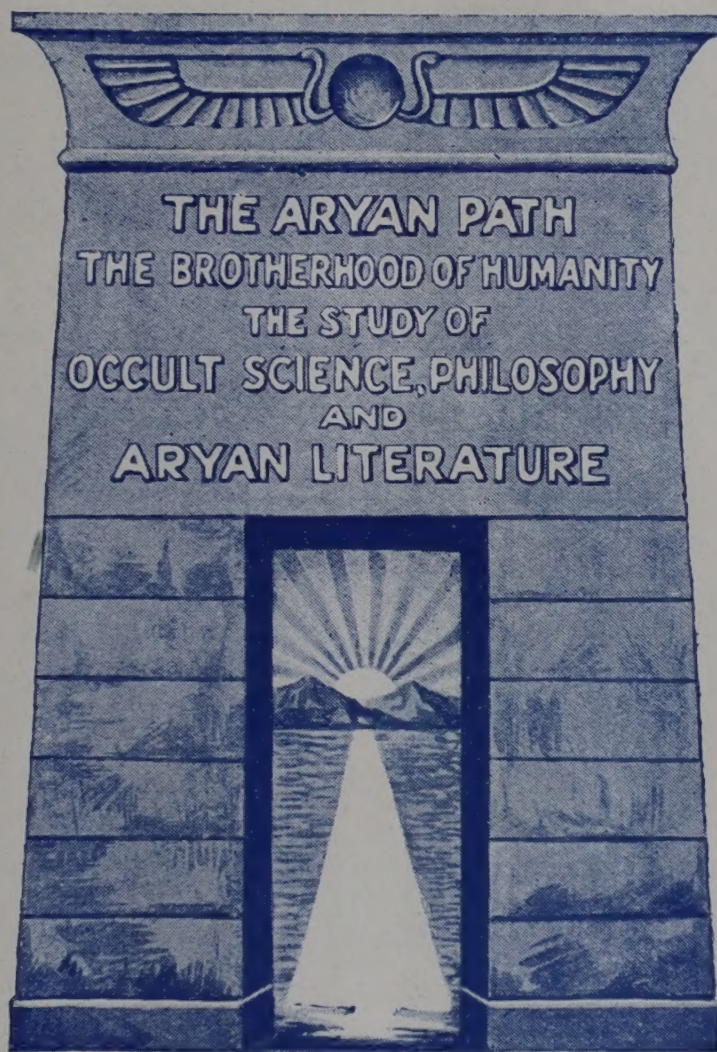




# THE OSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO



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Vol. XXIV No. 10

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August 17, 1954

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When a man hath put all desires for himself away from his heart; when he hath ceased to expect and demand save that is freely given; when he hath ceased suspicions and complaints, as well as refutation of any criticism given of himself: he then comes to know the principles of harmony in his own soul, from which there runs to all an accord and a symphony. Others may not hear; but he has concern only that the right word be spoken by him. Others may not feel in response to the generous love that thrills his own soul; others may not see the signs of one who is free from desire and anger and self-defense; but his clear unfaltering purpose will bless them none the less; his steadfast benevolence, though it chafe the worser part of them, will some day stir their better part, and a better course be taken for that his true life gave assurance of it.

—DHAN GARGYA



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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;
- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।



*There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth*

BOMBAY, 17th August 1954.

VOL. XXIV. No. 10

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AUM

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

BOMBAY, 17th August 1954.

VOL. XXIV. No. 10

## “ACCEPT THE WOES OF BIRTH”

Where there is no struggle, there is no merit.—*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 95

Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death is the future of all that vegetates without a change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage? Is it not those only who have learnt the deceptive value of earthly hopes and the illusive allurements of external nature who are destined to solve the great problems of life, pain and death?

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 475

If the above statements are taken in a literal sense we must all rejoice that the ghastly suffering, of body and mind, which is universal will soon bring to birth a meritorious humanity. But that is a vain hope. It is a recognized fact that mankind has been suffering in body and in mind. And at present the accumulation of causes has precipitated a variety of sufferings, the worst of which is the fear and worry of insecurity. And yet only a very few trace suffering to its roots—selfishness, rivalry, greed and egotism. Only a microscopic minority acknowledge that earthly hopes are deceptive and that external nature is illusive and alluring. Frustration of earthly hopes often strengthens the longing for triumph in sensuous living; people yearn to obtain the objects of sense by hook or by crook.

Men and women pass through the experience of suffering without learning its lessons. Illusion and allurements of sensuous living are not abandoned by the worldly wise; they chase with zest the glamour and the fascination of lust and wrath and greed. Some are even prepared to pay the price in suffering. Only when suffering becomes unbearable and drowning it in intoxication fails, people wake up and ask—Why pain? How to overcome it?

Thus a microscopic minority only enquire about the true meaning of their own pains, and probe the problem of evil in a universe which makes patent through its creativity rhythm and harmony

and beauty. Only a few ask why and how it is that in this world

Every prospect pleases  
And only man is vile.

Everywhere Nature is bountiful and beautiful. Every man aspires to reform himself; but most men are destructive and ugly, and know it not. In this cycle knowledge has advanced by leaps and bounds, but man's moral nature has remained a stagnant pond. Our civilization has made a virtue of selfishness and many of its most “successful” men have made an art of viciousness.

The Theosophical student acquires the knowledge of the 4 links in the golden chain and proceeds to learn numerous details of human and cosmic evolution. He comes upon and is even able to grasp with his mind the vital truth contained in the extracts, quoted above, from *The Secret Doctrine*. His earnestness and enthusiasm lead him to seek the ways and means of that moral and mental discipline which would enable him to break the fetters of sense life, of creedal-religious life, of communal-social life, of political party life, to withdraw as much as possible from the slums of society wherein flourishes intoxication born of desires. Very naturally he yearns to free himself from the corrupting influences of mundane existence and to rise so that he may secure the constructive



celestial forces which help to build health, wholeness, holiness.

Such a student-aspirant has learnt the *first* meaning of "the woes of birth" caused by "the steeping of the senses in the subtle essences of the sensuous world." But a new trial of understanding awaits him. That pertains to a correct comprehension of that aspect of the Law of Karma which affects the Personal man—his duties to himself, to others, to nature, to the great science-philosophy called the Esoteric Wisdom, and to the Adept-Instructors in that Wisdom. A conflict of duties, not encountered hitherto, bewilders him.

At this stage the "Aphorisms on Karma" need special study; they are a splendid gift of W. Q. Judge to the aspirant who wisely wishes to discipline himself. All the 31 Aphorisms (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 21*) are very practical; but especially, at this stage, Nos. 12, 13, 26 and 27 are applicable and will be found to be of great value. They provide instruction to destroy the tendency to sins of commission and avert the deadly harm coming from the sins of omission.

The persistent practice and right application of the Law of Karma-Action to our Dharma-Duties teaches us to view the Great Law from every side and on each occasion. Thus we spiral higher and learn the *second* implication of the injunction—"Accept the woes of birth."

During this period of Karma-Dharma experience, the feeling of Vairagya arises and the cultivation of "indifference to pleasure and to pain" takes place, so that illusion is conquered, truth alone perceived. A tendency to be scornful and even contemptuous of poor, deluded humanity arises like smoke which is mistaken for fire and the effort at developing righteousness degenerates into self-righteousness. Other similar expressions of the breakage of discipline occur, and often the aspirant is unconscious of it all. In breaking worldly conventions, in attempting to develop detachment, the student-aspirant fails to note that he has been strengthening his pride and his egotism and when the ill effects overtake him he feels a martyr and is deluded about his own "woes of birth."

Detaching himself from wholesome conventions

which communal, national and racial Karma has built up, the student-aspirant falls. He has not begun to live by and in the light of the Divine Thinker; fancying that he has come out from among the *hoi polloi* and is enjoying the good company of lofty souls, in reality he has become a little worse than good and mistakes the voice of his temptations for the voice of his conscience. When he wakes up to his degradation he has a hard fight with his fast-moving lower nature, freed of the curbs and the brakes of good social conventions and institutions. He had fancied himself a devotee while he was strengthening his self-esteem, self-regard and pride.

Repentance comes to his rescue. With tact and humility, in silence and secrecy he learns about the why, the what and the how of true repentance. Then he learns the *third* aspect of the injunction—"Accept the woes of birth."

In shouldering his self-created follies, in transmuting them to powers for good by Will-Thought-Feeling exercises, he develops generosity and impersonality; a child-heart, innocent but not ignorant; a more honest and more unselfish appraisal of friends and kin; a deliberate but silent endeavour to let go psychic cravings and mental desires; and, above all, a self-forgetfulness and Self-remembrance while doing his duty by every duty to all and to the whole.

Then only comes the knowledge of what the martyrdom of self-conscious existence is. Then only is felt the inwardness of these verses from *The Voice of the Silence* :—

The wheel of the Good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour. The hand of Karma guides the wheel; the revolutions mark the beatings of the karmic heart.

True knowledge is the flour, false learning is the husk. If thou would'st eat the bread of Wisdom, thy flour thou hast to knead with Amrita's clear waters. But if thou kneadest husks with Maya's dew, thou canst create but food for the black doves of death, the birds of birth, decay and sorrow. (p. 30)

Thou canst create this "day" thy chances for thy "morrow." In the "Great Journey," causes sown each hour bear each its harvest of effects, for rigid Justice rules the World. With mighty sweep of never erring action, it brings to mortals lives of weal or



woe, the karmic progeny of all our former thoughts and deeds.

Take then as much as merit hath in store for thee, O thou of patient heart. Be of good cheer and rest content with fate. Such is thy Karma, the Karma of the cycle of thy births, the destiny of those who, in their pain and sorrow, are born along with thee, rejoice and weep from life to life, chained to thy previous actions. (pp. 37-38)

Step out from sunlight into shade, to make more room for others. The tears that water the parched soil of pain and sorrow bring forth the blossoms and the fruits of Karmic retribution. Out of the furnace of man's life and its black smoke, winged flames arise, flames purified, that soaring onward, 'neath the Karmic eye, weave in the end the fabric glorified of the three vestures of the Path. (pp. 34-35)

Desire nothing. Chafe not at Karma, nor at Nature's changeless laws. But struggle only with the personal, the transitory, the evanescent and the perishable. (p. 15)

Sow kindly acts and thou shalt reap their fruition. Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin. (p. 33)

By meditation the mind learns and the heart sees the import and significance of these and like statements and in that protracted experience the devotee comes upon the wider track of the Karmic law. The interdependence of humanity is the cause of Distributive Karma and it is this law which affords the solution to the great question of collective suffering and its relief. At this stage the Devotee, on the path of probation and chelaship, learns the higher and the *fourth* meaning of—"Accept the woes of birth."

If thou would'st reap sweet peace and rest, Disciple, sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future harvests. Accept the woes of birth. (p. 34)

But the Path of Woe is not ended. The disciple is warned and tested, energized and

inspired—there is to be "Immolation," "mental woe unspeakable," "woe for the living dead," "Paranirvanic bliss," "boundless pity and compassion for the world of deluded mortals."

Know that the Bodhisattva who Liberation changes for Renunciation to don the miseries of "Secret Life," is called "thrice Honoured," O thou candidate for woe throughout the cycles. (p. 44)

So, the highest, the *fifth* aspect experienced by the Divine Master of Compassion, the Nirmanakaya, is glimpsed by the devoted disciple who, with head bowed in reverence, whispers—"Accept the woes of birth."

## THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CULTURE

The Report of the Indian Institute of Culture for 1953 has been issued. As each year, the Report presents a record of quiet, steady and in spirit and inspiration Theosophical, activity in the spreading of Culture, not only Indian; for the Institute is working for the recognition of the essential unity of all cultures. The Report includes an examination of world and Indian Cultural trends.

Participants in the Institute's activities have come from many countries, and its Branch in London at 62, Queen's Gardens, Lancaster Gate, W. 2, has done excellent work and won discerning recognition.

Students interested in the Report or in the work of the Institute should write to the Corresponding Secretary, Indian Institute of Culture, 6, North Public Square Road, Basavangudi, Bangalore 4.



## VINOBA BHAVE AND HIS MISSION

Shri Vinoba Bhave, who during recent years has risen to country-wide influence and international renown, seems to come under the definition of a Theosophist as given by Madame H. P. Blavatsky in October 1879 in the first issue of the first volume of her journal, *The Theosophist*:—

...once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought—Godward—he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth, with “an inspiration of his own” to solve the universal problems. (“What Are the Theosophists”: *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 22*, p. 5)

More people today pay tributes to Gandhiji and talk of his teachings than practise them consistently. Vinoba seems pre-eminently to be the inheritor of Gandhiji's spiritual tradition. He is striving to revive hope and confidence in Gandhiji's message. With his great erudition and utter simplicity, his faith and devotion, his humility and sincerity and, above all, his selflessness, Vinoba is a great exponent of Gandhiji's philosophy and a living exemplar of the way of life he showed. He holds out in his example and his programme the hope that Gandhiji's philosophy of truth, love and non-violence may greatly help to save the world from the curses of hatred, greed and war.

Unlike Gandhiji, Vinoba is a scholar—a veritable “treasury of knowledge,” to use Gandhiji's own words. His knowledge of languages is astounding. Besides his own language, which is Marathi, he has studied Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, English, French and over a dozen of the living languages of India. This enables him, during his tour of the villages, to convey his message directly to the people in their own language. His scholarly interests have also led him to study the scriptures of the important religions, especially Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam, Judaism, Taoism and Christianity. Besides this, Vinoba is an accurate student of history, and has a penetrating knowledge of the evolution of ideas and institutions in India and elsewhere.

The book which has inspired and guided Vinoba all through his life, as it did Gandhiji, is the

*Bhagavad-Gita*. To let him speak for himself:—

I have no words to explain the place the *Gita* occupies in my life... It has always given me peace of mind, energy and wisdom. Whenever I needed an incentive or the drive to do a thing, it came from the *Gita*.

He has translated the *Gita* into Marathi verse and about a quarter of a million copies of this translation have been sold. His *Gita Pravachan* (Discourses on the *Gita*) in Hindi is also proving very popular.

Like Gandhiji, Vinoba believes in the method of non-violence or love, not as a matter of expediency but as a creed. Therefore, when Gandhiji launched his movement of individual civil disobedience, in defence of the right of freedom of speech in protesting against the war in which India had been made a participant without being consulted, he named Vinoba as the first to offer *Satyagraha*. Introducing him to the public Gandhiji wrote at that time:—

He has never been in the limelight on the political platform. With many co-workers he believes that silent constructive work with civil disobedience in the background is far more effective than the already heavily crowded political platform. And he thoroughly believes that non-violent resistance is impossible without a heart-belief in and practice of constructive work. Vinoba is an out and out war resister... (*Harijan*, 23rd October 1940)

One of Vinoba's characteristics is continuous growth, and his programme of constructive work has grown with him. Though by nature a recluse who shrinks from publicity, by his deeds of selfless service and his devotion to the cause of *Daidranarayan*—the poor and down-trodden masses—Vinoba has captured the imagination of the country, especially of the peasantry, who look upon him as their saviour. To the millions of landless labourers of India his *Bhoodan* Movement for the “sacrificial giving of land” has brought a message of hope and the silent peasant revolution that is taking place in the real Gandhian way has vast implications. The underlying idea of the mission is that “every son of the soil, i.e.,



every man, must have a right and a claim on Mother Earth, in the same way as he has over air and water."

It was while touring Communist-ridden and strife-torn Hyderabad, more than three years ago, that Vinoba got the idea of the land-gifts mission. Since then he has come to the conclusion that the answer to Communism and class warfare in the villages is to be found through the non-violent change of the existing conditions in agriculture, by providing land for the landless, without State intervention or legislation. Walking from one to another of India's hundreds of thousands of villages, he appeals to every owner of land, rich or poor, to contribute his quota, on the basis of justice and brotherhood, asking of the rich man one-sixth of his holdings for redistribution to the landless. This procedure, he believes, will break through class lines and will bring sufficient land together to fill the needs of the landless, which he estimates at five acres per family, with the target for land collection set at 50 million acres by 1957.

Vinoba approaches the people for land gifts with love, humility and reasoning. "I have come to loot you with love," he says to those who have land. "If you have four sons, consider me as the fifth, and accordingly give me my share." He pleads with the owners of land that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and he makes it perfectly clear to them that their making a land gift does not imply benevolence; he considers his demand a just and rightful one on behalf of the poor. Not only does he ask for land from big landholders, but also requests small landholders to contribute their quota to this *yajna*, for his purpose is to create a change in everyone's heart.

Gandhiji in urging the trusteeship of wealth claimed that, whereas expropriation would yield only the capitalists' wealth, converting them to trusteeship would make available also their talents and abilities. But the trusteeship of wealth requires only the equitable sharing of the fruits of ownership. The Bhoodan Movement, it has been pointed out, goes further, involving a partial transfer of ownership itself.

Naturally, not all the land gifts mean a change

of heart. Human motives are often mixed and Shri M. V. Desai, who reported in *The Times of India* his Bhoodan tours with Shri Jayaprakash Narain and Shri Vinoba, suggested that some landlords had read aright the growing sentiment against large holdings and met it more than half-way; the desire for social prestige and the hope of acquiring religious merit were other motives; but he felt that the conviction seemed to be spreading that "there must be sufficiency for all before there is superfluity for some."

So far, over 33 lakh (3,300,000) acres of land have been donated. Though this is not sufficient for the purpose Vinoba has in view, still the response that he is receiving from all quarters to his movement, so unique in both conception and execution, is quite encouraging. Vinoba has an unflinching faith that his is the right method for rebuilding village life on the basis of economic and social justice and equality, and for rescuing the villagers from the ignorance, mental sloth and want of fellow-feeling which are the cause of much of the present degradation and misery. In his own words:—

I make a claim for the correctness of this work for three reasons. It is in tune with the cultural traditions of India. It contains in it the seed of economic and social revolution. And, lastly, it can help in the establishment of peace in the world.

Vinoba does not claim to solve the big land problem. What matters more is the method of working it out. Critics point out that it has not increased acreage or crops and that it leaves unsolved the problem of the fragmentation of land, not to mention the peasants' credit needs. But Vinoba sees in intensive small-scale farming with cottage industries the solution of the problems of insufficiency of food and unemployment. He has been quoted as

more worried about the fragmentation of hearts than the fragmentation of lands; fragmented land can be easily consolidated later with mutual good-will and co-operation, but the fragmentation of hearts owing to social and economic inequalities is full of dangerous possibilities in a State like India.

Equitable land distribution on the basis of adequate holdings and the cultivation of the land by the recipients and their families is a long step



towards solving at least the problem of the millions of landless labourers in predominantly agricultural India.

The *Bhoodan* Movement is essentially a moral movement, and its major contribution has been in creating the right psychological atmosphere in the country for the success of land-reform legislation and other progressive measures. The success which Vinoba has hitherto achieved bears witness to the power of an appeal to man's better nature. His demonstration points to the cultivation of the sense of brotherhood and fellow feeling as being necessary for the peaceful achievement of social and economic justice.

The *Bhoodan* Movement aims at purging men and women and through them, society, of all the faults which corrupt national life and constitute the most formidable stumbling-block to further progress—greed, egoistic pride, the sense of individual possession, exploitation of our fellow men, etc. People often do not understand the full significance of *Bhoodan* and ask why Vinoba does not bring pressure to bear on the Government to get the land redistributed through legislation, but instead wanders about on foot, inflicting discomfort on his frail body. To such as argue thus his answer is this:—

I should like to point out to these friends that the problem facing us does not admit of such an easy solution. The law will no doubt take away your surplus lands; but will it release you from the besetting bonds of attachment, sense of possession, egoistic pride, etc.? Can we enact and enforce a law that people should give up all pride, discard the feeling of superiority, take to a life of sacrifice and cast away greed? Could we achieve these things by means of a law? Surely these are things which one must do oneself of one's free will. I am wandering about on foot just because I want to enter in your hearts, to contact your inmost soul and to influence your will from within. I want you to purify your hearts... If you change in your heart and begin to distribute your land to your less fortunate brothers of your own free will, not as a miser does, but lovingly and generously as a father gives to his son, if you begin to serve them and share their joys and sorrows, all your present ills will melt away in no time and instead there will be the reign of peace and happiness.

Thus Vinoba's programme holds the hope of

hastening the day when "happily at last the just demands of the many are attended to," and when "the pitiful cry for bread, that rings throughout the world unheeded, has died away." (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 563) It is a world problem, and for its solution Vinoba has offered a revolutionary programme.

Shri Vinoba does not underestimate the possibilities of the *Bhoodan* Movement. He is trying, on the basis of *ahimsa*, to change first men's hearts, then their lives and then to transform the whole of society. He calls it a moral and spiritual movement for the regeneration of man and for the reorientation of social and economic values. The order is significant—and hopeful. He believes that it will usher in "an unprecedented and mighty revolution in our country." He has said:—

I firmly believe that India should be able to evolve, consistent with her ideals, a new type of revolution, based purely on love... and India might well show the way to a new era of freedom, love and happiness for the whole world. (*Bhoodan-Yajna*, p. 16)

Shri Vinoba is a great believer in manual labour. It is a matter for regret to him that the recognition of the dignity of labour has so largely been lost in present-day India, where most people regard the performer of manual labour as below others in social status. Vinoba is striving to do away with the idea that one type of work is superior to another. Every man who whole-heartedly serves society should receive an adequate wage. Everyone should get a full opportunity for development. Vinoba calls the realization of this ideal of social equity *Samya Yoga*. It differs radically from Communism in that it takes its stand upon the oneness of the Spirit in all.

Shri Vinoba wants a basic equality of living standards, but not their stabilization at a low level. His *Bhoodan* Movement has been well described as a higher form of Socialism, with an ethical penumbra. Its effects have sometimes been spectacular. In several villages like Magarauth in Uttar Pradesh, which Shri M. V. Desai has described, the landowners, large and small, have donated all their land. In Magarauth the land was redistributed, 72 families electing individual



farming projects, with much mutual help and large contributions of labour for community projects, while 32 families established a co-operative concern, appropriately called "the family," all working together and sharing the fruits of their common labour. Everything has been accomplished by village initiative, untouchability has withered away, and if the crop is good there will be no hunger for any, for the first time for many years.

Shri Vinoba is without political commitments. He is not even fighting Communism, but what hold will Communism with its appeal to violence have if the people's needs are non-violently met? The thirsty man, as Shri Vinoba has said, will prefer clean water to dirty. And Bhoodan Yajna's relatively greater effectiveness has been demonstrated. To the accompaniment of bloodshed and a reign of terror the Communists redistributed in Telengana District, in Hyderabad State, perhaps 30,000 acres (official estimates being much lower) in 30 months, where Shri Vinoba in his first 26 months of Bhoodan work collected 150,000 acres.

Vinoba urges the people to be free from attachment to wealth and material things, and to replace the idea of the private ownership of wealth by that of the trusteeship of wealth in the interest of society. He wants to make the rich realize that their interests and those of society are and should be identical. The Bhoodan campaign is but the beginning of this long and comprehensive programme. Vinoba has begun with land because that is fundamental to the rebuilding of India's economy, but he intends to widen the process and work it out in other fields. Already someone has suggested that the Bhoodan principle be applied to industry. And for a truly equitable economic order the members of the various professions also will have to come to look on their respective callings as first and foremost media of service to the community instead of primarily as opportunities for private gain. Meanwhile Vinoba told a group of foreign students at Gaya on August 8th, 1953, "If we can solve the problem in one village we can also solve the problem in the whole world, provided our approach is not narrow."

As a complement to Bhoodan work, Vinoba has recently launched another programme—the Sam-

*pattidan Yajna* (Sacrifice of Wealth) in order to do away with the inequalities of wealth and all the evils which arise therefrom. It differs vitally from other usual collections, in that it is not intended for creating a fund. The donor, after promising to give a certain share of his wealth, has himself to undertake to administer his gift. Each rich donor has to pledge himself to give at least a sixth of his income each year throughout his life. The provision that he is not to turn it over as a lump sum but to hold it in trust and use it as directed by Shri Vinoba or his designated agent, rendering an account of his trusteeship, should help to ensure the donor's continuing personal interest in the beneficiaries of this Movement, whom his gifts will help to establish on their newly acquired holdings, providing a well, implements or oxen as the need may indicate.

Vinoba is deliberately proceeding with this programme slowly, for it takes time to introduce in society a new way of life. He does not want the achievement in this respect to be measured in money, for that is not how one can measure a moral change. What is more important is the impingement of this idea on the minds of the people and the inner change which it works in them, albeit quite slowly. A psychological change like this cannot be brought about by war or violent revolution. "It can be brought about only by the methods of Buddha, Christ, Ramanuja and other great teachers," says Vinoba—in other words, by love and non-violence.

The *Bhoodan Yajna* is a step in the direction of *Sarvodaya* (the greatest good of *all*, not merely the greatest good of the greatest number). *Sarvodaya* is only another name for the Gandhian way. After the passing away of Gandhiji constructive workers from all parts of the country assembled at Sevagram and formed a loose sort of organization to be known as the *Sarvodaya Samaj*, with a view to changing the existing social order and evolving a society based on love, equality and the well-being of all, and free from exploitation, strife and conflict. It is for the establishment of this *Sarvodaya*, says Vinoba, that he is going from village to village. He realizes that its full implementation must await a greater and



more wide-spread awakening of the social conscience as well as greater individual growth towards the pattern of the whole man. The firm establishment of such a brotherhood *in actu* must be preceded by patient education of public opinion, we should say, by inculcating, as Madame Blavatsky puts it, "those higher and nobler conceptions of public and private duties which lie at the root of all spiritual and material improvement." (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 233)

Bhoodan may rest on faith in the essential goodness of man, but it may not end there. It gives the landlords the opportunity to act in a spirit of self-sacrifice and it abjures violence but there seems to be nothing in its platform to rule out later moral pressure on the recalcitrant through non-violent non-co-operation; nor does it exclude later land-reform legislation backed by public opinion. At present, however, Vinoba has no intention of relinquishing the control of his Bhoodan Movement to those not in sympathy with his ideals or who might make political capital out of land distribution. The Bhoodan Yajna Act passed in Uttar Pradesh, framed after consultation with him, provides for his nomination of a Bhoodan Committee to administer all donated lands and redistribute them. But when a Bill was introduced in the Bihar Legislature providing for the State Government to appoint the Bhoodan Yajna Committee he said that he would return the donations and leave the State rather than have a State Agency administer Bhoodan lands. He was too anxious for the villagers to develop their own initiative to leave the reconstruction work to the Government. The Bill failed to pass.

Yet Vinoba makes no claim to being a national leader, calling himself but a "humble devotee of God who regards the service of the poor as the way to the attainment of the highest goal of life." And as a true *Karma-Yogi*, he believes in performing every action sacramentally, dismissing all attachment to its results.

From one point of view the Bhoodan Movement offers an escape valve for a cumulative pressure

which the intuitive have sensed and which, denied such an outlet, would one day possibly explode with violence, causing terrible sufferings and perhaps wrecking society. From another, it has unleashed a force whose growing momentum cannot easily be checked and whose ultimate repercussions are incalculable. The conservative may read a disturbing meaning into his saying:—

The people are going to solve their problems, not I. I am simply creating an atmosphere...but when the atmosphere spreads somebody will ask—and somebody will give.

The fearful may think uneasily of the jinn which, once released from the bottle, rose to his full terrifying height, but the ethical basis of the Movement and India's traditional values hold the promise of the force not getting out of hand in its home-land at any rate. The Bhoodan appeal is accompanied by ethical discourses and Vinoba maintains that the non-violent method of the solution of the problem is far more important than the solution itself. The apprehensive, moreover, may draw some reassurance from Lincoln, who demanded:—

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world?

Shri Vinoba is not far from 60 years of age, but the number who are prepared to serve the Movement with a dedication similar to its founder's holds a great encouragement. Following the announcement by the Praja-Socialist Party leader, Shri Jayaprakash Narain, at the All-India Sarvodaya Sammelan on April 19th, 1954, of his wish to withdraw from "what is known as politics" after fulfilling his immediate political engagements, and to devote his life to constructive work and to the task of non-violent reconstruction of man and society of which Bhoodan is the immediate expression, nearly 500 persons offered to dedicate their lives to helping to bring about a non-violent revolution based on Bhoodan Yajna.

Shri Vinoba has dropped, from a considerable height, a heavy gold nugget into the still relatively quiet waters of the established order. How far the ripples may spread no man can say.



## THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

Prof. R. C. Zaehner's inaugural lecture as Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford, delivered early in November 1953 under the title "Foolishness to the Greeks," has since been published by the Oxford University Press as a pamphlet. It has been hailed in high quarters as brilliant but is not reassuring to those who had shared the hope of Mr. Spalding, the founder of the Chair, that this Professorship would help to bring the world's great religions into closer "understanding, harmony, and friendship."

For Professor Zaehner, in striking contrast to his predecessor, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, seems to be a square peg in a round hole. He apparently starts out with preconceptions fatal to the hope of finding points of agreement on which lasting mutual sympathy can be built, these pre-conceptions including the unflattering opinion that much of the interest in Oriental religions in England is "displayed by 'cranks.'"

He considers "the observed fact of human unhappiness to be the only common factor between the great religions," though he finds a similarity between Christian orthodoxy and non-Christian heterodoxies, testifying but to the strength of man's "craving for an incarnate God." That all religions lead to the same goal he flatly denies. Quoting the *Anugītā* he says that the following "is what the Hindus, in their large tolerance, genuinely believe and what all men of good-will would like to believe":—

With numerous, coherent symbols the same knowledge is rehearsed. All people, whatever their cult, station, or way of life, who are inwardly at peace, attain to the same truth, as rivers (flowing into) the sea.

Making the surface approach, to man as well as to religion, Professor Zaehner says that

though the Hindu is perfectly entitled to be scandalized at the folly of the Cross, we in our turn may justifiably gasp at the Hindu's wild assertion, "I am Brahman," and "What I am, that art thou": for this means nothing less than that I am the sole truly existing

reality, that you are the same, and that therefore I am you.

One wonders what he understands by the sentence which, he remarks in this context, "appears again and again in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads": "The gods love the obscure and hate the obvious." To what can it point but the existence of a hidden meaning behind the teachings publicly proclaimed? And may not that hidden meaning show the way to reconciling what seems contradictory between the religions in their dead-letter sense?

Part of Professor Zaehner's difficulty would be obviated by recognizing the dual nature of man and by differentiating between religions and religion *per se*, not as something non-rational, as he understands the religious impulse to be, but as something higher than the reasoning mind, the aspiration of the individual towards the Divine which he senses in himself as in Great Nature, and an ardent yearning to realize unity with all that is.

Professor Zaehner thinks that "it would be difficult to fall into more manifest error" than to regard all mystical experiences as identical, and to think "that mysticism must therefore be a *philosophia perennis* transcending all so-called revealed creeds." We would agree that not all mystical experiences are identical, but the highest mystical experience must necessarily be one. As a Japanese verse puts it:—

Though many paths there be  
To reach the mountain's height,  
All on ascending see  
The same Moon's light.

The testimony of the great philosopher-mystics of the West—Augustine, Plotinus, Eckhart, Susa—does not differ fundamentally from the mystical realization of Easterners, if one can read correctly between the lines of their attempts to give out in a comprehensible idiom their testimony to an overwhelming spiritual experience that by its very transcendent nature is essentially inexpressible.

Moreover, to hold as Professor Zaehner does that the mystical experience is possible only if God exists as a Person distinct from man is to



ignore the evidence for mysticism from Advaitins as well as from Buddhists. Advaita Vedantism does indeed recognize the non-separateness of God and Soul, but the acceptance of such unity as a philosophical proposition is not the realization of it to which the mystic may attain. The very concept of Non-Duality surely points to such realization having been attained by Shankara, the proponent of that doctrine, at least. And only if Nirvana is wrongly understood as annihilation can such realization be denied to the Buddha and his Arhats.

There is much in Professor Zaehner's lecture that will offend Hindus and Buddhists. For example, he dismisses even the possibility of Rama and Krishna having been historical characters, asserting as a fact "that they belong to the world of fantasy rather than to that of fact." The Hindu idea that "the phenomenal world is simply the *līlā* or sport of the deity and has no real existence in itself" is caricatured cleverly as the Red King's dream from *Alice in Wonderland*:—

"He's dreaming now," said Tweedledee: "and what do you think he's dreaming about?"

Alice said, "Nobody can guess that."

"Why, about *you*!" Tweedledee exclaimed, clapping his hands triumphantly. "And if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?"

"Where I am now, of course," said Alice.

"Not you!" Tweedledee retorted contemptuously. "You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream!"

"If that there king was to wake," added Tweedledum, "you'd go out—bang!—just like a candle!"

"I shouldn't!" Alice exclaimed indignantly. "Besides, if *I'm* only a sort of thing in his dream, what are *you*, I should like to know?"

"Ditto," said Tweedledum.

"Ditto, ditto!" cried Tweedledee.

The possibility seems not to have occurred to

Professor Zaehner that, from the purely metaphysical point of view, the Absolute can be recognized as the only Reality and everything in the universe as an illusion, and yet that, as H.P.B. wrote, "the experience of any plane is an actuality for the percipient being, whose consciousness is on that plane." (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 296)

The erudite Professor may be forgiven his persiflage at the expense of idealist philosophy more easily than the remark that Buddhism recommends compassion, "not as being intrinsically good but as being empirically efficient in ridding the mind of the erroneous idea of individual personality." This seems to betray an insensibility to the Great Sacrifice of the Enlightened One that must arouse pity in his followers, to whom his Compassion is an inspiration to reverent and humble emulation. As *The Voice of the Silence* puts it:—

Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of LAWS—eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting right, and fitness of all things, the law of Love eternal.

Madame H. P. Blavatsky enumerated in her first book, *Isis Unveiled*, (Volume II, p. 124) three basic principles on which, she said, "rested the universal foundation of every religious creed; God, and individual immortality for every man—if he could but win it," namely:—

- (1) Everything existing, exists from natural causes.
- (2) Virtue brings its own reward, and vice and sin their own punishment.
- (3) The state of man in this world is probationary.

We commend these and the three fundamental propositions of *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 14–17) to Professor Zaehner's open-minded research.



# FRAGMENTS OF OCCULT TRUTH

## APPENDIX TO "DEVACHAN"

[ In our July issue we reprinted Fragment No. VI on "Devachan." To that Fragment was appended an Appendix in the same number of *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, for March 1883. Below we reprint that Appendix which is in five parts and which appeared in that magazine at pp. 135 - 137—EDS. ]

### APPENDIX A

It may be worth the reader's while to learn what Colonel H. S. Olcott has to say in his Buddhist Catechism (14th Thousand) of the intrinsic difference between "individuality" and "personality." Since he wrote not only under the approval of the High Priest, but also under the direct instruction of his Guru (Spiritual Master), his words will have weight for the student of Occultism. This is what he says in his Appendix :—

"Upon reflection, I have substituted 'personality' for 'individuality' as written in the first edition. The successive appearances upon one or many earths, or 'descents into generation' of the *tanhaically*-coherent parts (Skandhas) of a certain being, are a succession of personalities. In each birth the *personality* differs from that of the previous or next succeeding birth. Karma, the *deus ex machina*, makes (or shall we say, reflects?) itself now in the personality of a sage, again as an artisan and so on throughout the string of births. But though personalities ever shift, the one line of life along which they are strung like beads runs unbroken.

"It is ever *that particular line*, never any other. It is therefore individual, an individual vital undulation which began in Nirvana or the subjective side of Nature as the light or heat undulation through ether began at its dynamic source; is careering through the objective side of Nature, under the impulse of *Karma* and the creative direction of *Tanha*; and tends through many cyclic changes back to Nirvana. Mr. Rhys Davids calls that which passes from personality to personality along the individual chain, 'character' or 'doing.' Since 'character' is not a mere metaphysical abstraction but the sum of one's mental qualities and moral propensities, would it not help to dispel what Mr.

Rhys Davids calls 'the desperate expedient of a mystery' [*Buddhism*, p. 101] if we regarded the life undulation as individuality and each of its series of natal manifestations as a separate personality? The perfected individual, Buddhistically speaking, is a Buddha, I should say: for a Buddha is but a rare flower of humanity, without the least supernatural admixture. And as countless generations ('Four Asankheyyas and a hundred thousand cycles.' Fausboll and Rhys Davids' *Buddhist Birth Stories*, p. 13) are required to develop a man into a Buddha, and *the iron will to become one runs throughout all the successive births*, what shall we call that which thus wills and perseveres? *Character?* or Individuality; an individuality but partly manifested in any *one* birth, but built up of fragments from all the births?

"The denial of 'soul' by Buddha (see *Sanyutto Nikaya*, the Sutta Pitaka) points to the prevalent delusive belief in an independent transmissible personality; an entity that could move from birth to birth unchanged, or go to a place or state where, as such perfect entity, it could eternally enjoy or suffer. And what he shows is that the 'I am I' consciousness is, as regards permanency logically impossible, since its elementary constituents constantly change, and the 'I' of one birth differs from the 'I' of every other birth. But everything that I have found in Buddhism accords with the theory of a gradual evolution of the perfect man, viz., a Buddha through numberless natal experiences. And in the consciousness of that person who at the end of the given chain of beings attains Buddha-hood, or who succeeds in attaining the fourth stage of Dhyana, or mystic self-development, in any one of his births anterior to the final one, the scenes of all these serial births are perceptible. In the Jatakattāhavannana, so well translated by Mr. Rhys Davids, an expression con-



tinually recurs which I think rather supports such an idea, viz.: 'Then the blessed one *made manifest an occurrence hidden by change of birth*,' or 'that which has been hidden by, &c.' Early Buddhism then, clearly held to a permanency of records in the Akasa, and the potential capacity of man to read the same when he has evolved to the stage of true individual ENLIGHTENMENT." (pp. 54-57.)

#### APPENDIX B

Having been asked:—"How then? Is there no change of occupation for souls in Devachan? Is one moment of earthly sensation only, selected for perpetuation?"—our MASTERS reply in the negative. No; *Devachan* is no monotonous condition, in which some one or even two or more moments of earthly sensations are indefinitely perpetuated—stretched so to say, throughout æons. For, this would be contrary to all analogies and antagonistic to the law of cause and effect under which results are proportioned to antecedent energies. There are two fields of causal manifestations—the objective and subjective. The grosser energies—those which operate in the denser condition of matter—manifest objectively in the next physical life, their outcome being the new personality of each birth marshaling within the grand cycle of the evolving individuality. It is but the moral and the spiritual activities that find their sphere of effects in *Devachan*. And the thought and the fancy being limitless, how can it be argued for one moment that there is anything like monotony in the state of *Devachan*? Few are the men whose lives were so utterly destitute of feeling, love, or of a more or less intense predilection for some one line of thought as to be made unfit for a proportionate period of *Devachanic* experience, beyond their earthly life. So, for instance, while the vices, physical and sensual attractions, say, of a great philosopher, but a bad friend and a selfish man, may result in the birth of a new and still greater intellect, but at the same time a most miserable man, reaping the *Karmic* effects of all the causes produced by the "old" being and whose make-up was inevitable from the preponderating proclivities of that being in the preceding birth, the inter-medial period between the two physical births

cannot be—in nature's exquisitely well adjusted laws—but a *hiatus* of unconsciousness. There can be no such dreary blank as kindly promised, or rather implied by Christian Protestant theology to the "departed souls," which, between death and "resurrection" have to hang on in space, in mental catalepsy awaiting the "Day of Judgment." Causes produced by mental and spiritual energy being far greater and more important than those that are created by physical impulses—their effects have to be—for weal or woe—proportionately as great. Lives on this earth or other earths, affording no proper field for such effects, and every labourer being entitled to his own harvest—they have to expand in—either *Devachan* or *Avitchi*.<sup>1</sup> Bacon, for instance, whom a poet called—

"The brightest, wisest, *meanest* of mankind"

—might reappear in his next incarnation as a greedy money-getter, with extraordinary intellectual capacities. But, however great the latter, they would find no proper field in which that particular line of thought pursued during his previous lifetime by the founder of modern philosophy could reap all its dues. It would be but the astute lawyer, the corrupt attorney-general, the ungrateful friend, and the dishonest Lord Chancellor who might find, led on by his Karma, a congenial new soil in the *body* of the money-lender, and reappear as a new Shylock. But where would Bacon, the incomparable thinker, with whom philosophical inquiry upon the most profound problems of nature was his "first and last, and only love," where would this "intellectual giant of his race"—once disrobed of his lower nature—go to? Have all the effects of that magnificent intellect to vanish and disappear? Certainly not. Thus his moral and spiritual qualities would also have to find a field in which their energies could expand themselves. *Devachan* is such a field. Hence—all the great plans of moral reform, of intellectual research into abstract principles of nature, all the divine, spiritual aspirations that had so filled the brightest part of his life, would, in *Devachan*, come to

<sup>1</sup> The lowest states of *Devachan* interchain with those of *Avitchi*.



fruition; and the abstract entity, known in the preceding birth as Francis Bacon, and that *may* be known in its subsequent reincarnation as a despised usurer—that Bacon's own creation, his Frankenstein, the son of his *Karma*—shall in the meanwhile occupy itself in this inner world, also of its own preparation, in enjoying the effects of the grand, beneficial, spiritual causes sown in life. It would live a purely and spiritually conscious existence—a dream of realistic vividness—until Karma being satisfied in that direction and the ripple of force reaching the edge of its sub-cyclic basin, the being should move into its next area of causes—either in this same world or another according to his stage of progression. . . . Therefore, there is “a change of occupation,” a continual change—in *Devachan*. For that dream-life is but the fruition, the harvest time of those psychic seed germs dropped from the tree of physical existence in our moment of dream and hope; fancy glimpses of bliss and happiness stifled in an ungrateful social soil, blooming in the rosy dawn of *Devachan*, and ripening under its ever fructifying sky. If man had but one single moment of ideal experience, not even then could it be, as erroneously supposed, the indefinite prolongation of that “single moment.” That one note struck from the lyre of life would form the key-note of the being's subjective state and work out into numberless harmonic tones and semi-tones of psychic phantasmagoria. There, all unrealized hopes, aspirations, dreams become fully realized, and the dreams of the objective become the realities of the subjective existence. And there, behind the curtain of *Maya* its vaporous and deceptive appearances are perceived by the INITIATE who has learned the great secret of how to penetrate thus deep into the ARCANUM OF BEING. . . .

#### APPENDIX C

Objectors of that kind will be simply postulating an incongruity: an intercourse of entities in *Devachan* which applies only to the mutual relationship of physical existence! Two sympathetic souls, both disembodied, will each work out its own Devachanic sensations, making the other a sharer in its subjective bliss. This will be as real to

them, naturally, as though both were yet on this earth. Nevertheless, each is dissociated from the other as regards personal or corporeal association. While the latter is the only of its kind that is recognized by our earth experience as an *actual* intercourse, for the *Devachanee* it would be not only something unreal but could have no existence for *it* in any sense, not even as a delusion: a physical body or even a *Mayavi-rupa* remaining to *its* spiritual senses as invisible as it is itself to the physical senses of those who loved it best on earth. Thus even though one of the “sharers” were alive and utterly unconscious of that intercourse in his waking state, still every dealing with him would be to the *Devachanee* an absolute *reality*. And what *actual* companionship could there ever be other than the purely idealistic as above described, between two *subjective* entities which are not even as material as that ethereal body-shadow—the *Mayavi-rupa*? To object to this on the ground that one is thus “cheated by nature” and to call it “a delusive sensation of enjoyment which has no reality” is to show oneself utterly unfit to comprehend the conditions of life and being outside of our material existence. For how can the same distinction be made in *Devachan*—*i.e.* outside of the conditions of earth-life between what we call a reality, and a factitious or an artificial counterfeit of the same, in this, our world? The same principle cannot apply to the two sets of conditions. Is it conceivable that what we call a reality in our embodied, physical state will exist under the same conditions as an actuality for a disembodied entity? On earth, man is dual—in the sense of being a thing of matter and a thing of spirit; hence the natural distinction made by his mind—the analyst of his physical sensations and his spiritual perceptions—between an actuality and a fiction: though, even in this life the two groups of faculties are constantly equilibrating each other, each group when dominant seeing as fiction or delusion what the other believes to be most real. But in *Devachan* our Ego has ceased to be dualistic, in the above sense, and become a spiritual, mental entity. That which was a fiction, a dream in life, and which had its being but in the region of “fancy” becomes under the new



conditions of existence—the only possible *reality*. Thus, for us, to postulate the possibility of any other reality for a *Devachanee* is to maintain an absurdity, a monstrous fallacy, and an idea unphilosophical to the last degree. The actual is that which is acted or performed *de facto*: “the reality of a thing is proved by its actuality.” And the suppositious and artificial having no possible existence in that *devachanic* state, the logical sequence is that everything in it is actual and real. For, again whether overshadowing the five principles during the life of the personality, or entirely separated from the grosser principles by the dissolution of the body, the sixth principle, or our “Spiritual Soul,” has no substance—it is ever *Arupa*; nor is it confined to one place with a limited horizon of perceptions around it. Therefore whether *in* or *out* of its mortal body, it is ever distinct, and free from its limitations; and if we call its *devachanic* experiences “a cheating of nature,” then we should never be allowed to call “reality” any of those abstract feelings that belong entirely to, and are reflected and assimilated by, our *higher* soul, such as an ideal perception of the beautiful, profound philanthropy, love, &c., as well as every other purely spiritual sensation that during life fills our inner being with either immense joy or pain.

#### APPENDIX D

“Devachan” is of course a *state*, not a locality, as much as “Avitchi”—its antithesis [which please do not confound with *Hell*]. Esoteric Buddhist philosophy has three principal *lokas* so-called—namely (1) *Kama loka*, (2) *Rupa-loka*, and (3) *Arupa loka*, or in their literal translation and meaning—[1] world of desires or passions, of unsatisfied earthly cravings—the abode of “Shells” and Victims, of elementaries and suicides; [2] the world of Forms, *i.e.*, of shadows more spiritual, having form and objectivity but no substance; and [3] the *formless* world, or rather the world of no-Form, the incorporeal, since its denizens can have neither body, shape, nor colour for us mortals, and in the sense that we give to these terms. These are the three spheres of ascending spirituality in which the several groups of sub-

jective and semi-subjective entities find their attractions. The time having not yet come to speak of the latter two, we will merely notice the first one, namely the *Kama-loka*. Thence it is, that all, but the remaining shells, the suicides and the victims of premature violent deaths, go according to their attractions and powers either into the *Devachanic* or the *Avitchi* state, which two states form the numberless sub-divisions of “Rupa” and “Arupa” *lokas*; that is to say that such states not only vary in degree, or in their presentation to the subject entity as regards form, colour, &c., but that there is an infinite scale of such states, in their progressive spirituality and intensity of feeling; from the lowest in the *Rupa*, up to the highest and the most exalted in the *Arupa-loka*. The student must bear in mind that *personality* is the synonym for limitation; and that the more selfish, the more contracted the person’s ideas, the closer will he cling to the lower spheres of being, the longer loiter on the plane of selfish social intercourse.

#### APPENDIX E

To use an antiphrasis—“Avitchi” is the state of the most *ideal spiritual* wickedness, something akin to the state of Lucifer, so superbly described by Milton. Not many though, are there who can reach it, as the thoughtful reader will perceive. And if it is urged that since there is *Devachan* for nearly all, for the good, the bad, and the indifferent, the ends of harmony and equilibrium are frustrated, and the law of Retribution and of impartial, implacable Justice hardly met and satisfied by such a comparative scarcity if not absence of its antithesis, then the answer will show *that it is not so*. “*Evil* is the dark son of Earth (matter) and *Good* the fair daughter of Heaven” (or Spirit) says the Chinese philosopher; hence the place of punishment for most of our sins is the Earth—its birth place and play-ground. There is more apparent and relative, than actual evil even on earth, and it is not given to the *hoi polloi* to reach the fatal grandeur and eminence of a “Satan” every day. See foot-notes in article “Death,” by Eliphas Levi (October *Theosophist*, Vol. III), the editorial answer to the article:



"Death and Immortality" (November *Theosophist*, p. 28) and the words used by the author, when speaking of those who are immortal in good by identification with God (or Good), and immortal in evil by identification with Satan (Evil). Although the general rule applies but to "Sorcerers," i.e., adepts in Black Magic, real Initiates and sons of Evil, generally known as "the Brothers of the Shadow," yet there are exceptions to that rule as to every other. Occasionally men reaching the apex of evil become "unconscious" sorcerers; they identify themselves with "Satan," and then *Avitchi* becomes their Fate. Happy they are when thereby they avoid a worse punishment—a *loka* from which indeed, no traveller—either returns or, once within its dark precincts—pursues his journey!

## IMPERSONALITY IN POETRY

The problem of personality can be studied from different view-points, but desiring a true and accurate analysis of it leads to its examination from the philosophical and religious standpoints. Beauty, which has special significance for an artist, is a universal force like Truth and Goodness. Is a great artist then personal? If not, why not and how not so? These are the interesting questions discussed in an article written by Mr. P. S. Sastri, "The Problem of Personality in Aesthetic Experience," which appears in *The Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute*, Vol. X, Parts 1-4 (1952-53).

Distinguishing between the personality and the permanent self, Mr. Sastri says that the ordinary individual self is only a "finite centre of experience" aiming at a permanent self. All of us hope to develop our true individuality. Once that permanent self is realized then it would be contradictory to speak of personality, we should then be "depersonalized." The identification of the personal self with the social self, he says, is helpful; it enlarges and purges personality of its own traits in the interests of a larger whole. But the self of humanity must be kept in mind. Both

the self of society and that of humanity are determined by the Reality-principle while the personality is determined by the Pleasure-principle.

"The essence of human consciousness is to be universal in its outlook." Great Teachers like the Christ and the Buddha, Mr. Sastri says, embody the perfection which humanity aims at, rather than a special kind of personality. This has also been, in a lesser degree, the distinctive achievement of great writers, thinkers and saints. The true poet, transcending personality, produces world literature. His work, like that of all true artists, has an immortal, universal quality. As human beings gain higher experiences and realization, their sense of personality is dimmed or lost and their sense of unity with the world and with mankind is aroused and predominates. Impersonality characterizes such experience, whether æsthetic, moral, religious or philosophic. Thus, "Truth, Beauty and Goodness have an intrinsic value."

In the field of fiction, Mr. Sastri observes, there are several novelists who represent the social spirit: Pope, Thackeray, Zola and Galsworthy. Their works are successful. But he says that Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, as compared to these, is a failure because it is highly subjective and therefore personal. This is not, however, necessarily correct, for Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* is definitely symbolic and shows how a man who chooses wrongly succumbs to the force of evil; how, after selling his soul, he finds himself in a desperate situation.

The supreme example of impersonality in a writer is given as Shakespeare. His work is universal. He is able to take, as Mr. Sastri points out, the point of view of each of his characters. He never betrays his own feelings. Here Mr. Sastri quotes James Joyce's observation in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*:—

The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined, out of existence....

Later, Mr. Sastri speaks of Yeats in another connection. Yeats, the modern poet, who was definitely influenced by Theosophy, held that the poem, as Mr. Sastri puts it, is a



...result of the poet quarrelling with himself. The conflict is between the lower self and the higher self. The concrete particularity of the poet's self is lost in the Impersonal Reality. The poet comes out of this ecstatic state with new strength for "something great is then given to the soul."

Keats also asserted in one of his letters, notes Mr. Sastri, that a poet has no personality of his own and that he experiences eternity in a single moment. Keats also spoke of this world as "the vale of soul-making." This aspiration toward the impersonal is characteristic of great writers, from the Greek dramatists down to Tagore and Iqbal in the present era. Mr. Sastri gives us, too, the examples of Goethe who sought to "raise the pyramid of his being as high as possible" and of Kalidasa who "sought the cessation of finite existence or personality." Some of their characters, even, have this urge toward the infinite: Kalidasa's Parvati is not satisfied till she has become an integral part of Shiva, the universal regenerating power.

It is clear how great art must be impersonal and belongs to the realms of higher experience. Mr. Sastri also shows how the poet is a sensitive mediator, a very necessary one who reveals and translates. He quotes T. S. Eliot's remark that "the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature...by being a finely tempered medium." Eliot continues:—

...the poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases and images which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together.

But what happens when these experiences and impressions unite? The result is a moment of inspiration. Blake, the mystic poet, wrote in a letter:—

The time it has taken in writing was thus rendered

non-existent, and an immense poem exists which seems to be the labour of a long life, all produced without labour or study.

Mr. Sastri comments: "Thus Blake points out that space, time and personality are transcended in the creative act." Blake was the great champion of inspiration and imagination as against cold logic. It is the moment of inspiration that is "the blessed and serene mood," providing the poet with "the vision and faculty divine" so that he may "see into the life of things." And Mr. Sastri quotes Blake again: "Art is not the experience of the individual but the representation of eternal truth." He also quotes Walter H. Pater, famous art critic of the last century: in such a moment the poet is

...attracted by the thought of a spirit of life in outward things, a single, all-pervading Mind in them, of which man, and even [the] poet's imaginative energy, are but moments.

This passage and Mr. Sastri's remarks on it are Theosophical in tone. He writes:—

The poet writes because he must, because he wishes to realize in himself and to enable us to realize within ourselves too, the highest powers of Mind and Spirit.

This brings to memory an assuring passage from *Through the Gates of Gold*:—

If you talk to an inventor, you will find that far ahead of what he is now doing he can always perceive some other thing to be done which he cannot express in words because as yet he has not drawn it into our present world of objects. That knowledge of the unseen is even more definite in the poet, and more inexpressible until he has touched it with some part of that consciousness which he shares with other men. But in strict proportion to his greatness he lives in the consciousness which the ordinary man does not even believe can exist,—the consciousness which dwells in the greater universe, which breathes in the vaster air, which beholds a wider earth and sky, and snatches seeds from plants of giant growth.



## NO PSYCHIC SHORT CUTS TO REALIZATION

Mr. Aldous Huxley's slender recent volume, *The Doors of Perception*, describes and analyzes his experiment with mescaline, a narcotic claimed to change the quality of consciousness more profoundly than any other known to science. The attention of Theosophical students is invited to the article by Mr. Maurice Collis, based upon that book, which appeared in *The Aryan Path* for July, and especially to the Note which followed it and in which was examined, in the light of the Theosophical teachings, Mr. Huxley's experience while under the influence of the drug.

He regarded his experience as transcendental. Ordinary objects at which he looked seemed to take on a vast meaning. "Everything shone with Inner Light and was infinite in its significance." He thought that he understood "precisely and completely" the meaning of *Sat Chit Ananda*, as though that tremendous realization were to be had at the cost of a drug! Jesus said: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." And Mr. Huxley's studies had prepared him to recognize a lack in his exaltation being unaccompanied by any touch of human sympathy or desire to help mankind.

His sense, at one point of time, as Mr. Collis puts it, of "disintegrating under pressure of a reality greater than his mind could bear" was another telltale warning. He seems to have experienced a dangerous kind of "depersonalization," in which he felt blissfully submerged into "a Not-Self simultaneously perceiving and being the Not-Self of the things around." The Note appended to Mr. Collis's article points out how different this is from the true self-identification with all, depicted in *The Voice of the Silence* (pp. 53-54).

A well-known psychiatrist, Dr. Humphrey Osmond, the Superintendent of the mental hospital at Weyburn, Saskatchewan, Canada, who was in charge of the experiment in which Mr. Huxley collaborated as the chief actor, reviewed *The*

*Doors of Perception* in the Spring 1954 *Tomorrow*. He does well to urge the need of better knowledge of the nature of man and his place in the universe and to recognize that the experience of both the saint and the scientist is needed for "a comprehensible picture of ourselves and of the universe." He even writes in his concluding paragraph:—

The faith and courage to act in a manner which reason now shows is essential for survival, can only derive from an understanding of our relationship to the One, the Absolute, God.

But he is not justified in applying to such an experience as Mr. Huxley's the profound words of Blake:—

Do men buy it for a song,  
Or Wisdom for a dance in the street?  
No! it is bought with the price  
Of all that a man hath.

Mr. Huxley has not, as far as the evidence goes, paid that price!

In the same issue of *Tomorrow* appeared an article, "Our Transcendental World" by Dr. J. R. Smythies, whose paper, "The Present Crisis in Psychology," was published in *The Aryan Path* for November 1951, after being discussed at the Indian Institute of Culture in Basavangudi, Bangalore. In the article in *Tomorrow* he describes experiences of other people than Mr. Huxley under the influence of mescal, a beverage prepared from mescaline:—

Wonderful patterns and colours appear, geometric figures, flowing arabesques, spirals, cobweb patterns, network, filigree, great tapestries, masks, statues, faces—strange and beautiful faces—fabulous animals, silver birds flying through silver forests of unimaginable beauty, glittering fields of jewels, magnificent gardens, great buildings and human figures taking part in scenes of poignant beauty.

That Mr. Huxley's studies and trend of thought had prepared him to read a higher meaning into his not incomparable experience does not prevent its suspicious resemblance to these experiences, which confirm the verdict of the Note on p. 307 of the July *Aryan Path*, that what he took for a spiritual experience subject to certain admitted limitations was rather

a waking somnambulant experience, psycho-physiological



or astro-physical, in which the physical consciousness and senses were partially entranced.

Miss Rosalind Heywood's experience as the subject of a scientific test with mescaline (*The Manchester Guardian*, May 29th, 1954) complements interestingly what is said above. She does not echo his hope that mescaline may become a substitute for drink and tobacco as a means of release from "intolerable selfhood and the dreariness of everyday life." "It pitchforked me into an inner world," she writes, "overwhelming and different in kind from that mediated to us by our senses." Among her experiences as described at the time to the investigator were "an awareness of pattern," "all the patterns in the world," and "the pure light at the top of the mountain. But . . . of course it was not at the top of the mountain but inside."

Other experiences were terrible, including "a wild black figure chopping off heads, because it was so funny to see them fall."

Worst of all, I came upon "the lost," squatting, grey-veiled, among grey rocks, "at the bottom" unable to communicate, alone beyond despair. I longed passionately to arouse and comfort them, but knew myself unworthy. None the less, I seemed aware, that the High Gods could do that, by sinking themselves in sacrifice even lower than the lost, to become the objects of their pity and compassion.

"But, even when blissful," the experience of "the inner world in the end grew overwhelming."

Are we all, I wonder, quite ready for that? Choirs of Seraphs might lull some babies to sleep. Being flung into the Bay of Biscay might teach them to swim. But others would find these things a strain.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Huxley's eminence as a writer and his glowing account of his experience will not tempt others to try to repeat its delights while ignorant of the dangers of unlawful trespass into the psychic or astral world and unprotected by altruism, not to mention the danger of their becoming mescal addicts.

## SOME PLAIN FACTS

Apart from having the actual philosophy of Theosophy presented to us, we are greatly privileged today to have many hints as well as practical suggestions given to us by H.P.B. as to the best means we should employ in our own daily life, if we are earnest.

In considering what is written in this article it must be kept in mind that everyone has the power of choice as to his actions; what he does not have power over is the *result* of his actions. There is never any "command" in the spiritual life except when the pupil has entrusted himself to the Master who will help him to gain the knowledge and wisdom which he is seeking. For the rest of us H.P.B. can take that place—or she does not. She points the way to all; the power of choice remains. A *willing* attentiveness to her directions saves much time and heartache: an *unwilling* attentiveness detracts from the full value of our attitude and action. A refusal to follow her teachings completely, either because we doubt the wisdom of the direction (and try to prove to ourselves and to others that it is not

possible to follow them fully today), or the flouting of them entirely, brings a final unpleasant awakening for which there is none to blame but ourselves.

Meditation along this line on some of H.P.B.'s practical suggestions will bear good fruit. Such meditation is very desirable, for without it we shall indeed in time "whittle away" the priceless directions that she gave for our own help.

What has she said on some important practical subjects?

### *Vegetarianism:*

. . . when the flesh of animals is assimilated by man as food, it imparts to him, physiologically, some of the characteristics of the animal it came from. Moreover, occult science teaches and proves this to its students by ocular demonstration, showing also that this "coarsening" or "animalizing" effect on man is greatest from the flesh of the larger animals, less for birds, still less for fish and other cold-blooded animals, and least of all when he eats only vegetables.

. . . we advise really earnest students to eat such food as will least clog and weight their brains and



bodies, and will have the smallest effect in hampering and retarding the development of their intuition, their inner faculties and powers. (*The Key to Theosophy*, Indian ed., p. 258)

If from illness or long habit a man cannot go without meat, why, by all means let him eat it. It is no crime; it will only retard his progress a little. (*Ibid.*, p. 259)

With these hints given to us, why do we argue whether vegetarianism is good for us or not? Why do we stand up for ourselves when we are not vegetarians? Why do we concoct reasons as to why we cannot become vegetarians today? The first two of the above extracts show that H.P.B. advises "really earnest" students to become vegetarians, as vegetables "will least clog and weight their brains and bodies," etc.

Two reasons are given which can excuse an earnest student from becoming a vegetarian—illness and long habit. But the point to notice is that, though non-vegetarianism due to these reasons is not a crime, yet the coarsening effect will still take place and our progress be retarded a little.

What, generally speaking, keeps the earnest student today from becoming a vegetarian? Let us confess it; there are three reasons. (1) We like the taste of meat and fish. Let us admit that our body is still carnivorous and coarse. (2) We do not like a vegetarian diet. Let us admit that our taste rules our mind. (3) Sometimes it is difficult and awkward to be a vegetarian. Let us admit that there is never anything asked of the earnest student that is too difficult or too awkward. Let us also admit that we pay the price for disregarding these instructions, no matter what the reason; that if we do not follow these simple directions of H.P.B. *we are not ready for them*. That is our only excuse. Let us not excuse ourselves on any other plea, for to do so is a far worse thing than meat eating. True honesty with ourselves is the first requisite to right living.

#### *Vaccination, Inoculation, Immunization, etc.:*

As far as we are aware there are very few definite statements by H.P.B. on these matters. One is her condemnation of "the artificial introduction of animal matter into the human blood, by the infamous Brown-Sequard method" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 19*, p. 13), which she described in

*The Key to Theosophy* (p. 291) as "a loathsome animal injection into human blood" and called "unconscious black magic." Another is her editorial reference in *The Theosophist* for January 1883 to an "even worse form of inoculation" (than vaccination)—"the empoisoning of the Hindu mind with the views of modern scepticism." We know that she has spoken directly against vivisection and cruelty to animals; and a little knowledge of how vaccines, etc., are prepared will show that cruelty of one kind or another is involved. There is now no excuse for lack of knowledge along these lines, but the real problem for the earnest student is his attitude towards vaccination, etc., as applied to himself. It is often said: "I have no choice; I must be vaccinated before I can travel." It is true that vaccination is said to be a requirement for international travel, but is it unavoidable? Do we trouble to find out? Does the fact that we yield under pressure free us from the result? Once again the student must decide for himself, but even if he should decide to yield he should be honest with himself and say: "I want to travel without trouble; therefore I shall be vaccinated." But at what price? The ramifications of Karma are intricate.

#### *Drugs and Alcohol:*

Wine and spirit drinking is only less destructive to the development of the inner powers, than the habitual use of hashish, opium, and similar drugs. (*Key*, p. 260)

Nations . . . which . . . out of revenue-greed, hesitate to abolish opium and whiskey trades, fattening on the untold misery and degradation of millions of human beings, have no right to call themselves either Christian or civilized. (*Lucifer*, May 1891; *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*, VIII. 172)

Should ill health seem to make the taking of drink or drugs a necessity, let us admit that it is the result of a defect in ourselves.

#### *Politics:*

With this must be linked our attitude towards the world of which we are a part and in which we live. H.P.B. has the following to say in *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 228):—

ENQUIRER. What do you consider as due to humanity at large?

THEOSOPHIST. Full recognition of equal rights and privileges for all, and without distinction of race, colour, social position, or birth.



ENQUIRER. When would you consider such due not given?

THEOSOPHIST. When there is the slightest invasion of another's right—be that other a man or a nation; when there is any failure to show him the same justice, kindness, consideration or mercy which we desire for ourselves.

She also tells us that on the plane of action

. . . political action must necessarily vary with the circumstances of the time and with the idiosyncrasies of individuals . . . as individuals, each is left perfectly free to follow out his or her particular line of political thought and action, so long as this does not conflict with Theosophical principles or hurt the Theosophical Society. (*Ibid.*, pp. 229-30)

She tells us that reforms must be made gradually. Our basic question on any social effort should be: "Will the proposed action tend to promote that true brotherhood which it is the aim of Theosophy to bring about?"

It is necessary to see from these extracts that what all students can agree on are principles—full recognition of equal rights and privileges. The method by which this ideal can be reached differs with each individual, but each must respect the views of the other. The principle involved is that of humanity's good, not the good of a race, nation, class or individual, for this is the way to establish true brotherhood.

#### *Punishment:*

Justice consists in doing no injury to any living being; but justice commands us also never to allow injury to be done to the many, or even to one innocent person, by allowing the guilty one to go unchecked. (*Key*, p. 248)

Human Law may use restrictive not punitive measures. (*Ibid.*, p. 198)

The applications of these two extracts in everyday living are numberless.

#### *Prohibitions and Enforcements:*

H.P.B. was not against prohibitions or enforcements that are truly for the common good.

. . . when the world feels convinced—and it cannot avoid coming one day to such a conviction—that animals are creatures as eternal as we ourselves, vivisection and other permanent tortures, daily inflicted on the poor brutes, will . . . force all Governments to put an end to these barbarous and shameful

practices. (*The Theosophist*, March 1886; *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*, IX. 192)

If humanity can only be developed mentally and spiritually by the enforcement, first of all, of the soundest and most scientific physiological laws, it is the bounden duty of all who strive for this development to do their utmost to see that those laws shall be generally carried out. (*Key*, p. 230)

What is it in us that hates prohibitions and enforcements that affect our own actions? We say that we stand for individual liberty. But that liberty is of thought. It is where "*thought* has struggled to be free" that we find the Theosophical Movement at work, not where mere actions are concerned. Should not our attitude towards prohibitions and enforcements be: What are the principles underlying these? Are they for the common good? If so, what course is left open to us but to turn the prohibition into a voluntary self-denial, the enforcement into a voluntary acquiescence? It is only after careful thought that we should act, or feel, or desire.

To take some positive practical suggestions, that is, things to do rather than things not to do:—

. . . our duty is to drink without a murmur to the last drop, whatever contents the cup of life may have in store for us, to pluck the roses of life only for the fragrance they may shed on *others*, and to be ourselves content but with the thorns, if that fragrance cannot be enjoyed without depriving some one else of it. (*Key*, p. 227)

In helping on the development of others, the Theosophist believes that he is not only helping them to fulfil their Karma, but that he is also, in the strictest sense, fulfilling his own. It is the development of humanity, of which both he and they are integral parts, that he has always in view, and he knows that any failure on his part to respond to the highest within him retards not only himself but all, in their progressive march. By his actions, he can make it either more difficult or more easy for humanity to attain the next higher plane of being. (*Ibid.*, p. 234)

. . . uproot that most fertile source of all crime and immorality—the belief that it is possible . . . to escape the consequences of their own actions. (*Ibid.*, p. 245)

What the Theosophist has to do above all is to forget his personality. (*Ibid.*, p. 247)

What ought he to do? . . . His duty; that which his conscience and higher nature suggests to him; but only after mature deliberation. (*Ibid.*, p. 248)



## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In the April issue of the *Journal of the History of Ideas* William J. Bouwsma, of the University of Illinois, in tracing the development of European thought in the Renaissance period has come upon a key figure in the person of William Postel. In an article entitled "Postel and the Significance of Renaissance Cabalism" he endeavours to find out why such advanced minds should have spent so much time over the Jewish Kabalah.

He traces the Kabalah back to Moses de Leon, a Castilian Jew of the later 13th century, but finds himself at a loss for specific verifiable traces of its development from earlier times, though he recognizes its derivation from the Neo-platonic and Gnostic schemes of emanation. Naturally the movement had to be an underground one in the Dark Ages; otherwise it could not have emerged again in the Renaissance; but the links are there and no doubt Muslim scholars carried them across that period, Moses de Leon himself hailing from Spain, newly retaken from the Moors.

Mr. Bouwsma considers, however, that the Kabalistic doctrine of the ten Sephiroth, or the creative powers, did furnish an intelligible framework of intermediaries which he says "solve the perennial problem of explaining the immanent activity of a transcendent God." Also it included "techniques of scriptural exegesis which have the general aim of discovering profound spiritual significance in even the most apparently local and trivial passages of the Scriptures."

He rightly considers that

Cabala was valuable to Postel, in the first place, because it helped him to make sense of the universe. His problem was the typical one of desiring to re-integrate various aspects of thought and experience which had been dissociated and compartmentalized not only by the prevailing philosophical schools, but also by the metaphysical scepticism of the humanists.... he felt the universe to be a vast system of correspondences in which the general is everywhere mirrored in the particular, every object has cosmic implications, and all created things exist in dynamic relationship to each other and to an ultimate reality.

His trinity varied from the orthodox Christian one in being composed of father, mother and son.

Who Postel was is disclosed by H.P.B. in *The Theosophical Glossary* :—

Postel, Guillaume. A French adept, born in Normandy in 1510. His learning brought him to the notice of Francis I, who sent him to the Levant in search of occult MSS., where he was received into and initiated by an Eastern Fraternity. On his return to France he became famous. He was persecuted by the clergy and finally imprisoned by the Inquisition, but was released by his Eastern brothers from his dungeon. His *Clavis Absconditorum*, a key to things hidden and forgotten, is very celebrated.

H.P.B. names him also among the most famous of the learned mediæval students of the Kabalah, which, "like all the rest of systems, whether religious or philosophical, ... is derived directly from the primeval Secret Doctrine of the East; through the Vedas, the Upanishads, Orpheus and Thales, Pythagoras and the Egyptians."

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Those who hold that the American way of life is the best and the only one worth adopting—and there are many who subscribe to this view—will do well to give serious thought to pronouncements such as Dr. Nathan M. Pusey's, deploring public life in the United States. In his baccalaureate address on June 13th, the Harvard President told the Harvard College seniors that, during recent years, there had "been far too little of the heroic—too little that one might look up to even as exemplary," in their country. He implied the need for true ideals of right living in proposing the purification of his country's "reputedly free way of life of the exuberant confusion, meanness and irrationality that threaten almost to overwhelm us." Dr. Pusey added :—

...our national life has been suffering from a peculiarly violent, festering mental ill-health, a noxious growth of irrationality.... This illness has fostered uncertainty, accentuated division, magnified hate.

Thus, far from the United States having reached the pinnacle of progress, it seems to be heading towards further deterioration. The ideal of "reason's service for the public good," Dr. Pusey suggested, should be brought home to the graduates turned out by the colleges. To achieve



this, education has to aim at developing hearts and wills as well as minds. But educational reform, necessary as it is, is but an aid. Wherein, then, lies the remedy? A hint is given us by Dr. Pusey:—

The special commandment Jesus gave us was not that we should be wise or successful, but only that we should love one another.

It is only too evident that this commandment, albeit accepted in theory, is not being put into practice by a large majority of those who call themselves the followers of Jesus, or of any other great spiritual teacher who gave an identical teaching, because it has been denied in the heart. The result is that selfishness and unbrotherly feeling have gained the upper hand and are reflected in public and private life. H.P.B. wrote:—

...we maintain that all pain and suffering are results of want of Harmony, and that the one terrible and only cause of the disturbance of Harmony is *selfishness* in some form or another. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 204)

Since January 1952 the Parapsychology Foundation, Inc., New York, has been carrying on, with a small staff but with much encouragement from scholars in the field, its attempts to establish parapsychology as a science in the world's universities, to help students in their parapsychological research and to bring together scientists from different disciplines that they might discuss together and, if possible, synthesize their different approaches to psychic research. In 1953 it organized the first International Conference of Parapsychological Studies at the University of Utrecht, Holland. Famous investigators like Dr. J. B. Rhine, Dr. S. G. Soal, Dr. R. H. Thouless, Prof. H. H. Price and Mr. Aldous Huxley have at one time or another participated in its activities. We are glad to notice too that the Foundation is giving attention to the philosophical approach as well as to *phenomena*.

In connection with the latter the Foundation, and modern psychical research generally, may be offered a warning. Psychic phenomena cannot always be treated in the same way as those in the chemist's laboratory — or rather, if they are,

the experiment is closest to investigating unknown high explosives, with the important difference that a mistake will harm not only the body but also the mental and moral constitution. Mrs. Eileen Garrett, President of the Foundation, while working hard to encourage the modern scientific approach, shows a perilously naïve complacency about the entities with whom mediums like herself come in contact. What they say they are, is not always what they are. (See *The Ocean of Theosophy*, Indian edition, pp. 112–113.)

Here is the inadequacy of psychic research pursued in the framework of either materialistic thought or religious belief: one either draws a dangerously false analogy between physical and psychical phenomena, ignoring the independent intelligences of many kinds that inhabit the psychic atmosphere, or assumes sentimentally that one is receiving news from the dear departed, angels and so on.

In the interests both of safety and of the right interpretation of observed phenomena, one needs to acquire the background of knowledge made available in Theosophy. One of the very important facts there explained is that there are two invisible worlds, not one. The spiritual and the psychic are very different, and the best way to study the psychic is in the light of impersonal, spiritual knowledge. But this requires great moral discipline on the part of the investigator, which is necessary also for safety from the malevolent intelligences that are not absent from the psychic world. This is one justification of the strange-seeming secrecy of true occult fraternities and the baffling allegorical nature of their treatises. The true occultist received the key to these obscure statements from his teacher only when the latter was convinced that his pupil could now venture beyond the threshold without the likelihood of either taking harm or misusing the great powers that can be won there, and would by many be used for selfish ends, to the injury of others and perhaps the ruin of themselves.

In the July 1954 *Medical Features* (Science Information Service, London), mention is made



of a flower which the Jibaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador and Peru use for anæsthetic purposes. A botanist had occasion recently to observe its use in the case of an associate accidentally shot. Before the bullet was removed, the Indians gave him a drink made from the flower which put him to sleep for 36 hours. The only serious after-effect was impairment of vision for five days. The botanist identified the flower as belonging to the *genus* *Datura*, some of the species of which contain a powerful narcotic.

Dr. Ellis in his valuable *Ancient Anodynes* mentions a large number of early methods of anæsthesia. There was in classical times a local anæsthetic, referred to by the naturalist Pliny and also Dioscorides, called the Memphis Stone, to which Dr. Ellis makes reference. He mentions its use also by Albertus Magnus. H.P.B. in *Isis Unveiled* speaks of it in the following terms:—

When ground into powder, and applied as an ointment to that part of the body on which the surgeon was about to operate, either with his scalpel or fire, it preserved that part, and *only that part* from any pain of the operation. In the meantime, it was perfectly harmless to the constitution of the patient, who retained his consciousness throughout, in no way dangerous from its effects, and acted so long as it was kept on the affected part. When taken in a mixture of wine or water, all feeling of suffering was perfectly deadened. (I. 540)

The famous mandrake or mandragora was also widely used as an anæsthetic and H.P.B. says that "it has more than one hidden property in it perfectly unknown to the botanist." She adds:—

This mandragora seems to occupy upon earth the point where the vegetable and animal kingdoms touch, as the zoöphites and polypi do in the sea.... What do the naturalists know of the intimate nature of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms? How can they feel confident that for every one of the discovered properties there may not be many powers concealed in the *inner* nature of the plant or stone? And that they are only waiting to be brought in relation with some other plant, mineral, or force of nature to manifest themselves in what is termed a "supernatural manner." (*Ibid.*, I. 466)

When two minds vibrate alike or change into the same state, one can transmit his thoughts to the other. Such is the rationale of telepathy. In one form or another telepathy is so frequent

in human existence that it is surprising that, till recently, many psychologists had not been convinced of its reality. It is, however, reported by *The New York Times* of 9th June that steady gains in experimental telepathic communication have brought about a gradual change in opinion in favour of telepathy and opened new fields for psychological study.

The Fourteenth International Congress of Psychology, held in Montreal in the beginning of June, was informed by Dr. Gardner Murphy, Director of Research at the Menninger Foundation, Kansas, that psychologists had tended to ignore the field of telepathy because "experiments had yielded results that did not readily fit in with previously accepted scientific concepts." He suggested that, "although telepathy had no practical applications today, it probably would have important uses in the future."

To what "uses" it will be put, remains to be seen. It is one thing to understand the principles of telepathy or, in the interest of impersonal scientific investigation, to test one's ability to catch the reflection of a thought in another's mind, with that other's consent and co-operation; it would be quite another thing to impose one's thought upon another to make that other perform any action, however desirable, or to enter into the mind of another and pick out its secrets. All psychic phenomena, including telepathy, fall into two main classes, those produced deliberately and at will and those which occur sporadically and without volition. The former are safe only in the hands of pure and utterly unselfish persons who possess accurate knowledge of the psycho-physiological constitution of man and of the laws of nature. The latter depend upon a native or acquired sensitiveness and passivity which, if encouraged, may well develop into the dangerous disease of mediumship. Hence the necessity to guard against psychic practices of all sorts.

Thoughtful men and women throughout the world have long ceased to subscribe to the view that "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." The great desirability, nay, the need, of a closer *rapprochement* between the two worlds, in the interest of mutual under-



standing, sympathy and co-operation, is being repeatedly emphasized by prominent thinkers. One such is Kenneth Walker, who, in "I Look to Asia," appearing in the May-June issue of *Vedanta for East and West*, evaluates the respective contributions of the Eastern and Western worlds to the cause of human progress, and shows how each is in need of the other. The essential difference, according to him, between the two is this:—

Whereas we in the West were interested only in things that were happening *outside* us and spent all our time rushing about doing things, ... you in the East have been preoccupied with the inner world of the mind and spirit and it is in this realm that your great men have made their discoveries.

This does not imply, as Mr. Walker himself admits, that there are no exceptions to this generalization; nor should it be understood that there exists an unbridgeable chasm between East and West. "In essence all men are the same." The diversity between them is only the result of different cultural traditions, of divergent psychological outlooks and of the fundamentally different ways of looking at the same problems.

Mr. Walker sees a danger looming in the distance which might spell disaster to the world as a whole, and that is the tendency among the younger generation in the East to be dazzled by the achievements of modern science and to "be tempted to neglect their own great inheritance of traditional knowledge and become a bad imitation of the West." On the other hand, it would be desirable to have an increasing traffic in the opposite direction, from East to West. The West needs to turn its gaze inwards, and recognize the worth of spiritual values and of true religion. Mr. Walker expresses a Theosophical truth in saying that if religion plays only a minor rôle in our lives today it is because religious orthodoxies and creedalism have taken the place of true religion, and because the fundamental unity of all faiths is forgotten.

In one particular, however, we cannot agree with him, and that is his implied assumption that the East owes to the West whatever it has learnt

of science. The mass of cumulative evidence recently reinforced, and the conclusive opinions furnished by many a scholar, all go to prove, in the words of H. P. Blavatsky, that "modern science has little or no reason to boast of originality." Those interested may turn to the closing pages of Vol. I of *Isis Unveiled*, where H.P.B. sums up the achievements of the ancient Orient in the scientific and other spheres. Speaking of the modern West she says:—

What have we to offer for comparison? Beside such majestic achievements of the past, what can we place that will seem so grandiose and sublime as to warrant our boast of superiority over an ignorant ancestry? Beside the discoverers of geometry and algebra, the constructors of human speech, the parents of philosophy, the primal expounders of religion, the adepts in psychological and physical science, how even the greatest of our biologists and theologians seem dwarfed! Name to us any modern discovery, and we venture to say, that Indian history need not long be searched before the prototype will be found of record. (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 620)

Our readers' attention may be drawn to *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, by Brajendranath Seal.

Yet another "advance" in knowledge has broken down! The Summer 1954 *Vegetarian News* (London) states that Denmark, where the battery system of stimulating egg production is said to have been used first, has passed legislation forbidding its use on the ground that it is cruel.

Other comments in *Vegetarian News* indicate that the myth of the special value of meat as an article of diet is being steadily, if slowly, discredited. Thus Dr. Charles Hill, British Minister of Health, is quoted as having said recently in Parliament, referring to lacto-vegetarianism, that "the meatless diet can be as good as any other."

The "Radio Doctor" is quoted as stating on the B.B.C. that "...lean meat is relatively inefficient as a source of energy." In another B.B.C. programme a Doctor said: "...meat is not essential either for energy or health."



## BOOKS

*By H. P. BLAVATSKY*

**Isis Unveiled**

Centenary Anniversary Edition. A photographic reprint of the original edition of 1877. Two volumes bound in one.

**The Secret Doctrine**

A photographic reprint of the original edition of 1888. Two volumes bound in one.

**The Theosophical Glossary**

A photographic reprint of the original edition of 1892.

**Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge**

**The Key to Theosophy**

**Raja-Yoga or Occultism**

**The Voice of the Silence**

**Five Messages**

*By W. Q. JUDGE*

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Information as to the meeting place and times of meetings may be had from the United Lodge of Theosophists, Bombay.



# The United Lodge of Theosophists

## DECLARATION

**T**HE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

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

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate; it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the Form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished to Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

Correspondence should be addressed to: The U.L.T., 51 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay.

## U. L. T. LODGES

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