under the circumstances, it is suggested that

the best answer available at present is to give the young the fullest possible information, and keep them constantly informed of the very latest research. But the information must be communicated scientifically, objectively, through the kind of media and by the kind of personality that teen-agers feel able to trust.

Important as is the dissemination of information about these drugs, it is necessary to tackle the problem at its *root*. Nothing short of the known at one remove through second- and third-century Christian writers and reiterated by Theosophy can effect a cure of the ills, physical, mental and moral, which afflict the individual and the race.

A complete library of manuscripts which may shed new light on the beginnings of Christianity is being published for the first time under the supervision of an international team of scholars (*Unesco Features*, February 1971). The manuscripts belonged to a community of Gnostics, philosophers who studied and taught the Gnosis or spiritual knowledge and who flourished in the Middle East during the early centuries of the Christian era, on the fringe of the various established religions.

The manuscripts, consisting of 13 "codices" or volumes, were discovered at Nag Hammadi, 80 miles north-west of Luxor, in 1946. Up till now they have never been available as a complete set, and have been studied only partially. Scholars are taking keen interest in this important set of Gnostic writings, for, traditionally, Gnosticism has been known at one remove through second- and third-century Christian writers whose main concern was to expose Gnostics as heretics.

Unesco Features refers to the chance discovery of the manuscripts and the new insights they should provide into the Gnostic teachings:

The 13 beautifully-bound sets were found by chance by fellahen scraping earth on the site of an old cemetery. They were

in a large jar which apparently had been buried in a tomb. A flood of manuscripts spilled out. These were later sold for a very small sum but, unlike the Dead Sea scrolls which in many cases were peddled piecemeal, the Nag Hammadi manuscripts were taken to Cairo and split up into several lots. Eventually all of them found their way to the Coptic Museum, except for about 100 pages at present in the Jung Institute, in Zurich.

While it is hard to date the manuscripts, the leather bindings may help. Among scraps found in the bindings is part of a letter in Greek which may provide a clue as to when this particular volume was compiled.

The publication of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts is bound to stir up fresh controversies as to the role of Gnosticism as a religious and philosophical movement and its significance in the history of religions and of Christianity in particular. . . .

Some of the 50-odd treatises in the Nag Hammadi collection deal with esoteric and mystical ideas prevalent in early Christian times, while other texts are of non-Christian origin — compilations of thoughts found in Greek, Jewish and Oriental writings. Gnosticism flourished particularly in Syria, in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, the most celebrated Gnostic being Valentinus, leader of the Alexandrian School.

Certainly one of the most controversial texts is the Gospel of Thomas which has already been translated and published and purports to reveal secret sayings of Christ recorded by Thomas Didimus. Of the 114 sayings it contains, 40 are not accounted for in any other existing text.

The facsimile edition in eight volumes will appear over a period of two years. Priority will be given to the manuscripts which have not been published so far. The publishers are E. J. Brill of Leiden (Netherlands), who are also bringing out the five-volume English translation and a series of studies on Gnosticism by eminent scholars.

There are many hints in Theosophical literature as to who the Gnostics were. *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 389), for instance, contains this suggestive statement: "Each of the Gnostic sects was founded by an Initiate, while their tenets were based on the correct knowledge of the symbolism of every nation."

Concepts of matter have been fast changing. In an article, "Towards an Understanding of Antimatter," A. Logunov, Director of the Institute

of High Energy Physics of the U.S.S.R., writes:

One of the most remarkable achievements of nuclear physics in the 20th century has been the discovery of a special symmetry in nature, whereby each particle of matter has a sort of "double" called the antiparticle. It has the same mass and internal angular momentum, but opposite charges, electrical and otherwise. The existence of this symmetry in nature was originally indicated by P. Dirac in 1928.

The first antiparticle to be discovered was the positron, or anti-electron. It was detected in cosmic rays in 1932. Some twenty years later, antiprotons and antineutrons were discovered in high energy accelerators. Nobel prizes were awarded for this achievement. . . .

Alongside each and every chemical compound consisting of the atoms of an ordinary substance, there may exist an analogous chemical compound built of atoms of antimatter. In other words, contemporary scientific thought admits that there may be sectors of the Universe composed of antimatter. They differ from ordinary matter only in that the "anti-atoms have a positron, instead of an electron envelope, and corresponding antinuclei instead of the usual atomic nuclei.

A characteristic result of the interaction between particles and antiparticles is that in the event of collision they "annihilate" each other, to use the technical term, being converted into particles of less mass with a considerable release of energy. . . . Since considerable energy is released by the annihilation process, a mixture of matter and antimatter is the "ideal" fuel with the absolute maximum, possible, calorific value, approximately a thousand times greater than that of the fuel released by atomic fission. Because of the enormous energy release during the annihilation of antimatter, astrophysicists have not infrequently been attracted by the theory that there are "antiworlds" (*i.e.*, sectors consisting of antimatter) in the Universe. It would account for many powerful and as yet unexplained sources of cosmic radiation. . . .

The presence of antimatter may be of paramount importance in understanding the workings and evolution of the Universe. Moreover, according to current thought, the properties of particles and antiparticles are closely connected with the symmetry of space and time. From the study of the relative properties of particles and antiparticles, it may be possible to obtain fundamental information about the nature of the interaction of the particles in space and time.

H.P.B.'s statement that "each atom has seven planes of being or existence . . . and each plane is governed by its specific laws of evolution and absorption" (*S.D.*, I. 150) perhaps provides a hint for the understanding of the foregoing.

An article by Robert Rawitch printed in *The Sunday Standard* of February 28, by arrangement with the *Los Angeles Times*, describes a unique prison where inmates learn responsibility. The community-living programme of the minimum security units of the Tehachapi State Prison in California has brought to it world-wide attention. Conditions in this prison are described thus:

The round-the-clock guards have been removed from two minimum security dormitory-like housing units, saving taxpayers Rs. 750,000 annually. Inmates have been given the responsibility of running their own lives and solving most of their own problems while undergoing what they call "resocialization" ("rehabilitation" is now a nasty word among inmates) before entering the outside world.

Inmates must express a desire to enter one of the two special housing units. Then prison officials must determine that the man is not a security risk and that he has a chance of successfully living within this radically different prison life-style.

The concept was instituted by the prison superintendent, G. Perry Lloyd, considered by many to be one of the most progressive penologists in the country. "Community living gives a man as much responsibility for much of his own behaviour as we possibly can give him," explains Lloyd. "The worst thing that happens to a guy when he comes into prison is that he doesn't have to make decisions. A bell rings and he has to get up and go to breakfast, or be here or there at a certain time. We've tried to strip all that away in community living."

There's no guard looking over their shoulders or prodding them to clean up their room, get a hair-cut, get to work on time or go to sleep at a certain hour. And there's no presumably impartial guard to settle their differences of opinion, such as what programme to watch on television, what to do with a man playing a radio too loud at night or leaving the lights on into the wee hours of the morning. All such decisions are made by the inmates themselves, usually by a vote of those present or involved in the dispute.

But beyond just attempting to make serving time easier on inmates, the real goal of the programme is to make prison life a little more like society and therefore reduce the chances of the paroles coming into conflict with the outside world.

By placing together men who have common problems it is hoped they will learn from one another's mistakes, overcome feelings of inadequacy, obtain a positive image of themselves and learn to relate better to other people, Lloyd explains.

Prison officials keep no statistics on the success rate of paroles who come from the community-living project at Tehachapi. But Lloyd and inmates involved in the programme—who stay in touch with their old buddies—definitely feel most of the men are keeping out of trouble after their release. . . . No one can remember a fist fight in Willard Hall in more than a year and escapes are extremely rare. . . . Inmates are urged to complete their education through the high school level and are trained in vocations. . . .

In June, 1967, following the appearance at the prison of a group of teenagers singing patriotic songs, the men in Willard Hall formed their own sing out group. In the last two years, the group has been outside of the prison frequently, performing before college audiences, other inmates, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and the Parole Advisory Council Convention at the Disneyland hotel.

The success of such a programme shows that criminals cannot be terrorized into good behaviour. Harsh treatment often brings out the worst in a human being; even men who have not been violent to begin with have become so as a result of the inhuman treatment meted out to them in old-style prisons. What prisoners need above all is to be resocialized and readjusted to the normal people in society.
