

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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THE SPIRITUAL LIFE FOR THE MAN OF THE WORLD

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The spiritual life for the man of the world sounds somewhat of a paradoxical statement, for, naturally, in the hurly-burly of the world of today, in the conditions of economic life, in the struggle for existence of our commercial age, men and women will ask: “How is it possible for one who has to earn his living and keep body and soul together to live the spiritual life?”

There exist in the minds of men wrong conceptions about the spiritual life. There are teachings which say that they must go into the jungle, on to the mountain top, into the desert, if they desire to lead the spiritual life; teachings that say, “Retire into a nunnery, lock yourself up in a monastery, for there alone can you find God.”

When such a conception exists, to declare that it is possible for the spiritual life to be led by the man of the world sounds a little startling. And yet the one great fundamental, central teaching of all metaphysical philosophy in the East is that the spiritual life is possible for all; for everyone can realize the spirit who is God if a new attitude to life springs up and a new angle of vision is acquired.

The spiritual life needs a definition; firstly, from the point of view of the man who wants to live it, and secondly, from the point of view of what the spiritual life is. To many, man is a bundle of flesh, blood, tissue, nerves; the soul of man is the flame of the candle; when the candle is exhausted, the flame dies. According to Western psychological teaching, consciousness and life are produced by material forces and processes. Many repeat with the German scientists and the French psychologists: “Just as the liver produces bile, so the brain and senses produce the soul.” Even when they believe that the soul or consciousness survives bodily death they maintain that the soul is born of matter and of body.

If you turn from the scientific position to the position of the theologians of the Western world, you again come up against a definition that is crude, vague and confusing, namely, that a human soul is created for every baby born, and that spiritual life and realization depend on the supreme will of God. If He wills, you may live a spiritual existence; if He does not will, then you must live the life ordinary — eat, drink, be merry, and die! — to burn in the tortures of eternal Hell, or sit upon the right hand of God in eternal Heaven.

The Eastern view is different. It is revealed in our simple phraseology and expressions. You speak of man *having* a soul; we speak of man *being* a soul. You identify yourselves with your bodies in your ordinary talk. When you have a pain in the head you say, "I have a headache." We use different expressions, disengaging ourselves from the point of view of the body. We have no such phrase in Sanskrit as "I have fever." If we want to say this we say, "My body is suffering from fever." This attitude is the result of our identification with consciousness, which we regard as supreme. We take the view that consciousness is primary, body secondary; that life is primary, senses and brain secondary. Your Western science says, "Soul is because the body is." We reverse this and, in the language of the ancient Upanishads, say, "Because the man wants to hear, therefore the ear; because the man wants to see, therefore the eye; because the man wants to think, therefore the mind." The human soul is primary, and the spiritual life is possible for anyone who regards himself not as a body but as a soul. That is the first step.

It was once said by a great Teacher, "What a pity it is that men are shining, radiant gods, and they live like scavengers on the earth because they identify themselves with their bodies instead of realizing themselves as evolving souls!" The spiritual life mainly depends, in the first instance, on the view that you take of the constitution of man — the view that man is a spirit, a spiritual entity, working in and through his physical instrument, which he is to master and control so that through the temple of the body the wonderful powers of the soul may express themselves. The great teaching of Christ will be recognized in this view. The Christian teaching of the value of the spiritual life and the living of the spiritual life is true. The teaching of Christ, that the body of man is a temple in which the spiritual radiance of the soul should express itself, is true. What you therefore need is a clearer concept of your own scriptural teachings, and you will get a clearer light when you talk over and examine these teachings not from the point of view of the letter which killeth but from the point of view of the spirit which giveth them life. You will be aided in your search if you take up the comparative study of religions, philosophies, sciences, and seek after the truth, no matter from what source it comes. The concept that man is a spiritual entity is the first step towards living the spiritual life.

But I know there is a general belief among the religious people of the East as well as of the West that the spiritual life has very little to do with intellect or mind. There is a tendency to speak of the intellect as though it were some form of disease. But spiritual life consists at every step in the intellectual recognition of spiritual facts. You cannot practise what you do not understand; you cannot spiritually realize what you do not intellectually recognize, and the intellectual picture of man as a spiritual entity in the process of growth, unfolding gradually but steadily, is essential. Man is a manifestation of the power of the spirit, immortal, eternal, ancient, which ever was, ever is and ever shall be, and for which the hour never strikes. This is the first of the great intellectual truths which you should recognize and realize. You must *understand* the nature of the spiritual entity, immortal and eternal.

Your Christian scriptures teach that man is made in the image of God. You have also the philosophical, profound concept that God manifests Himself in His universe as a Trinity — God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. We say: God is a Trinity; man is made in his image, therefore man is also a trinity. As a spiritual entity in the process of growth man manifests the triple powers of the spirit, because man-spirit is made in the image of God-spirit. Man-consciousness is the seed in which are locked up, latent and inherent the powers of cosmic or God-consciousness. This God-consciousness is like a wonderful plant bearing green leaves, branches and fragrant flowers. That same consciousness is inherent in the seed — the seed that is sprouting — from which the tree will ultimately grow in the course of evolution; and that seed is man's spirit. The ultimate manifestation of the tree is God-consciousness. We as spiritual entities have in us, in latency, all the powers of cosmic consciousness, of God-consciousness; we are becoming divine in the process of evolution. In us the triple aspect of consciousness manifests spiritually, becoming patent from a condition of latency. In God that triple consciousness has become fully patent, and because God-consciousness is triune therefore man-consciousness is also triune.

How does the spiritual entity, man, manifest his triple nature? The spiritual entity whom we call man wants to know, and because he wants to know he wants to love, and because he wants to love therefore he desires to sacrifice. Knowledge, Love, Sacrifice — these three are the great trinity of man-consciousness in the process of growth. There is a close connection between these three aspects of consciousness in man. Just as there is an essential relationship between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, so there is an essential relationship between man the knower, man the lover and man the sacrificer or server. And when the knowledge aspect comes into expression man finds out the law of gaining knowledge in the spiritual world. He finds out the law of sacrificing himself

for those he loves in a definite way which it is necessary for us to know, because it is the counterpart of the knowledge, love and sacrifice of the spiritual entity who is man; the counterpart of those qualities governing the temple of the body which alone can represent the spiritual life. It has nothing to do with going into the desert or on to a mountain top. It is the transformation of the body into a temple of the living God; a transformation possible even to the man of the world through the power of the knowledge inherent in the spiritual entity.

What we want to gain, then, is the fundamental law of Knowledge, Love and Sacrifice. The soul, the spiritual entity in its heaven world, knows the inherent law of gaining knowledge — the law which we, with our limitations of matter, body and brain, take thousands or millions of years to find out. The spiritual entity knows the laws. It knows that if you want to know anything about a person or a thing you must love that person, you must love that thing. You cannot gain knowledge without love; there is no other way of gaining knowledge. All other ways are productive of limitations, of partial knowledge. Total and perfect knowledge can only be gained when the object of knowledge is loved. And just as it is necessary to love if we want to know, so it is necessary for us to realize that to love means to pour ourselves out into the object of love — a very different concept from the love which says, "I will love you very much if you will love me in return." Only the love which says, "I will pour myself out into you whether you like me or whether you do not like me" is the love by which the unity of the power of love is achieved and the person or the thing is known totally and thoroughly.

Does it sound fantastic? It does not, when we begin to analyze it and think about it. And when we begin to ponder the subject of Knowledge, Love and Sacrifice, we shall find that this trinity has its lower as well as its higher expression: the lower knowledge and the higher knowledge; the ordinary love and the extraordinary; the vulgar sacrifice and the great sacrifice. Spiritual life means that the lower knowledge-love-sacrifice must go and the higher Knowledge-Love-Sacrifice must manifest itself through the temple of the body.

When you come to understand this you begin to ask the question, "How can I achieve the higher Knowledge, Love and Sacrifice of the spiritual entity while I am in this body and under these handicaps?" Firstly, recognize that in the mortal or material part of the human constitution knowledge, love and sacrifice show themselves in their lower aspects because they are inherent in matter. All of us possess knowledge of this lower type, expressing itself through the power of the mind. But in this aspect it is a power which divides, a power which crushes, a power typical of the struggles of earthly life and the competition for existence. Man desires this lower knowledge. Why? So that he may outdo his neighbour in a life that is cognizant

only of material conflict — the survival of the “fittest.” It is the law of the brute. The survival of the fittest may be the law of the animal kingdom, but the law of sacrifice is the law of the human kingdom. When we manifest the lower knowledge, love and sacrifice we live as dead men, and this was the sense in which Christ used the words, “Let the dead bury their dead.” We tend to live in the lower world, to live not as Gods live but as animals live. But living the spiritual life means beginning to live in terms of the higher Knowledge, the higher Love, the higher Sacrifice. You must recognize the fact that the mind is not the Knower; that the spiritual entity who is Man is the Knower, and mind is the instrument of his Knowledge. You must realize that the emotions are something more than an expression of the earthly, self-centred lover; that emotions have to be made the instruments of the Great Lover and the Spiritual Man. You must recognize that sacrifice which is productive of negative effects is the lower, the self-defeating form of sacrifice. The higher form of sacrifice is always productive of joy — for in the service of the Spirit lies the perfect freedom.

What is the distinction between Real Knowledge and the lower knowledge? When you begin to use your lower knowledge, how do you use it? By the process of analysis, criticism, fragmentation, elimination. You try to get rid of certain things which have their root in ignorance; you use the intellect to cut down, to separate. But the higher knowledge is synthetic; under its inspiration the intellect is a builder and a unifier. It recognizes that ignorance and error exist, but it sees in ignorance not something to be scorned, but only a condition in which the Knower is absent in the object of knowledge. It sounds metaphysical, but it is not so when you begin to analyze it. Stated as simply as possible, the knowledge that you want is not the knowledge that comes from the outside only, by the help of the sense-organs, but the knowledge that arises from within, that wells up from within. The poet Cowper puts it very beautifully when he makes the distinction between knowledge and wisdom. He says:—

Knowledge dwells

In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.

What is wanted is knowledge rooted in the Wisdom that wells up from within — not the rejection of the knowledge that comes from without, but the power to evaluate it truly in the light of the inner Knowledge. You therefore require a trained mind. When we use the knowledge of the lower type it means that our minds are variable, unsteady; they jump from object to object. Patanjali, the great Indian philosopher, described the mind of the ordinary man as a butterfly that goes from flower to flower. Sometimes I think it is too beautiful a simile, for the mind of the ordinary man is too often like an octopus that throws out a tentacle on one side and grabs some-

thing, then throws out a tentacle on another side and grabs something else. The trained mind, the mind able to become the instrument of the Knower, is essential for the spiritual life. You have to become the master of your instrument, not remain the slave of it.

People often speak of practising meditation. Make sure of your practices, for the practice that does not make the mind alert but makes it sleepy, the practice that makes you half-dazed instead of thoroughly awake, the practice that sends the Knower ten thousand miles away instead of concentrating on the job in hand — that is the wrong kind of meditation. I know that some people want the kind of meditation that is “restful” and “peaceful” — the best form of that meditation is going to sleep. But you want the other form — the meditation that develops attentiveness, the meditation that produces accuracy in life and work, punctuality, purity in causation, and the concentrated mind in and through which the Knower begins to work, and which is attentive to the details of life.

It is sometimes said: “Why bring the mind down to these mortal things, to these things of the flesh?” Browning was right, and he touched on a profound spiritual teaching of the Eastern world when he said that sometimes flesh helps soul, and sometimes soul helps flesh. Matter and spirit are the two great arms of the Divine Father. Spirit must have its material vehicle to manifest through. There can be no matter not energized by the power of the spirit. And therefore the meditation, the control of the mind, that you want is the power that enables you to set a right value on things, to put all things in their proper place. The Knowledge of the Higher Mind brings you the faculty of evaluating all things in the world, of the flesh and of the spirit. You cannot convince a person that the life of the flesh he is living is an illusion by simply saying, “It is an illusion.” But if you can show this person what the real value of the life of the flesh is, what the outcome is in pain, sorrow, suffering or difficulty — then you may be able to turn him or her away from it by means of a philosophy that is reasonable and demonstrable to the mind. The knowledge you want is this Higher Knowledge of the control of the mind, in which the great Knower will manifest his power if the head is not full of other people’s thoughts and ideas but of the Wisdom that wells up from within the spirit which is Man. What is the characteristic of this Knowledge? Power — the power which is peace. That is the difference between it and the lower knowledge, which may also bring power but does not bring peace.

Now come to the emotions, the instrument of the heart, the instrument of the great Lover who is Man. All of us express emotions — loves, hatreds, likes, dislikes, sympathies, antipathies, contempts and compassion. These must be examined in terms of the profound reality of the great Lover. For what is the characteristic of the spiritual Lover? Impersonality. He loves, not this or that person, not

this or that thing, but *all*, continuously, in ever-widening circles. The spiritual Lover does not say, "I will not love this person or this thing because I do not get any return." The spiritual Lover says, "Everywhere is God's life. The sinner of today will become the saint of tomorrow. The saint of today was the sinner of yesterday." The spiritual Lover says, "I do not care whether people love me in return or not; it becomes my privilege to love all." This is the higher love, expressed through the deeper emotions of the heart. Human nature is subjected to varying moods, good, bad, mostly indifferent; it is elated at one moment, depressed at another. The Great Love is not like this. It does not flicker like a candle in the wind. It is a love that understands, a love derived from the Higher Knowledge, a love qualified by Wisdom. It touches all and is therefore able to help all. It is a love so profound and impersonal that it purifies the animal in man. People sometimes complain, "The spiritual life is not for me, because I have an ape and a tiger in me." True, we have the animal in us. Take note of the ape and the tiger in you and begin to master them, for if you can do so they will become wonderful instruments in your hands. I am not so much afraid of the ape and the tiger in man, but I am sometimes afraid of the pig and the ass in man, for they are obstinate and you cannot purify them because they are mired in a deadly complacency. Take note of your emotions. Take note of your animal nature. Do not be afraid of it. Do not play with it, and do not use it as an excuse for mental laziness and spiritual apathy.

The spiritual life is possible by only one way. The great teaching of the Eastern Wisdom is that there is one primary road to the spiritual life — the road of uttermost purity. All other roads are false. When we use the word "purity," you in the West think mainly of sexual purity. But you must think of it in many other senses also. You must think of it in its primary, all-embracing sense of impersonality — *purity of motive*, purity of purpose, purity of thought, purity of deed, purity of word, purity of life — purity (spiritual integrity) manifesting week by week and month by month, year in and year out. The Great Love which is able to help all is able to do so because its motives are pure. Therefore, purify yourself.

Now I know that sometimes the doctrine is preached that if you are not pure, if you have emotional weaknesses, selfish weaknesses, you should indulge them and "burn them out." This is a false doctrine; it has never worked. Search the entire volumes of the spiritual biographies of any people in the world and you will find that doctrine false. You do not try to put out a fire by adding fuel to it. You cannot get rid of your anger by giving way to anger. You cannot eliminate the habit of lying by telling more and more lies. The way to overcome a weakness is to control it, to purify yourself, to preach to yourself the doctrine that you will kill out ruthlessly any weakness that comes up, until there is but one Great Love manifesting itself in the temple

of the body — the Love that shows affection towards those who are our equals, that accepts those who are lower in evolution than ourselves, that accords devotion to those higher in evolution than ourselves; the Love that shows reverence to all, the higher reverence which says, "God is in all things, manifesting Himself everywhere." We are apt to look for God in those forms only which are dear to us, rejecting Him in other forms because those forms are repellent to us. Sri Krishna said, speaking to His disciple: "I am in all forms. The splendour of splendid things am I, but I am also in the gambling of the cheat."

To love all with great spiritual reverence, to see the mark of God everywhere — this is the characteristic of the true Lover. He does not condone the wrong but accepts the wrong-doer; for the wrong-doer, who does the wrong through ignorance, is yet a brother. This is the sacrifice of the Higher Love — a sacrifice which is freedom, a sacrifice that ensures fearlessness, a sacrifice essential to higher human expression. You have a beautiful definition of a sacrament in your Christian scriptures — "An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." Everything is sacramental for the man who leads the spiritual life. There is no distinction between religious and secular things when you begin to lead the spiritual life. Everything is sacred, everything is holy, everything is an outward and visible form of an inward and spiritual grace. The sacrifice which is joy makes life sacramental.

The spiritual life does not, therefore, make for division: it links everything together in the ultimate Unity. Thus you can see why it is possible for every man and woman in the street to lead the spiritual life. The man who wants to lead that life need not change his environment; he needs to change himself. The spiritual life is possible in the home, in the club, in the office, as well as in the church. Any action that can be done as sacrifice because the power of Wisdom and God-consciousness is felt, that is of the spiritual life. You can begin to live it here and now, not changing your position geographically, but changing yourself — getting a new point of view, looking at things as outward signs in which there is the grace of God, seeing the spirit beneath all forms. When some people think of God they think of Him as some wonderful form sitting high in the heavens, outside His universe. But God is everywhere, and, through the control of the mind, the emotions and the senses, the Knower, the Lover, the Actor, manifests powers which are those of the spiritual world operating in and through the temple of the body. This is the teaching you find in the ancient Upanishads, where it is said:—

Not for the sake of the husband is the husband dear, but for the sake of the Self is the husband dear. Not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear, but for the sake of the Self is the wife dear. Not for the sake of the sons are the sons dear, but for the sake of the Self are the sons dear. Not

for the sake of the wealth is the wealth dear, but for the sake of the Self is the wealth dear. Not for the sake of the knowledge is the knowledge dear, but for the sake of the Self is the knowledge dear. Not for the sake of the world is the world dear, but for the sake of the Self is the world dear.

You should seek this Self, the one, indivisible, unchangeable, immortal, ancient Self; and if you cannot find that Self in your own heart you will not find it anywhere else. Hence the cry of the Christ — “I and my Father are One”; the cry of the Buddha — “Look inward: thou art Buddha”; the cry of the great Upanishadic Teacher who said, “I am verily the supreme Brahman.”

To recognize the Self in our own selves, to love all, to pour ourselves out into the lives of others, to recognize not only the sage and the saint but also the criminal and the sinner, and to help the criminal and the sinner so that he may have at least the opportunity to reach up to the stature of perfection — this is the spiritual life. To take the next step forward in our own activities, to recognize ourselves as slowly, quietly, steadily growing into His splendour — that is the spiritual life. Therefore pray to your own Self within the chamber of your heart, in the silence of the inner life; for the God who is everywhere is also in you.

To recognize ourselves as divine, to hold up our heads and say, “We will accept the challenge, we will labour to grow to the stature of perfection as others have grown, we will raise the same cry others have raised”; to recognize that it is possible for men to do today what men did in the past, to seek the Wisdom of the great Teachers of Wisdom — that is the aspiration and the determination that should be ours. Let us heed the cry of the ancient Upanishads, the cry to the disciples — “Awake! Arise! Seek the Great Ones, and learn!” Leave the kingdom of the dead and enter the kingdom of the Living. For we are dead, though we walk the streets and talk with each other; we are dead because the knowledge and the love and the sacrifice which we manifest in our ignorance is of the lower type and not the superior. When we begin to display the higher Knowledge, Love and Sacrifice, then will we come into the kingdom of the Living. Follow the teaching of the Christ — not what is preached in His name but what He preached Himself. To do that is to partake of the Power which is Peace, the Wisdom which is Love, and the Sacrifice which is Joy.

In this way the spiritual life becomes possible today, in this modern world, in spite of its strife and disorder, as it was possible in the ancient world, in quiet times.

THE MIND IN NATURE

[The following article by H. P. Blavatsky first appeared in *Lucifer*, Vol. XIX, pp. 9-14, for September 1896.—Eds.]

Great is the self-satisfaction of modern science, and unexampled its achievements. Pre-Christian and mediæval philosophers may have left a few landmarks over unexplored mines: but the discovery of all the gold and priceless jewels is due to the patient labours of the modern scholar. And thus they declare that the genuine, real knowledge of the nature of the Kosmos and of man is all of recent growth. The luxuriant modern plant has sprung from the dead weeds of ancient superstitions.

Such, however, is not the view of the students of Theosophy. And they say that it is not sufficient to speak contemptuously of "the untenable conceptions of an uncultivated past," as Mr. Tyndall and others have done, to hide the intellectual quarries out of which the reputations of so many modern philosophers and scientists have been hewn. How many of our distinguished scientists have derived honour and credit by merely dressing up the ideas of those old philosophers, whom they are ever ready to disparage, is left to an impartial posterity to say. But conceit and self-opinionatedness have fastened like two hideous cancers on the brains of the average man of learning; and this is especially the case with the Orientalists — Sanskritists, Egyptologists and Assyriologists. The former are guided (or perhaps only pretend to be guided) by post-Mahabharatian commentators; the latter by arbitrarily interpreted papyri, collated with what this or the other Greek writer said, or passed over in silence, and by the cuneiform inscriptions on half-destroyed clay tablets copied by the Assyrians from "Accado-" Babylonian records. Too many of them are apt to forget, at every convenient opportunity, that the numerous changes in language, the allegorical phraseology and evident secretiveness of old mystic writers, who were generally under the obligation never to divulge the solemn secrets of the sanctuary, might have sadly misled both translators and commentators. Most of our Orientalists will rather allow their conceit to run away with their logic and reasoning powers than admit their ignorance, and they will proudly claim like Professor Sayce¹ that they have unriddled the true meaning of the religious symbols of old, and can interpret esoteric

¹ See the *Hibbert Lectures* for 1887, pages 14-17, on the origin and growth of the religion of the ancient Babylonians, where Prof. A. H. Sayce says that though "many of the sacred texts were so written as to be intelligible *only to the initiated* [italics mine] . . . provided with keys and glosses," nevertheless, as many of the latter, he adds, "are in our hands," they (the Orientalists) have "a clue to the interpretation of these documents *which even the initiated priests did not possess*" (p. 17). This "clue" is the modern craze, so dear to Mr. Gladstone, and so stale in its monotony to most, which consists in perceiving in every symbol of the religions of old a solar myth, dragged down, whenever

texts far more correctly than could the initiated hierophants of Chaldæa and Egypt. This amounts to saying that the ancient hierogrammatists and priests, who were the inventors of all the allegories which served as veils to the many truths taught at the Initiations, did not possess a clue to the sacred texts composed or written by themselves. But this is on a par with that other illusion of some Sanskritists, who, though they have never even been in India, claim to know Sanskrit accent and pronunciation, as also the meaning of the Vaidic allegories, far better than the most learned among the greatest Brahmanical pundits and Sanskrit scholars of India.

After this who can wonder that the jargon and blinds of our mediæval alchemists and Kabalists are also read literally by the modern student; that the Greek and even the ideas of Æschylus are *corrected* and improved upon by the Cambridge and Oxford Greek scholars, and that the veiled parables of Plato are attributed to his "ignorance." Yet, if the students of the dead languages know anything, they ought to know that the method of extreme necessitarianism was practised in ancient as well as in modern philosophy; that from the first ages of man, the fundamental truths of all that we are permitted to know on earth were in the safe keeping of the Adepts of the sanctuary; that the difference in creeds and religious practice was only external; and that those guardians of the primitive divine revelation, who had solved every problem that is within the grasp of human intellect, were bound together by a universal freemasonry of science and philosophy, which formed one unbroken chain around the globe. It is for philology and the Orientalists to endeavour to find the end of the thread. But if they will persist in seeking it in one direction only, and that the wrong one, truth and fact will never be discovered. It thus remains the duty of psychology and Theosophy to help the world to arrive at them. Study the Eastern religions by the light of Eastern — not Western — philosophy, and if you happen to relax correctly one single loop of the old religious systems, the chain of mystery may be disentangled. But to achieve this, one must not agree with those who teach that it is unphilosophical to enquire into first causes, and that all that we can do is to consider their physical effects. The field of scientific investigation is bounded by physical nature on every side; hence, once the limits of matter are reached, enquiry must stop and work be recommenced. As the Theosophist has no desire to play at being a squirrel upon its revolving wheel, he must refuse to follow the lead of the materialists. He, at any rate, knows that the revolutions of the physical world are, according to the ancient

opportunity requires, to a sexual or phallic emblem. Hence the statement that while "Gisduubar was but a champion and conqueror of old times," for the Orientalists, who "can penetrate beneath the myths," he is but a solar hero, who was himself but the transformed descendant of a humbler God of Fire (*loc. cit.*, p. 17).

doctrine, attended by like revolutions in the world of intellect, for the spiritual evolution in the universe proceeds in cycles, like the physical one. Do we not see in history a regular alternation of ebb and flow in the tide of human progress? Do we not see in history, and even find this within our own experience, that the great kingdoms of the world, after reaching the culmination of their greatness, descend again, in accordance with the same law by which they ascended, till, having reached the lowest point, humanity reasserts itself and mounts up once more, the height of its attainment being, by this law of ascending progression by cycles, somewhat higher than the point from which it had before descended? Kingdoms and empires are under the same cyclic laws as planets, races, and everything else in Kosmos.

The division of the history of mankind into what the Hindus call the Satya, Treta, Dvapara and Kali Yugas, and what the Greeks referred to as "the Golden, Silver, Copper, and Iron Ages" is not a fiction. We see the same thing in the literature of peoples. An age of great inspiration and unconscious productiveness is invariably followed by an age of criticism and consciousness. The one affords material for the analyzing and critical intellect of the other.

The moment is more opportune than ever for the review of old philosophies. Archæologists, philologists, astronomers, chemists and physicists are getting nearer and nearer to the point where they will be forced to consider them. Physical science has already reached its limits of exploration; dogmatic theology sees the springs of its inspiration dry. The day is approaching when the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known.

Once more the prophecy already made in *Isis Unveiled* twenty-two years ago is reiterated:—

Secrets long kept may be revealed; books long forgotten and arts long time lost may be brought out to light again; papyri and parchments of inestimable importance will turn up in the hands of men who pretend to have unrolled them from mummies, or stumbled upon them in buried crypts; tablets and pillars, whose sculptured revelations will stagger theologians and confound scientists, may yet be excavated and interpreted. Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin — nay, has already begun. The cycle has almost run its course; a new one is about to begin, and the future pages of history may contain full evidence, and convey full proof of the above.

Since the day this was written much of it has come to pass, the discovery of the Assyrian clay tiles and their records alone having

forced the interpreters of the cuneiform inscriptions — both Christians and Freethinkers — to alter the very age of the world.²

The chronology of the Hindu Puranas, reproduced in *The Secret Doctrine*, is now derided, but the time may come when it will be universally accepted. This may be regarded as simply an assumption, but it will be so only for the present. It is in truth but a question of time. The whole issue of the quarrel between the defenders of ancient wisdom and its detractors — lay and clerical — rests (a) on the incorrect comprehension of the old philosophers, for the lack of the keys the Assyriologists boast of having discovered; and (b) on the materialistic and anthropomorphic tendencies of the age. This in no wise prevents the Darwinists and materialistic philosophers from digging into the intellectual mines of the ancients and helping themselves to the wealth of ideas they find in them; nor the divines from discovering Christian dogmas in Plato's philosophy and calling them "presentiments," as in Dr. Lundy's *Monumental Christianity*, and other like modern works.

Of such "presentiments" the whole literature — or what remains of this sacerdotal literature — of India, Egypt, Chaldæa, Persia, Greece and even of Guatemala (*Popul Vuh*), is full. Based on the same foundation-stone — the ancient Mysteries — the primitive religions, all without one exception, reflect the most important of the once universal beliefs, such, for instance, as an impersonal and universal divine Principle, absolute in its nature, and unknowable to the "brain" intellect, or the conditioned and limited cognition of man. To imagine any witness to it in the manifested universe, other than as Universal Mind, the Soul of the Universe — is impossible. That which alone stands as an undying and ceaseless evidence and proof of the existence of that One Principle, is the presence of an undeniable design in kosmic mechanism, the birth, growth, death and transformation of everything in the universe, from the silent and unreachable stars down to the humble lichen, from man to the invisible lives now called microbes. Hence the universal acceptation of "Thought Divine," the Anima Mundi of all antiquity. This idea of Mahat (the great) Akasha or Brahma's aura of transformation with the Hindus, of Alaya, "the divine Soul of thought and compassion" of the trans-Himalayan mystics; of Plato's "perpetually reasoning Divinity," is the oldest of all the doctrines now known to, and believed in, by man. Therefore they cannot be said to have originated with Plato, nor with Pythagoras, nor with any of the philosophers within the historical period. Say the *Chaldæan Oracles*: "The works

² Sargon, the first "Semitic" monarch of Babylonia, the prototype and original of Moses, is now placed 3,750 years B.C. (p. 21), and the Third Dynasty of Egypt "some 6,000 years ago," hence some years before the world was created, agreeably to Biblical chronology. (Vide *Hibbert Lectures on Babylonia*, by A. H. Sayce, 1887, pp. 21 and 33)

of nature co-exist with the intellectual, spiritual Light of the Father. For it is the Soul which adorned the great heaven, and which adorns it after the Father."

"The incorporeal world then was already completed, having its seat in the Divine Reason," says Philo, who is erroneously accused of deriving his philosophy from Plato.

In the Theogony of Mochus, we find Æther first, and then the air; the two principles from which Ulom, the *intelligible* God (the visible universe of matter) is born.

In the Orphic hymns, the Eros-Phanes evolves from the Spiritual Egg, which the æthereal winds impregnate, wind being "the Spirit of God," who is said to move in æther, "brooding over the Chaos" — the Divine "Idea." In the Hindu *Kathopanishad*, Purusha, the Divine Spirit, stands before the original Matter; from their union springs the great Soul of the World, "Maha-Atma, Brahm, the Spirit of Life"; these latter appellations are identical with the Universal Soul, or Anima Mundi, and the Astral Light of the Theurgists and Kabalists.

Pythagoras brought his doctrines from the eastern sanctuaries, and Plato compiled them into a form more intelligible than the mysterious numerals of the Sage — whose doctrines he had fully embraced — to the uninitiated mind. Thus, the Kosmos is "the Son" with Plato, having for his father and mother the Divine Thought and Matter. The "Primal Being" (*Beings*, with the Theosophists, as they are the collective aggregation of the divine Rays), is an emanation of the Demiurgic or Universal Mind which contains from eternity the idea of the "to be created world" within itself, which idea the unmanifested Logos produces of Itself. The first Idea "born in darkness before the creation of the world" remains in the unmanifested Mind; the second is this Idea going out as a reflection from the Mind (now the manifested Logos), becoming clothed with matter, and assuming an objective existence.

As Krishna truly says — the same words being repeated later by another *vehicle* of the LOGOS — "I am the same to all beings . . . those who worship me (the 6th principle or the intellectual *divine* Soul, *Buddhi*, made conscious by its union with the higher faculties of *Manas*) are in me, and I am in them." The Logos, being no personality but the universal principle, is represented by all the divine Powers *born of its mind* — the pure Flames, or, as they are called in Occultism, the "Intellectual Breaths" — those angels who are said to *have made themselves independent, i.e.*, passed from the passive and quiescent, into the active state of Self-Consciousness. When this is recognized, the true meaning of Krishna becomes comprehensible.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 318

INTEGRITY AND INTEGRATION

To call an individual a man of integrity is to accord him high praise indeed. The designation, when deserved, indicates a higher stage of development than most men have attained. Integrity means, by one definition, "uprightness of character, probity, honesty." A man of integrity is incorruptible, making his decisions without fear or favour, when in a post of authority; doing his duty meticulously and honestly when placed under Karma in a subordinate position.

Integrity implies dependability. People trust intuitively a man of integrity and he never betrays that trust. Rectitude, or uprightness in character and conduct, is named by Krishna among "the marks of him whose virtues are of a godlike character" (*The Bhagavad-Gita*, XVI. 1, 3). It seems appropriate that it is flanked by mortification and by harmlessness — mortification of one's lower self and the curbing of its ebullitions; harmlessness towards all.

Integrity, however, has another meaning — "wholeness." The word is derived from the Latin *integritas* and it from *integer*, meaning "whole." And the Old English root from which "whole" is derived has also the derivative "hale," meaning "of sound and vigorous health." The whole man is an integrated man, not a compartmentalized being such as is the average individual today.

Integrity in the highest sense demands true integration. Modern psychologists use the latter word for "an orderly arrangement of the physical, emotional and mental components of the personality into a more or less stable and harmonious pattern of behaviour." That is not the integration which Theosophy holds up as our objective, though true integration will indeed produce a fully "stable and harmonious pattern of behaviour." At present, the close integration of the incarnated aspect of the mind and the desire nature of the personality is, alas, only too common. In such a case the mind is often the abject slave of the desires, feeding with thought the selfish inclinations which it schemes to gratify.

Desires would die of inanition, like a fire denied fuel, if man did not keep them alive by thought. All desires for self-gratification, whether through the titillation of the senses by self-indulgence or through the mental and emotional "tranquillizers" of praise, admiration, power or place, must be abjured by one who would achieve the Higher Integration, that of body, soul and spirit. This, with the complete knowledge it confers, can be attained in incarnated existence alone. The wheel of birth, death and rebirth will, however, ceaselessly revolve until man, using the key of *Viraga*, "indifference to pleasure and to pain," turns from the gewgaws of desire to seek to know himself as a spiritual being, one in essence with the All.

What does it mean to detach oneself from pleasure and pain? It means to cease to identify Self with the body, to cease to identify Self with

either the good side or the dark side of life. . . . Self is neither prosperity nor pain. Pain and pleasure come from identification of Self with what is experienced. The moment the identification is cut off, the body is here if we choose to use it, and pleasure and pain are here if we choose to experience them; otherwise, we are outside their sphere of influence. It is difficult for us to get this view, but that is the very purpose of our struggle on earth. (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vol. XXIV, p. 64)

Only when that detachment is achieved in some degree will it be possible for some of us, sincerely and wholeheartedly, to covet that power which shall make us "appear as nothing in the eyes of men," to desire to become "*a mere beneficent force in Nature.*" For that we must repudiate the tawdry and strive with all the force of our being towards the True.

Having that attitude we shall indulge in no pride in the conquest of a hillock, though it may invigorate us for a further climb. At every step in advance, however, we have to search our hearts to be sure that we seek only the way which shall lead us to fitness for better service, and that no hope for personal power and glory lurks within, but only gratitude to Those who have reached the eternal heights of human perfection and attained full spiritual integration, for the example and encouragement They give.

Speaking on the tenth anniversary of the East Asian Institute in New York late in May, Dr. Grayson Kirk, the distinguished President of Columbia University, spoke of creative work at many of the great Universities of the U.S.A. in the field of Asian studies. Columbia University, he said, had every year distinguished visiting scholars from Asia, whom he credited with quickening the intellectual climate; and for a decade had been developing undergraduate courses dealing with India, China and Japan.

The American Embassy's News Letter of 3rd June quotes Dr. Kirk as believing "that an essential part of the liberal education of a young American should be a knowledge of the great non-Western cultural traditions." Hence, he said, courses on India, China and Japan had been created "to parallel the long-established humanities and contemporary civilization courses of Columbia University which deal with Western traditions."

This represents a direct contribution to the second object of the Theosophical Movement of our time, promoting as it does "the study of Aryan and other Scriptures, of the World's religion and sciences," and vindicating, as this must, "the importance of old Asiatic literature, namely, of the Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian philosophies."

STUDIES IN THE SECRET DOCTRINE

VI.—REVELATION—TRUE AND FALSE

[Reprinted from *Theosophy*, Vol. XI, pp. 257-63, for April 1923.

—Eds.]

We have seen that *The Secret Doctrine* establishes two kinds of Knowledge, Absolute and Relative, and bridges the chasm between these by Esoteric Knowledge; on the other hand Agnosticism (in its true sense of course) obscures all Knowledge and plunges relative Knowledge in the depths of Nescience. Avidya, Aparavidya, Gupta-vidya and Paravidya have been the four factors of study for us.

Leaving aside Agnosticism, Nescience, Avidya, let us say a word or two about Relative Knowledge, Aparavidya. It is said to deal with illusions, non-realities. Hasty inferences are very commonly indulged in, and we should guard ourselves against them. The Doctrine of Maya has worked havoc among the followers of the Brahmanical creed: it has been misunderstood and wrongly applied, with the result that individual, national and racial catastrophes have resulted. This highly philosophical doctrine can be truly comprehended by the mystic, but to do so he must possess the necessary adequate knowledge of several propositions of the Esoteric Science, one of which pertains to the subject-matter now under consideration.

Maya or Illusion caused by Avidya or Agnosticism is very different from that caused by Aparavidya or Relative Knowledge.

The illusion of Agnosticism and that of Relative Knowledge are clearly referred to in *The Secret Doctrine*. It speaks of how the doctrine of illusion is misunderstood and “perverted by Western schools” and says:—

All that which *is*, emanates from the ABSOLUTE, which, from this qualification alone, stands as the one and only reality — hence, everything extraneous to this Absolute, the generative and causative Element, *must* be an illusion, most undeniably. But this is only so from the purely metaphysical view. . . . Everything is relative in this Universe, everything is an illusion. But the experience of any plane is an actuality for the percipient being, whose consciousness is on that plane; though the said experience, regarded from the purely metaphysical standpoint, may be conceived to have no objective reality. (Volume I, pp. 295-6)

Alongside with this let us ponder over the following:—

The Universe is called, with everything in it, MAYA, because all is temporary therein, from the ephemeral life of a fire-fly to that of the Sun. Compared to the eternal immutability of the ONE, and the changelessness of that Principle, the Universe, with its evanescent ever-changing forms, must be necessarily, in the mind of a philosopher, no better than a will-o'-the-wisp. Yet, the Universe is real enough to the conscious beings in it, which are as unreal as it is itself. (Volume I, p. 274)

When *The Secret Doctrine* says that the “spark journeys through the Seven Worlds of Maya,” it does not refer to the illusions of Nescience but to the unfoldment of the spark into the Flame by the very necessary illusions of Relative Knowledge. It is said:—

Maya or illusion is an element which enters into all finite things, for everything that exists has only a relative, not an absolute, reality, since the appearance which the hidden noumenon assumes for any observer depends upon his power of cognition. . . . Nothing is permanent except the one hidden absolute existence which contains in itself the noumena of all realities. The existences belonging to every plane of being, up to the highest Dhyan-Chohans, are, in degree, of the nature of shadows cast by a magic lantern on a colourless screen; but all things are relatively real, for the cognizer is also a reflection, and the things cognized are therefore as real to him as himself. . . . Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached “reality”; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya. (Volume I, pp. 39-40)

From this we see that the worlds of Maya are the worlds of Relative Knowledge. Our experiences are “inextricably bound up with the relativity of human knowledge.” This is the “Maya of phenomenal existence.” Says *The Secret Doctrine*:—

. . . according to our teaching which regards this phenomenal Universe as a great *Illusion*, the nearer a body is to the UNKNOWN SUBSTANCE, the more it approaches *reality*, as being removed the farther from this world of *Maya*. (Volume I, pp. 145-6)

Absolute Knowledge also is Absolute Reality. That which lies buried and hidden in the silence of Gupta Vidya is a mystery. Under the guidance of Nature and her laws we are initiated into the mysterious workings of her being, and from one aspect and factor of Relative Knowledge we go to a succeeding one. To make a deliberate and conscious effort to realize what is hidden is to be a practical Theosophist — an earnest student of Gupta Vidya; is to be initiated into the Perceptive Mystery to which *The Secret Doctrine* refers as shown in our third study.

Manifestations of Noumenal Knowledge produce phenomenal knowledge which we have designated relative. It may be called Typal Knowledge and is comparable to the shadows of the One Noumenal Reality — Absolute Knowledge. The shadows resemble, and in a sense represent, the substance. But typal knowledge is begotten of Arche-

typal Knowledge, which may be compared to an Image. Noumenal or Absolute Knowledge reproduces itself, as an image — Archetypal or Esoteric Knowledge, and the latter reflects itself causing shadows of phenomenal knowledge.

When we busy ourselves with shadows regardless of the image in which they are rooted, we mistake them for substance, invest them with spurious values, and generally lose ourselves in the mazes of phenomenalism, falling into the pit of Avidya — Agnosticism. On the other hand when we discriminate between aspects and factors of Relative Knowledge, in terms of different and successive phases of evolution through which we pass, we are able to recognize them as valuable helps, leading towards the Image-Source, and finally to the Ultimate Reality referred to in one of the above quotations from *The Secret Doctrine*.

This valuable help is always available for the earnest and sincere man who seeks for Truth and is not satisfied with a creed, who demands Knowledge and rejects mere belief, who follows the faith of his Inner God and not of the father of his body. It is said that the Word of the Wisdom and the Voice of the Masters always abide in the world.

We have compared Apara-Vidya or Relative Knowledge to Manas, but, like Manas in the human constitution, Relative Knowledge has a triple aspect — (1) Higher, (2) Lower, and (3) Antaskarana, or the bridge between the two. This bridge is Apara-Vidya distinct from Avidya which is Manas influenced, energized and ensouled by Kama, or lower Manas. Antaskarana has a relation to Higher Mind — the word of the Wisdom to be seen in the world, the Voice of the Master to be heard in the world, the ray of the Sun of Gupta-Vidya — Archetypal Knowledge which we have compared to Buddhi.

Thus between Relative Knowledge and Archetypal Knowledge is Theosophy, written, spoken, made public — the Exoteric Wisdom-Religion. It is from the same source as the Heart Doctrine of the Buddha, the Parables of the Christ, the secret teachings spoken by guru to chelas, the real and true Revelations or Shruti.

H.P.B. reiterates the fact of the existence of the Original Doctrines from which all others emanate. The Tree of Knowledge has many branches with manifold leaves, buds, blooms, flowers and fruits — but the Root is one. To this she gives the name of Bodhism, “which by many ages antedates the metaphysical philosophy of Siddhartha Sakyamuni”; nay, antedates the Vedas themselves (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 143). Says *The Secret Doctrine*:—

But it is perhaps desirable to state unequivocally that the teachings, however fragmentary and incomplete, contained in these volumes, belong neither to the Hindu, the Zoroastrian, the Chaldean, nor the Egyptian religion, neither to Buddhism, Islam, Judaism nor Christianity exclusively. The Secret Doctrine is the essence of all these. Sprung from it in their

origins, the various religious schemes are now made to merge back into their original element, out of which every mystery and dogma has grown, developed, and become materialized. (Volume I, p. viii)

A little more definite information about the Wisdom-Religion or Bodhism is conveyed in the following passage:—

We can assert, with entire plausibility, that there is not one of all these sects — Kabalism, Judaism, and our present Christianity included — but sprang from the two main branches of that one mother-trunk, the once universal religion, which antedated the Vedic ages — we speak of that pre-historic Buddhism which merged later into Brahmanism. (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 123)

A careful study of Mme. Blavatsky's views on the subject reveals to us the important fact that there is sufficient material extant in sacred works, little studied and less understood, to prove a universal basic system of thought which gave birth to all true religious philosophies, which explains all phenomena of a mystical and occult nature, and which is man's only true and reliable guide in this world of Agnosticism and relative knowledge. His *real* salvation lies in being initiated into that Perceptive Mystery which is now forgotten, and which is the Soul of that basic system of thought. An illuminating passage on the subject will be found in *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, p. 99.

Thus we begin to realize the significant and important fact that in relative knowledge can be found sure indicators to the Gupta-Vidya or Archetypal Knowledge. If we clear away the debris of Avidya-Agnosticism and cleanse the Apara-Vidya, Relative Knowledge, of the forgeries, vandalism and general craftiness of priesthoods and their victims, human ignorance, superstition and credulity, we arrive at a basic and fundamental Revelation or Shruti in the light of which all Laws and Traditions or Smriti assume a universal and true aspect. These are the types whose parent and source is the Esoteric Science, Gupta-Vidya or Archetypal Knowledge, to be obtained by initiation into the Perceptive Mystery.

Spiritual exploitation has taken place in reference to this fact of the existence of a true Shruti or Revelation. Like other sacred truths this one also has been distorted. Priests are exploiters of spiritual patriotism as politicians are of national, and that has been so for ages past from China to Peru. Sri Krishna's injunction in the *Gita* (XVI, 34) to act according to "what is declared in Holy Writ" has been wrongly interpreted by the orthodox Brahmanical priesthood, as the Western Church has exploited for its own purposes verses 18-19 of *Revelation* about adding to "the prophesy of this book" or taking away from "the book of this prophesy." In more than one Upanishad serious injunction is issued to study the Veda, to follow its advice, to practise its teachings, to obey its doctrines. In the *Svetasvataraopanishad* (VI, 18) it is said that He who creates Brahma also de-

livers the Vedas to Brahma, and therefore *Maitriopanishad* (VII, 10) issues a warning against the state of false or non-Vedic doctrine, and points out the necessity of studying the right Vedas. What is meant thereby is of course this real Shruti-Revelation of the universal basic Wisdom-Religion to which we have referred.

Similarly, the Laws of the Prophets and Traditions or Smriti have a universal aspect and basis. That is why the *Chandogyopanishad* says that the pure nature of the Soul arises out of pure nourishment and in the pure Nature Smriti¹ becomes firmly fixed. Race Memory in the form of immemorial tradition is the Reminiscence of which *The Key to Theosophy* speaks.

This universality and impersonality make the Vedas — Shruti-Revelation, constant and consistent. It is said that the Vedas are *svatah-pramana*, that is, self-evident, and *Apurushya*, universal, in the sense that they are not the inventions of any particular persons and therefore are also impersonal. Every Spiritual Teacher of the Wisdom from Sri Krishna to Muhammad has affirmed — “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.” From the Vedas of ancient Aryavarta down to H.P.B.’s *Secret Doctrine*, all proclaim the existence, immortal and immemorial, of “the same ancient wisdom-doctrine, one and identical.”² But priests are the enemies of the prophets, advocates and upholders of the letter that killeth and destroyers of the Spirit that giveth life.

We find ourselves between the Scylla of believing fanaticism in distorted scriptures which are put forward as Shruti-Revelation, and the Charybdis of modern and existing priesthoods now engaged in the distortion of the ancient Secret Doctrine; the former evoke the authority of immemorial traditions while the latter claim, in the name of tolerance and advancing knowledge, acceptance of false doctrines, whose genesis and origin is allegorically described in the *Maitriopanishad* (VII, 10). Let us protect ourselves from that “very different doctrine” upon which “fools here live their life . . . destroying the saving raft and praising what is false. They see the false as if it were true as in jugglery.”

In the light of the above the reader is invited to peruse with care the following extracts from an article entitled “What is Truth,” in *Lucifer*, Vol. I, February 1888:—

Is there such a thing as *absolute truth* in the hands of any one party or man? Reason answers, “there cannot be.” There is no room for absolute truth upon any subject whatsoever, in a world as finite and conditioned

¹ Max Müller and more than one Hindu translator have rendered Smriti as Memory. Dr. Robert Hume seems to us to have caught the real spirit of the original in rendering it as “the traditional doctrines.”

² *Isis Unveiled*, II, 99.

as man is himself. But there are relative truths, and we have to make the best we can of them.

In every age there have been Sages who have mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in *our* race, has, or could have given out, the whole and the final truth to another man, for every one of us has to find that (to him) final knowledge *in* himself. As no two minds can be absolutely alike, each has to receive the supreme illumination *through* itself, according to its capacity, and from no *human* light. The greatest adept living can reveal of the Universal Truth only so much as the mind he is impressing it upon can assimilate, and no more. *Quot homines, tot sententiæ* — is an immortal truism. . . .

. . . though *absolute* truth is not on earth and has to be searched for in higher regions . . . there still are, even on this silly, ever-whirling little globe of ours, some things that are not even dreamt of in Western philosophy.

To return to our subject. It thus follows that, though “*general abstract* truth is the most precious of all blessings” for many of us, as it was for Rousseau, we have, meanwhile, to be satisfied with relative truths. In sober fact, we are a poor set of mortals at best, ever in dread before the face of even a relative truth, lest it should devour ourselves and our petty little preconceptions along with us. As for an absolute truth, most of us are as incapable of seeing it as of reaching the moon on a bicycle. Firstly, because absolute truth is as immovable as the mountain of Mahomet, which refused to disturb itself for the prophet, so that he had to go to it himself. And we have to follow his example if we would approach it even at a distance. Secondly, because the kingdom of absolute truth is not of this world, while we are too much of it. . . .

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

In the above we decipher the several aspects of Knowledge or Vidya we have been studying. Absolute Knowledge is a matter of illumination, which follows the search in higher regions, and during

which "man is at one with the Universal Mind," which as we have seen before is Sophia, Shakti, Daiviprakriti. On the other hand there is the danger of our being caught up in the maze of Avidya and worshipping the wisdom of our own creation.

The earnest student will do well to ponder the extracts which follow in connection with those which have gone before. If in the above are to be found references to Noumenal Knowledge and typal Knowledge and Agnosticism, in what follows will be found traces of Archetypal Knowledge in both its aspects, exoteric and esoteric.

What constitutes real knowledge? The question lies at the very threshold of occult study. . . . That query is, in actual practice, the first put before a regular student of occultism, who is taken in hand by the Professors of the Occult World. And the student is taught — or is led to see — that there are two kinds of knowledge, the real and the unreal; the real concerned with eternal verities and primal causes, the unreal with illusory effects. . . . there is but one eternal verity and, in pursuit of that, thought is forced to travel along one road. . . . But can the eternal verity be reached? Even if hard facts be acknowledged as illusion so far as they are transitory, is not that which is exempt from change removed from observation? Must we not follow up the theoretical admission of the possibility of real knowledge, by the practical admission that no human being can ever have anything to do with it? . . . Who possess the real knowledge as contradistinguished from the unreal? — the student of Occultism is asked, and he is taught to reply — that which we have shown to be the only possible reply — "the adepts alone possess the real knowledge, their minds alone being *en rapport* with the universal mind."³

The Knowledge of the Adepts is Archetypal Knowledge — Gupta Vidya, the Buddhi, which is the Vehicle of Atma — Para Vidya. This Archetypal Knowledge has a revealed aspect — the Universal and Impersonal Wisdom-Religion, and an esoteric one into the mysteries of which one has to be initiated.

"He whom the Eternal Word condescendeth to teach is disengaged at once from the labyrinth of human opinions."

—B. P. WADIA

Of all duties the principal one is to acquire the knowledge of the supreme soul (the spirit); it is the first of all sciences, for it alone confers on man immortality.

—CODE OF MANU

³ *A Modern Panarion*, pp. 450-452 [*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 32*, pp. 13-14].

“UNMERITED KARMA”

The term “unmerited Karma” may seem strange to those who have thought that every effect has its antecedent cause, and that both are linked to the actor, the sufferer or enjoyer. It seems to cut the ground from under our feet, for, if we are to trust the Law, that is to say, the perfect adjustment of cause to effect-cause, how can any Karma be unmerited?

It is a human failing to think that things are either white or black, lawful or lawless; in point of fact, while black is black and white is white, there are many grades and differences as one merges into the other. So with the strict law of cause-effect, action-reaction.

In *The Key to Theosophy* we read:—

ENQ. But, surely, all these evils which seem to fall upon the masses somewhat indiscriminately are not actual merited and INDIVIDUAL Karma?

THEO. No, they cannot be so strictly defined in their effects as to show that each individual environment, and the particular conditions of life in which each person finds himself, are nothing more than the retributive Karma which the individual generated in a previous life. We must not lose sight of the fact that every atom is subject to the general law governing the whole body to which it belongs, and here we come upon the wider track of the Karmic law. Do you not perceive that the aggregate of individual Karma becomes that of the nation to which those individuals belong, and further, that the sum total of National Karma is that of the World? The evils that you speak of are not peculiar to the individual or even to the Nation, they are more or less universal; and it is upon this broad line of Human interdependence that the law of Karma finds its legitimate and equable issue. . . .

It is impossible that Karma could readjust the balance of power in the world's life and progress, unless it had a broad and general line of action. It is held as a truth among Theosophists that the interdependence of Humanity is the cause of what is called Distributive Karma, and it is this law which affords the solution to the great question of collective suffering and its relief. (pp. 200-1)

We have here corroboration of the fact that no man lives by himself alone; he affects others, they affect him. But it should be noted that “the law of Karma finds its legitimate and equable issue” along the “broad line of Human interdependence.” There is nothing unjust or unlawful about this. It is just that in certain cases it is the intermingling of different aspects of the one Law that brings apparent injustice to some.

What, then, is “unmerited” suffering? It is referred to more than once in *The Key to Theosophy*:—

We say that man suffers so much unmerited misery during his life, through the faults of others with whom he is associated, or because of his

environment, that he is surely entitled to perfect rest and quiet, if not bliss, before taking up again the burden of life. (p. 35)

After death it [the Ego] receives only the reward for the unmerited sufferings endured during its past incarnation. (p. 158)

One might say that he would rather be without the reward than suffer misery he did not deserve! So we need to understand this issue.

If it may be said that there is not a mental or physical suffering in the life of a mortal which is not the direct fruit and consequence of some sin in a preceding existence; on the other hand, since he does not preserve the slightest recollection of it in his actual life, and feels himself not deserving of such punishment, and therefore thinks he suffers for no guilt of his own, this alone is sufficient to entitle the human soul to the fullest consolation, rest, and bliss in his *post-mortem* existence. (*Key*, p. 159)

This is further explained in a footnote where it is stated that the essential idea behind the word “unmerited” is that “men often suffer from the effects of the actions done by others, effects which just do not strictly belong to their own Karma—and for these sufferings they of course deserve compensation.”

What does this mean? We can never act alone or live alone, and therefore there is such a thing as collective Karma. We suffer or enjoy because of the collective Karma of the times in which we are born. What causes us to take birth in a particular environment? Each birth takes place in the environment and with the opportunities which are the most suitable and the best possible for the Ego. It is owing to our particular Karma that we cannot find the perfect environment and have to use whatever is available to us. So in the real sense a bad environment is not unmerited, though the suffering personality, not seeing the causes, feels that he suffers unjustly.

There is, however, another aspect we can ponder over. Emerson tells us that “everything has its price.” In some cases it brings joy and happiness; in some cases it involves suffering. Did the Christ earn his early death by crucifixion? We know that such a terrible Karma does not come to an Adept because of his past misdeeds. Why then did he suffer? Anyone who gives out spiritual truths has to pay the price for so doing. If a man decides that he will, for one purpose or another, go to another country, then he has to pay the price by facing the effects of that country’s environment upon him. He has not technically earned the Karma of suffering from the noise and dirt or other defects of the country, but to suffer in this wise is a natural consequence of his decision to go to that country. Similarly, a soldier goes to war. It may not be his individual actions in the past that bring him wounds or misery; but the fact of his joining the army necessitates that he must pay the price for that action. Let us not forget that the soldier came into incarnation among warring people under Karma,

and that he is linked with the consequent collective suffering.

One of the most wonderful and stimulating passages on Karma is in *The Secret Doctrine*:—

It is only the knowledge of the constant re-births of one and the same individuality throughout the life-cycle; the assurance that the same MONADS — among whom are many Dhyān-Chohans, or the “Gods” themselves — have to pass through the “Circle of Necessity,” rewarded or punished by such rebirth for the suffering endured or crimes committed in the former life . . . that can explain to us the mysterious problem of Good and Evil, and reconcile man to the terrible and *apparent* injustice of life. Nothing but such certainty can quiet our revolted sense of justice. For, when one unacquainted with the noble doctrine looks around him, and observes the inequalities of birth and fortune, of intellect and capacities; when one sees honour paid fools and profligates, on whom fortune has heaped her favours by mere privilege of birth, and their nearest neighbour, with all his intellect and noble virtues — far more deserving in every way — perishing of want and for lack of sympathy; when one sees all this and has to turn away, helpless to relieve the undeserved suffering, one’s ears ringing and heart aching with the cries of pain around him — that blessed knowledge of Karma alone prevents him from cursing life and men, as well as their supposed Creator. (II. 303-4)

Later on she likens the reincarnating ego to an actor who plays different parts.

The *inner*, or real man, who personates those characters, knows the whole time that he is Hamlet for the brief space of a few acts. . . . And he knows that he was, the night before, King Lear, the transformation in his turn of the Othello of a still earlier preceding night; but the outer, visible character is supposed to be ignorant of the fact. In actual life that ignorance is, unfortunately, but too real. Nevertheless, the *permanent* individuality is fully aware of the fact, though, through the atrophy of the “spiritual” eye in the physical body, that knowledge is unable to impress itself on the consciousness of the false personality. (*S.D.*, II. 306)

The following words should also be engraved on our hearts:—

But verily there is not an accident in our lives, not a misshapen day, or a misfortune, that could not be traced back to our own doings in this or in another life. (*S.D.*, I. 643-4)

It is therefore much safer for us to stick to the idea of universal justice and hold ourselves responsible for our misshapen days than to attribute it all to unmerited Karma! Acceptance of what looks like unmerited Karma can be turned to good account, for it offers us opportunities for building qualities and powers. So, instead of indulging in self-pity for having to suffer “through no cause of our own,” let us “welcome each rebuff” and strengthen our character.

FOR OLD SOULS IN YOUNG BODIES

WHO IS MY FRIEND?

"I like Vishnu, Mother," Raman said as he ran in from play. "He thinks everything I do is fine."

"I hope everything you do is right, Son!"

"Well, Srinivasan finds fault with me for the littlest thing he doesn't think I ought to have done. Why, today we had a race at recess time and I came in ahead of everybody and Vishnu shouted 'Jai!' But Srinivasan spoiled it all getting next to me as we went in and whispering, 'You didn't really win, you know, Raman; you started ahead of the rest.' Is that a nice way for a friend to talk?"

"Was it true, Son?"

"Ye-es, but I was just the least little bit ahead."

"Well, I think Srini was right and that he was a better friend of yours than Vishnu. It isn't winning if you don't win fairly."

"But I like people who like me, Mother!"

"Srini showed his liking for you better by wanting to help you be a friend he can respect. You know from your adventure stories that, when people want to climb a steep hill that is dangerous to climb, they rope themselves together so that if one slips the others can help to hold him up and keep him from getting a bad fall. Would you rather be roped next to a boy who is careful where he puts his own feet and who warns you if he sees you step on a slippery place, or one who thinks it doesn't matter where you step?"

"I'd rather be told if he sees the ground I'm stepping on is slippery!"

"Then?"

"Well then, I guess Srinivasan was right, Mother! I didn't feel quite good myself about having started first, but he made me feel worse and I didn't like it."

"We never do feel happy when we haven't acted honestly, so that's a good sign, Son! It shows the lighthouse of conscience is burning brightly."

"What's a lighthouse, Mother?"

"Where there are rocks near the surface that the sea hides, so that the captain of a ship can't see them, men build a tall house over them with a lamp that keeps flashing all night to warn ships away from the rocks. If a ship is anywhere near, each flash says to the captain, 'Don't come here! Danger here!' so that he can steer his ship away."

"Now when we want to do something that isn't fair, like starting ahead before the other boys in the race, a little voice in us that we call 'conscience' gives a warning. 'Don't do that! That isn't right!' And if we do it anyway, that little voice keeps on telling us, 'You oughtn't to have done that! It wasn't fair!' and makes us feel unhappy."

“How can we make it stop, Mother?”

“There are two ways, one safe and one very dangerous. The right way is to say to ourselves, ‘No, I see it was wrong! I must not cheat again!’ The other way—a very bad way indeed—is to say, ‘Who cares?’ or ‘So what? I won, didn’t I?’ That is very dangerous because the oftener we do it the weaker the little warning voice sounds, till at last we may not hear it at all! It’s like setting an alarm clock to wake us up in the morning at the right time. If we get up every morning as soon as it rings it keeps on waking us up. But if we say, day after day, ‘Never mind, I’ll sleep just a little longer,’ after a few days it doesn’t wake us any more; it rings, but we no longer hear it, and that is a very bad thing indeed, because then we do wrong without thinking at all, just as the captain may run his ship right on to the rocks because he doesn’t notice the warning light.”

“O Mother, I see that I did wrong to start before the other boys. I will try hard to remember and not do that again!”

“That’s my good boy! Now forget it, Son, but be thankful that you have a real friend like Srinii to help you to remember always to play fair!”

Have men’s sensibilities been blunted by the brutalities of the last two great wars and is man’s moral imagination being deadened by the continuing portrayal of violence in cinema and television and the cheap magazines and papers that casually dispense brutality? Mr. Norman Cousins considers very seriously “The Desensitization of Twentieth-Century Man” in his editorial in the *Saturday Review* of May 16th, moved thereto by the shock of the apparent unconcern of most bystanders at a scene of violence enacted at a New England railway station, when only three or four persons besides himself showed any interest in helping its victim.

Have we indeed “made our peace with violence”? Mr. Cousins maintains that the young killers whose crimes do evoke horror “belong to the larger world.” They may magnify and intensify its imperfections, but “they do not invent them.” He closes his editorial with a warning that should have wide publicity and serious pondering:—

The desensitization of twentieth-century man is more than a danger to the common safety. It represents the loss or impairment of the noblest faculty of human life — the ability to be aware both of suffering and beauty; the ability to share sorrow and create hope; the ability to think and respond beyond one’s wants. There are some things we have no right ever to get used to. One of these most certainly is brutality. The other is the irrational. Both brutality and the irrational have now come together and are moving towards a dominant pattern. If the pattern is to be resisted and changed, a special effort must be made. A very special effort.

THOUGHTS ON DEVACHAN

An understanding of the process and implications of the *devachanic* experience can be of value to the understanding of our nature. The proper grasp of the complexity of our natures and the relationship between the various principles provides the answer to the problems involved in knowing oneself.

The state of *devachan* or the heaven world is purely subjective. It is, in fact, produced by the operation of the subjective side of our nature, unobstructed by the demands and tensions resulting from our all-too-objective earth life. Such a condition, of course, is not possible during waking consciousness except in unusual and rare circumstances. For the most part, our ordinary conscious processes are a mixture of objective reactions to subjective forces. These reactions are modified by our environment, the restrictions and impetus provided by our everyday contacts and associations.

Devachan being free from all such exposures, we consider it as a state in which consciousness can function unimpeded by the modifications imposed by objective earth life. The fact that it is purely subjective accounts for the lack in that state of what we usually call progress, for progress, in the sense of conscious development, can take place only under conditions where contrasts prevail. We learn by comparing one thing with another. We make progress by intelligently comparing and resolving one experience in relation to another, in terms of an ideal objective. This is why it is stated that, in the final analysis, all persons act according to their understanding of the reason for existence. Thus the Christian will resolve his contrasting experiences in terms of his religion; the Hindu will interpret his experiences in terms of his religion; and the Theosophical student, in terms of his philosophy. From this it becomes clear that a proper understanding of the reason for existence is of prime importance for the correct understanding of our experiences, both here and in *devachan*.

We must understand that *devachan* is a necessary condition. We could not ordinarily obtain the full benefit of our experiences were it not for the interlude of *devachan*. In waking life we do not have the opportunity to assimilate all the impressions, hopes and desires that make up our lives. It is only under the completely subjective, hence protected, conditions in *devachan* that we can uninterruptedly pursue the highest thought and feelings of which we are capable, thus converting impressions and aspirations into faculty and character.

Devachan therefore is both desirable and necessary. But those of us who are students of Theosophy must endeavour to shorten our stay there, if we wish to fulfil the true purpose of life in the most effective manner. This purpose is: uninterrupted service in the cause of Brotherhood. But between the logical conception of a necessary objective and the ability to realize that objective there usually exists a con-

siderable gulf. This gulf is caused by lack of understanding and of control of our subjective natures. No matter how deep is our understanding of the necessity to help Masters in Their great Work for humanity, we shall not be able to avoid the interlude of *devachan* so long as we desire the joys that this state affords. Do we then desire this heaven of unnumbered years? Very probably we shall answer, "No," the reasons given usually being logical and in accord with the Theosophical teachings on the subject, such as: "We are unable to obtain new knowledge in *devachan*." "We are unable to work for our fellow men in that state." "It is a selfish condition of bliss, to be avoided if possible." "We wish to get back to earth life as soon as possible in order to continue our work of service and self-improvement."

To help us determine whether or not we have come to a point in our evolution where we really are capable of renouncing *devachan*, we should supply the answers to several pertinent questions. Do we prefer conditions wherein we can pursue our studies and philosophical pursuits to those where we can fulfil our obligatory and self-chosen duties and responsibilities? If we long for the former, we shall probably be unable to shorten or renounce *devachan*. Do we rationalize or even unconsciously ignore the failures, faults and errors of ourselves or of our loved ones? If we do, we probably have an abiding desire for the heavenly condition provided by *devachan*. Do we desire cultural accomplishments without consistently striving to acquire these for the purpose of being the better able to help others? If we do, then we can know that we probably shall be under the necessity of accepting a long *devachan*.

It is in the realm of our hidden nature that we must search for the motives for our actions. This is why the task is most difficult and tedious. Probably the most helpful characteristic we can have in this task is courage. It takes courage of the first order honestly to face the questions presented. It is no simple thing to be able to regard ourselves and our loved ones in the same impersonal manner in which we are inclined to regard mere acquaintances and casual associates. It is no small thing to engage in the performance of our immediate duties, though they be devoid of excellence, in preference to the pursuit of a cultured life. Yet it is necessary that we bring ourselves to such an attitude if we are ever to acquire the strength which will make it possible for us to avoid being detained in *devachan*.

So we see that resolution and understanding are necessary if we are to accomplish the objective we have set for ourselves. Zeal and enthusiasm are, of course, the keys to the situation. Enthusiasm is the generator of the force which will bring about the effective realization of our hopes and objectives. Enthusiasm is generated and sustained by keeping in view our ideals.

The difference between an enthusiastic attitude and uninspired,

routine work is well illustrated in the story of two workers engaged in the construction of a building. The one when asked what he was doing replied: "Can't you see, I am laying stones!" When the other worker was approached and asked the same question, he looked up and with great interest said: "I am helping to build a temple." So with the earnest disciple. By keeping the noble purpose of his work and life constantly in mind, he is always conscious that his efforts are directed toward building a Temple through which can manifest the teachings and forces of the Spirit.

This realization will furnish the enthusiasm necessary to sustain our efforts, even to the extent of overcoming the drag of *devachan*. This sustained enthusiasm is one of the ingredients which must be present if the disciple is to be helped by the Masters to return quickly after the death of the body, thus making possible the effective resumption of his labours in the service of mankind.

Sybil Devon described interestingly in the Winter 1959 issue of *Tomorrow* her repeated dream experience presaging the death of someone known only slightly if at all before the dream. She had experienced it four times and it always followed a similar pattern. She would dream of a black coach, drawn by four black horses, and then would soon learn of the death presaged. She dreamt of it first as a child of ten, a pupil in a Toronto convent, and it was her roommate from Quebec City whose father she saw in her dream on his death-bed, recognizing him later from a picture and also recognizing other members of the family she had seen in the dream.

Another time it was her landlord in a San Francisco apartment house; again the baby of acquaintances made shortly after she had seen them in such a prophetic dream in their ranch-style home. The fourth time it had been the owner of a hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, at which she and her husband were stopping, whom she dreamt she saw lying dead, the night after their arrival, and who dropped dead the following day.

Mrs. Devon mentions that, after her first dream experience of the black coach and four black horses, she had learned of some of her Irish ancestors' having had the same dream sometimes, which in their case, however, had presaged the death of a family member. Assuming the accuracy of her account, and whether or not Mrs. Devon owes her tendency to psychic sensitivity in part to her heredity, this recurring dream seems definitely to fall in the class of prophetic dreams.

SIMPLICITY

We cannot imagine an effect without a cause. Law is within us; our very nature demands that we manifest law, order, harmony, equity, justice, in all our dealings. Mistaking our nature, however, for something different, not understanding it, we unconsciously set in motion causes the effects of which some call fate, destiny, luck, God's will, because they do not recognize that they themselves have generated those causes.

The Law of Karma includes and means cause and effect: its two inseparable processes are sowing and reaping. Actions are causal, but they do not produce themselves; *we* cause them; we initiate actions and reap their effects. But we do not and cannot administer the Law — it administers itself.

Law operates from within us as well as from outside; it operates because of our action on some plane: "There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it or feel its effects."

Law operates on every plane, of which there are seven; every being is under Karmic law; every being is sevenfold. All beings spring from the same Source and travel toward the same Goal. "The Path is one for all," but "the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims." Why? Because each makes his own choices; each is free to choose how to act; each sows his own causes.

The ultimate Cause and Sustainer of all our actions is the Highest in us, the Real, the Self. From this comes all our power to act. But "no act is performed without a thought at its root either at the time of performance or as leading to it." When action proceeds from false, personal ideas it creates false positions, a faulty nature and unhappiness for its vehicle, the personal self. In reality, manifested Power is threefold and we have three fundamental powers: to create, to preserve and to destroy in order to regenerate. In the knowledge of this lies the root of self-knowledge. Beginning with this basic knowledge and watching and controlling ourselves, we can gain knowledge of ourselves as we are. In this lies hope.

It is the manner in which we use our threefold power that determines the quality of our personal nature and our Karma. At the very root of our being, as of the Universe, are Love, Law, Order, Harmony. This gives us a criterion for action.

Such is the Law which moves to righteousness,
Which none at last can turn aside or stay;
The heart of it is Love, the end of it
Is Peace and Consummation sweet. Obey!

This is the statement of an utter necessity — it is all there is to the matter.

Often the Great Teachers have pointed out that the spiritual life is simple. It is the ability to conceive and sense this essential simplicity

that is so difficult in the *Kali-Yuga*. By meditating on the One Life, the One Law, the One Path and the One Goal we shall begin to get the idea and become more simple in mind — provided we desire to do so — desire being the motor power that moves both mind and will.

It is the *becoming* that is difficult, of course. Grasping with the mind and intellect is much less of a task. As St. Paul wrote to the Romans,

... to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . .

I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (vii: 18-19, 22-23)

Let us never forget that an Adept *becomes*; he is not made. We are engaged in the work of becoming, the most difficult task that a man can possibly undertake; yet it is the reason why we are here in manifested life. Only as we *become* here on earth what we *are* in reality, do we progress toward the Goal which is one for all, although the means to reach it will vary in detail with each pilgrim-chooser. "Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself," states *The Voice of the Silence*; and a footnote adds, "In this Path, to whatever place one would go, *that place one's own self* becomes."

We are inclined to think about and gather much information and many details regarding our bafflingly complicated lower self. Let us add to this, gradually, the ability to let go details and turn our attention to the Inmost, which is always one and simple.

This is an age of diversity — let us endeavour to create and sustain in it a Centre and centres of Unity. On the basis of the Declaration of the U.L.T. and of Robert Crosbie's helpful letters amplifying and explaining it, this may be done in a practical, effectual, impersonal manner, even in this dark period in which we are living. Let us extract from these letters, and those of W. Q. Judge, the simple, straightforward principles of conduct that they indicate and which are concisely formulated for us in the Declaration. These are a Theosophical criterion: the simple pattern for creating and sustaining the only sort of unity that will live to regenerate the world. There is no other.

If you try to put into practice what in your inner life you hold to be right, you will be more ready to receive helpful thoughts and the inner life will grow more real.

—W. Q. JUDGE

PSYCHIC AND SPIRITUAL SEEING

Dr. Humphrey Osmond and Dr. John Smythies, both apparently practising psychiatrists in large Western hospitals, write in the April *Hibbert Journal* on "The Significance of Psychotic Experience." The subtitle of their article is "A Reply to Professor Zaehner," whose *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane*, was published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1957.

They take exception to his insistence on differentiating between "the vision of God of the mystical saint" and the "hallucinations of the lunatic." They say that in his book he is arguing "the Catholic case where only certain narrowly defined preternatural experiences are accepted," ascribing to mystical saints an experience of "a real God" and to psychotics "'unreal' lunatic hallucinations or even devilish counterfeits." They, on the contrary, find it plausible that

some mystical saints and some lunatics are undergoing essentially the same class of experience, although with different particular details, in very different personal and cultural settings.

This seems an over-simplification of the problem. And do not the writers err at least as seriously in one direction as Professor Zaehner does in the other when they confidently ascribe to "an inappropriate metaphysics" what they call "the Vedantist delusion of being identical with God in the shape of the metaphysical Absolute"? They seem to consider themselves more open-minded than "the 'average scientist,' dedicated to a 'one world' hypothesis," in that they concede "the reality of the existence of the Jungian collective unconscious . . . as an autonomous realm of *existence*, greatly to be admired and feared."

It may here be mentioned that, when Jung was a lad of 12 or 13 years, Madame H. P. Blavatsky had written in her *Secret Doctrine* of

those floating reminiscences, obscure and vague, which unite the broken links of the chain of time to form with them the mysterious, dream foundation of our collective consciousness. (II. 293)

The two doctors write of hallucinogenic drugs, such as mescaline, which open the door to preternatural experiences, but they recognize that these may be "perceptions of a non-personal psychic reality," though they suggest also other categories to which they may be ascribed. The teachings of Theosophy would agree that psychotic patients might well be "struggling with unpleasant realities rather than lost in their 'fancies.'" It is stated in *Isis Unveiled*, however, that, given a certain intensity of will, hallucinations may be created by the mind and become subjective. (I. 62)

It is explained in *The Theosophical Glossary*, under "Hallucinations," that "no one can see that which does not exist — *i.e.*, which is not impressed — in or on the astral waves." But it makes a dis-

inction between different types of seers, explaining that

while the drunkard, the madman, and the untrained medium, or one suffering from brain-fever, see, because they cannot help it, and evoke the jumbled visions unconsciously to themselves, the Adept and the trained Seer have the choice and the control of such visions. They know where to fix their gaze, how to steady the scenes they want to observe, and how to see beyond the upper outward layers of the Astral Light. With the former such glimpses into the *waves* are hallucinations: with the latter they become the faithful reproduction of what actually has been, is, or will be, taking place.

With the latter, there could be no possibility of self-deception or mistaking an unprogressed "Planetary" for the personal God as which it may be masquerading. For the former the dangers of dabbling in the muddy waters of the Astral Light, with its reflections of the earth's memories, are emphasized in our philosophy.¹

The psychiatrists may have outstripped the followers of other scientific disciplines in conceding the existence of a psychic realm in addition to the physical world. If Dr. Osmond and Dr. Smythies are typical, in their outlook, of their whole profession, however, they have not even glimpsed the possibility of truly spiritual vision or the "glories untold" which lie, "bathed in the sunlight of the Spirit . . . unseen by any save the eye of Soul."

If Western psychiatrists and psychologists would but take the help of ancient Indian psychology, as restated in modern Theosophy, they could advance far more rapidly in the right direction. Even knowledge of the constitution of sevenfold man and of the four states of consciousness should take them far towards truly scientific understanding.

There is one general law of vision (physical and mental or spiritual) but there is a qualifying special law proving that all vision must be determined by the quality or grade of man's spirit and soul, and also by the ability to translate divers qualities of waves of astral light into consciousness. There is but one general law of life, but innumerable laws qualify and determine the myriads of forms perceived and of sounds heard. There are those who are willingly and others who are *unwillingly* — blind. Mediums belong to the former, sensitives to the latter. Unless regularly initiated and trained — concerning the spiritual insight of things and the supposed revelations made unto man in all ages from Socrates down to Swedenborg and "Fern" — no self-tutored seer or clairaudient ever saw or heard *quite* correctly.

—A MASTER OF WISDOM

¹ Attention is invited to "The Hallucinogenic Mushrooms" in our July 1957 issue.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

How the astral light acts as "a powerful universal hypnotizer of human beings" is strikingly borne out by an incident reported in *Time* for May 11th.

At a U.S. Navy hospital, a 31-year-old chief petty officer suddenly broke off a casual conversation with a nine-year-old girl, grabbed her by the throat, choked her and held her under water in a near-by tub until she was dead. Charged with murder, he insisted that he could not remember the beginning of the attack and had just "suddenly discovered himself" strangling the girl.

The case is not unique. Courts and psychiatrists have time and again been baffled by the man who kills without apparent motive, yet appears sane before and after the crime. Psychiatrist Joseph Sat-ten and his Topeka research team attribute the phenomenon to temporary and partial loss of consciousness, resulting in a kind of "personality detachment." "I knew I was doing it," the murderous petty officer had confessed, "but it didn't seem like me. It was like watching myself doing it." In three other cases of sudden and apparently motiveless murder, the researchers got the same story of men blacking out and then seeming to be spectators at their own crimes.

Many a problem that baffles psychiatrists and scientists would be easy enough to understand if the existence and function of the astral light were recognized. An enormous screen or reflector, the astral light records the pictures of all acts, good and bad, done by our ancestors as by ourselves, and these, says Mr. Judge in the closing section of *Echoes from the Orient*,

are reflected into the subconscious mind of every human being. If you fill the astral light with bad pictures, just such as the present century is adept at creating, it will be our devil and destroyer, but if by the example of even a few good men and women a new and purer sort of events are limned upon this eternal canvas, it will become our Divine Uplifter.

This points to the necessity of keeping close watch over our thoughts, for thoughts are dynamic energies. Thinkers who brood mischief and dwell in thought upon crime are morally responsible for giving a weak brother an impulse to sin. Jasper Niemand brings this out in *Letters That Have Helped Me*:—

A thought, on its departure from the mind, is said to associate itself with an elemental; it is attracted wherever there is a similar vibration, or, let us say, a suitable soil, just as the winged thistle-seed floats off and sows itself in this spot and not in that, in the soil of its natural selection. Thus the man of virtue, by admitting a material or sensual thought into his mind, even though he expel it, sends it forth to swell the evil impulses of the man of vice from whom he imagines himself separated by a wide gulf, and to whom he may have just given a fresh impulse to sin. (pp. 18-19)

The objection Theosophy raises to capital punishment also has a bearing on this subject; for executed criminals, who are thrown out of life full of hate and revenge, keep on rehearsing in *kama loka* their crime, their trial, their execution and their revenge, and try to inject thoughts of murder and other crime into the brains of sensitive living persons.

Christ is said to have cursed a fig tree, and in a matter of hours, states the *Gospel According to St. Mark* (xi: 20), it was "dried up from the roots." The Rev. Franklin Loehr and his Religious Research Foundation in Los Angeles do not claim such dramatic results, but their experiments and findings, reported in a new book, *The Power of Prayer on Plants*, are of considerable interest.

When Presbyterian Loehr heard six years ago that Dr. J. B. Rhine, Duke University's famed investigator into extrasensory perception, was testing the effect of prayer on plants, he and his associates bought two sealed jars of water, prayed hard over one, ignored the other, and used them to water two equal sets of seeds, planted under identical conditions. Two weeks later the prayed-over water had produced seven seedlings, the ordinary water only three. He then began to set up more elaborate experiments. After more than 700 experiments conducted by about 150 people on 27,000-odd seeds and seedlings, concludes the Rev. Mr. Loehr,

our research has shown . . . that prayer can make a difference in the speed of seed germination and in the rate and vigour of plant growth. This in turn demonstrates two things: 1) that prayer is fact, and 2) that scientific laboratory research can be done in basic religious fields.

It has now become a well-known fact that plants have consciousness and intelligence, that they respond to emotions such as love and hate, and that their growth is affected by the nature of the individual who plants and looks after them. But to claim that the experiments belong to the realm of religious research seems unwarranted. Is it not the love and tender care bestowed on some plants that makes them thrive, and the emotion of hate showered on others that makes them wither away and die? In one experiment, we are told, the researchers directed against a seedling "several brief 'bursts' of negation — strong mental commands to grow no more . . . and it grew no more." In another instance, an experimenter resorted to calling her seedlings "Communists." "To her that is an epithet of disdain, scorn and active dislike. Those poor seeds seemed to twist and writhe under the negative power showered on them." By faith all things are possible. "Whosoever . . . shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith," was the explanation Jesus offered when questioned as to how he had succeeded in drying up the fig tree.

The experiments have produced a good result inasmuch as they point to our responsibility towards the lower kingdoms of Nature, for the potency of the human will can influence the growth and development of these "younger brothers" of ours for good or for ill. If used for ill, Nature hits back; if used beneficently, Nature looks on man as one of her creators and makes obeisance.

Shri S. B. Muthe Gowda, in an article in *The Deccan Herald* (Bangalore) for June 8th, entitled "Religious Awakening," ascribes to "the Theosophical Movement under Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky" some of the credit for having furnished the necessary corrective in South India to "the spirit of heterodoxy and heresy" which Western influences had brought.

It is no doubt true that *The Theosophist's* drawing attention in its pages to the spiritual wealth of ancient India, which Madame Blavatsky stressed also in her books, did contribute materially to brightening the future of India and to bringing nearer the day of her regeneration. In giving to India's sons, as well as to Occidental readers, the knowledge that the ancestors of present-day Indians, whom Western education had led to underrate their ancestral wisdom, were intellectual giants, she helped to make the Indians of the day conscious of the greatness of their heritage.

But to say, as Shri Muthe Gowda does, perhaps influenced by Mrs. Annie Besant's later nationalist activities, which were political, not Theosophical, that the Theosophical Movement was "strongly nationalistic in character" is to dwarf its aims and scope. In a note signed "Ed." in *The Theosophist* for March 1884 (Vol. V, p. 150) it was said:—

...properly speaking, there is no "Esoteric Christianity," no more than there is Esoteric Hinduism, Buddhism or any other "ism." We know of one Esoteric doctrine — "the universal secret Wisdom-Religion" of old. The latter embraces every one of the great creeds of the antiquity, while none of these can boast of having it in its entirety. Our mission is to gather all these scattered rays, bring them back to one focus, and thus help those who will come after us to unveil some day the glorious sun of Truth.

Dr. Walter C. Till, Reader in Coptic in the University of Manchester, considers the Gnostic library discovered by Egyptian farmers in 1945 or 1946 near the modern village of Naga Hammadi in Upper Egypt as no less important than the Dead Sea Scrolls. All but one of the 13 MSS. found hidden in a vessel, presumably because of persecution, are now in the Coptic Museum in Cairo, awaiting study and editing by an international committee formed in 1956. The one manuscript taken out of Egypt, now the property of the C. G. Jung-

Institut in Zurich, contains four texts. One, called "The Gospel of the Truth," was published in Zurich in 1956. Dr. Till writes of another in an article in the March 1959 *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Manchester, entitled "New Sayings of Jesus in the Recently Discovered Coptic 'Gospel of Thomas,'" which he suggests might be dated c. 400 A.D. He is confident that the author was not the Apostle Thomas, many ancient works having been ascribed to well-known characters to heighten the works' importance.

The text contains 114 logia, some mere "sayings of Jesus," some short conversations with him, variants in some cases of Gospel accounts. On the basis of inconsistencies, Dr. Till believes they come from different sources. The text gives also many variations of parables found in the four Gospels and a few hitherto unknown.

Especially interesting from the standpoint of Theosophy are the further evidences here that the Christian teacher had a secret teaching. The title of the text begins thus: "These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus said and Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down." And the first logion reads thus: "He who will find out the interpretation of these words will not taste death." When Thomas called him "Master," Jesus is reported to have replied: "I am not thy master, for thou hast drunk from the bubbling fountain. . . ." And he is said to have taken Thomas aside and told him three words, of which Thomas, when questioned by his companions, said: "If I tell you one of the words he has told me you will take up stones and throw them at me and fire will come out of the stones and burn you up."

Where Jesus is quoted as saying: "Blessed are the solitaries and the elect, for you will find the kingdom because you come from it and you will return to it," Dr. Till gives his opinion that the word "solitaries" is used, not in the usual sense of "monk," but rather in the sense of "the lonely one" — "not so much," he thinks, "in the sense of a hermit . . . but of a person standing alone with the advanced development of his knowledge (gnosis) who, therefore, is not one of the mass."

Dr. Till offers a Theosophical interpretation of logion 3, which reads, "When you know yourselves you will be known and you will know that you are the sons of the living Father." He comments:—

I think we may suppose that "to be sons of the living Father" means that there is a divine spark in man, that man has taken his origin from the divine world of light whither the right knowledge (= Gnosis) will lead him back again.

Jesus is quoted in the same logion as saying: "If you do not know yourselves you are in poverty and you are poverty." In logion 67 he says: ". . . he who knows all the universe but does not know himself has missed everything."

Dr. Till mentions that "reincarnation is an essential feature in the Gnostic doctrine," but that it is not clearly mentioned in the "Gos-

pel of Thomas," though what may be a hint of it is given.

Truth and righteousness are stressed above practices, as when Jesus, asked by his disciples whether he wished them to fast and give alms and how they should pray and what diet they should observe, said: "Do not tell lies and do not do what you hate because everything is manifest before Heaven."

There would be many more Gnostic manuscripts but for the Christian persecution in which, Dr. Till writes, "nearly all the Gnostic books were destroyed," so much so that "the only available information about the ideas of the different Gnostic schools was, for a long time, only to be found in the contemporary books written against them."

In a talk at the dedication exercises of Colgate University's new library in Hamilton, New York, Mr. Norman Cousins rightly maintained that, although the factors in the contemporary crisis are new, the past has something of value to say to us. In his editorial in the *Saturday Review* of April 25th, "Books in the Bloodstream," drawn from that address, he urges the conversion of historical experience "into a design for a sane world" and the converting of "the vast processes of education into those ideas that can make this globe safe for the human diversity."

Mr. Cousins calls also for "the conversion of the individual morality into a group ethic." The highest individual ethics obviously should govern international and group relations, but is the present average individual morality fit for adoption as a group norm with peace and harmony as its aims? It would seem imperative first to take such steps as those outlined by a Master of Wisdom in defining, some 70 years ago, "The problem of true Theosophy and its great mission" as being

first, the working out of clear unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties, such as shall best and most fully satisfy the right and altruistic feelings in men; and second, the modelling of these conceptions for their adaptation into such forms of daily life, as shall offer a field where they may be applied with most equitableness. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 22*, p. 13)

We agree with Mr. Cousins that man is "infinitely perfectible." A stream can rise no higher than its source but man, deriving ultimately from the Absolute Unknowable, is indeed limitless in his possibilities of growth and unfoldment. Theosophy, however, while conceding "towering possibilities" in man to which those in positions of leadership could appeal, would reject the suggestion also made of man's being "infinitely malleable." This is irreconcilable with the basic factor of human free will, without which man could never rise to his full potentialities.
