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KRISHNA — THE AVATARA

[Before our next issue is out, the Hindu festival of Gokul Ashtami or Janmashtami will have taken place. It is also known as Krishna Jayanti, the Natal Day of Krishna. Tradition places his birth at the midnight hour on the eighth day in the second fortnight of the Hindu lunar month of Shravana; the day falls this year on the 28th of August.

Krishna is adored and worshipped by millions in India; and now in the Occident, thanks mainly to the work of the Theosophical Movement, the words of wisdom attributed to him and enshrined in the *Bhagavad-Gita* are read and practised by a growing number of people. But who *was* Krishna? Was he man or God? Teacher or bloodless myth? The following extracts from H.P.B.'s writings give some idea of the esoteric significance of the Avatara of Krishna.—EDS.]

KRISHNA. The most celebrated avatar of Vishnu, the "Saviour" of the Hindus and their most popular god. He is the eighth avatar, the son of Devaki, and the nephew of Kansa, the Indian King Herod, who while seeking for him among the shepherds and cowherds who concealed him, slew thousands of their newly-born babes. The story of Krishna's conception, birth, and childhood is the exact prototype of the New Testament story. The missionaries, of course, try to show that the Hindus stole the story of the Nativity from the early Christians who came to India. (*The Theosophical Glossary*)

AVATARA. Divine incarnation. The descent of a god or some exalted Being, who has progressed beyond the necessity of Rebirths, into the body of a simple mortal. Krishna was an avatar of Vishnu. . . . There are two kinds of avatars: those born from woman, and the parentless, the *anupapadaka*. (*The Theosophical Glossary*)

Christian philologists try to limit the meaning of Krishna's name to its derivation from *Krish*, "black"; but if the analogy and comparison of the Sanskrit with the Greek roots contained in the names of Chrêstos, Christos, and *Chrishna* are analysed more carefully, it will be found that they are all of the same origin. (*The Esoteric Character of the Gospels*)

The word Christos, like all Greek words, must be sought in its philological origin — the Sanskrit. In this latter language *Kris* means sacred, and the Hindu deity was named Chris-na (the pure or the sacred) from that.... In all languages, though the synonym of the word means pure or sacred essence, it is the first emanation of the invisible Godhead, manifesting itself tangibly in spirit. (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 158)

Has not the world witnessed, at rare intervals, the advent of such grand characters as Christna, Sakya-muni, and Jesus? Like the two latter personages, Christna seems to have been a real being, deified by his school at some time in the twilight of history, and made to fit into the frame of the time-honoured religious programme. Compare the two Redeemers, the Hindu and the Christian, the one preceding the other by some thousands of years; place between them Siddhartha Buddha, reflecting Christna and projecting into the night of the future his own luminous shadow, out of whose collected rays were shaped the outlines of the mythical Jesus, and from whose teachings were drawn those of the historical Christos; and we find that under one identical garment of poetical legend lived and breathed three real human figures. The individual merit of each of them is rather brought out in stronger relief than otherwise by this same mythical colouring; for no unworthy character could have been selected for deification by the popular instinct, so unerring and just when left untrammelled. *Vox populi, vox Dei* was once true, however erroneous when applied to the present priest-ridden mob. (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 536)

The *Kali Yuga* [began] just 4989 years ago at the death of Krishna, the bright "Sun-god," the once living hero and reformer. (*The Secret Doctrine* (1888), I. xliii)

All... public worship was exoteric, and the great universal symbols were distorted universally, as those of Krishna are now by the Vallabhacharyas of Bombay, the followers of the *infant* god. But are these

popular gods the *true Deity*? Are *they* the Apex and synthesis of the sevenfold creation, man included? Never! Each and all are one of the rungs of that septenary ladder of Divine Consciousness, pagan as Christian. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 335)

When mortals shall have become sufficiently spiritualized, there will be no more need of *forcing* them into a correct comprehension of ancient Wisdom. Men will *know* then, that there never yet was a great World-reformer, whose name has passed into our generation, who (*a*) was not a direct emanation of the Logos (under whatever name known to us), *i.e.*, an *essential* incarnation of one of "the seven," of the "divine Spirit who is sevenfold"; and (*b*) who had not appeared before, during the past Cycles. They will recognize, then . . . why Krishna and Buddha speak of themselves as *re-incarnations*, *i.e.*, Krishna is identified with the Rishi Narayana, and Gautama gives a series of his previous births; and why the former, especially, being "the *very supreme* Brahma," is yet called *Amsamsavatara* — "a part of a part" only of the Supreme on Earth. . . . The esoteric doctrine explains it by saying that each of these (as many others) had first appeared on earth as one of the seven powers of the Logos, individualized as a God or "Angel" (messenger); then, mixed with matter, they had re-appeared in turn as great sages and instructors who "taught the Fifth Race," after having instructed the two preceding races, had ruled during the Divine Dynasties, and had finally sacrificed themselves, to be reborn under various circumstances for the good of mankind, and for its salvation at certain critical periods; until in their last incarnations they had become truly only "the parts of a part" on earth, though *de facto* the One Supreme in Nature. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 358-59)

The more one studies their Hierarchies and finds out their identity, the more proofs one acquires that there is not one of the past and present *personal* gods, known to us from the earliest days of History, that does not belong to the third stage of Cosmic manifestation. In every religion we find the concealed deity forming the groundwork; then the ray therefrom, that falls into primordial Cosmic matter (first manifestation); then the androgyne result, the dual Male and Female abstract Force, personified (*second* stage); this separates itself finally, in the *third*, into seven Forces, called the creative Powers by all the ancient Religions, and the "Virtues of God" by the Christians. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 437-38)

Regarded in the light of the Logos, the Christian Saviour, like Krishna, whether as man or logos, may be said to have saved those who believed in the secret teachings from "eternal death," to have conquered the Kingdom of Darkness, or Hell, as every Initiate does. This in the human, terrestrial form of the Initiates, and also because the *logos* is Christos, that principle of our inner nature which develops in us into the Spiritual Ego — the Higher Self — being formed of the indissoluble union of *Buddhi* (the sixth) and the spiritual efflorescence of *Manas*, the fifth principle. "The Logos is passive Wisdom in Heaven and Conscious, Self-Active Wisdom on Earth," we are taught. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 230-31)

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 fn.)

No religion can prove by *practical*, scientific demonstration that there is such a thing as one *personal* God; while the esoteric philosophy, or rather the *theosophy* of Gautama Buddha and Shankaracharya, *proves* and gives means to every man to ascertain the undeniable presence of a living God in man himself — whether one believes in or calls his divine indweller Avalokiteswara, Buddha, Brahma, Krishna, Jehovah, Bhagawan, Ahura-mazda, Christ, or by whatever name — there is no such God outside of himself. The former — the one ideal outsider — *can never be demonstrated* — the latter, under whatever appellation, may always be found present if a man does not extinguish within himself the capacity to perceive this Divine presence, and hear the "voice" of that only manifested deity, the murmurings of the Eternal *Vach*, called by the Northern and Chinese Buddhist Avalokiteswara and Kwan-Shai-yin, and by the Christians — *Logos*. (*The Theosophist*, August 1883)

CAN THE MAHATMAS BE SELFISH ?

[This article first appeared in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, pp. 266-67, for August 1884, and was reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for July 1940.—EDS.]

In various writings on occult subjects, it has been stated that *unselfishness* is a *sine qua non* for success in occultism. Or a more correct form of putting it would be that the development of an unselfish feeling is in itself the primary training which brings with it "knowledge which is power" as a necessary accessory. It is not, therefore, "knowledge," as ordinarily understood, that the occultist works for, but it comes to him as a matter of course, in consequence of his having removed the veil which screens true knowledge from his view. The basis of knowledge exists everywhere, since the phenomenal world furnishes or rather abounds with facts, the causes of which have to be discovered. We see only the *effects* in the *phenomenal* world, for each cause in that world is itself the *effect* of some other cause, and so on; and, therefore, true knowledge consists in getting at the root of all phenomena, and thus arriving at a correct understanding of the *primal* cause, the "rootless root," which is not an effect in its turn.

To perceive anything correctly, one can use only those senses or instruments which correspond to the nature of that object. Hence, to comprehend the noumenal, a noumenal sense is a prerequisite; while the transient phenomena can be perceived by senses corresponding to the nature of those phenomena. Occult Philosophy teaches us that the seventh principle is the only eternal Reality, while the rest, belonging as they do to the "world of forms" which are non-permanent, are illusive in the sense that they are transient. To these is limited the phenomenal world which can be taken cognizance of by the senses corresponding to the nature of those six principles. It will thus be clear that it is only the *seventh* sense, which pertains to the *noumenal* world, that can comprehend the Abstract Reality underlying all phenomena. As this seventh principle is all-pervading, it exists potentially in all of us; and he who would arrive at true knowledge has to develop that sense in him, or rather he must remove those evils which obscure its manifestation.

All sense of *personality* is limited only to these lower six principles, for the former relates only to the "world of forms." Consequently, true "knowledge" can be obtained only by tearing away all the curtains of

Maya raised by a sense of *personality* before the *impersonal Atma*. It is only in that *personality* that is centred selfishness, or rather the latter creates the former and *vice versa*, since they mutually act and react upon each other. For, selfishness is that feeling which seeks after the aggrandizement of one's own egotistic personality to the exclusion of others. If, therefore, selfishness limits one to narrow personalities, absolute knowledge is impossible so long as selfishness is not got rid of. So long, however, as we are in this world of phenomena, we cannot be *entirely* rid of a sense of personality, however exalted that feeling may be in the sense that no feeling of *personal* aggrandizement or ambition remains. We are by our constitution and state of evolution placed in the "World of Relativity," but as we find that *impersonality* and non-duality is the ultimate end of cosmic evolution, we have to endeavour to work along with Nature, and not place ourselves in opposition to its inherent impulse which must ultimately assert itself. To oppose it, must necessitate suffering, since a weaker force, in its egotism, tries to array itself against the *universal* law.

All that the occultist does, is to *hasten* this process, by allowing his Will to act in unison with the Cosmic Will or the Demiurgic Mind, which can be done by successfully checking the vain attempt of *personality* to assert itself in opposition to the former. And since the MAHATMA is but an advanced occultist who has so far controlled his lower "self" as to hold it more or less in complete subjection to the Cosmic impulse, it is in the nature of things impossible for him to act in any other but an unselfish manner. No sooner does he allow the "personal self" to assert itself, than he ceases to be a MAHATMA. Those, therefore, who being still entangled in the web of the delusive sense of personality charge the MAHATMAS with "selfishness" in withholding "knowledge" — do not consider what they are talking about. The Law of Cosmic evolution is ever operating to achieve its purpose of ultimate unity and to carry the phenomenal into the *noumenal* plane, and the MAHATMAS, being *en rapport* with it, are assisting that purpose. They therefore know best what knowledge is best for mankind at a particular stage of its evolution, and none else is competent to judge of that matter, since they alone have got to the *basic knowledge* which can determine the right course and exercise proper discrimination. And for us who are yet struggling in the mire of the illusive senses to dictate what knowledge MAHATMAS shall impart to us and how they shall act, is like a street-boy presuming to teach science to Prof. Huxley or politics to Mr. Gladstone. For, it will be evident that, as soon as the least feeling

of *selfishness* tries to assert itself, the vision of the spiritual sense, which is the only perception of the MAHATMA, becomes clouded, and he loses the "power" which *abstract* "knowledge" alone can confer. Hence, the vigilant watch of the "Will" we have constantly to exercise to prevent our lower nature from coming up to the surface, which it does in our present undeveloped state; and thus extreme activity and not passivity is the essential condition with which the student has to commence. First his activity is directed to check the opposing influence of the "lower self"; and, when that is conquered, his untrammelled Will centred in his higher (real) "self" continues to work most efficaciously and actively in unison with the cosmic ideation in the "Divine Mind."

Only a life lived for others is a life worth while.

The man who regards his own life and that of his fellow creatures as meaningless is not merely unhappy but hardly fit for life.

Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value.

We cannot despair of humanity, since we are ourselves human beings.

Everybody acts not only under external compulsion but also in accordance with inner necessity.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

THE HERMETIC BRETHREN*

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... We of the secret knowledge do wrap ourselves in mystery, to avoid the objurgation and importunity of those who conceive that we cannot be philosophers unless we put our knowledge to some worldly use. There is scarcely one who thinks about us who does not believe that our Society has no existence; because, as he truly declares, he never met any of us. We do not come, as he assuredly expects, to that conspicuous stage, upon which, like himself, as he desires the gaze of the vulgar, every fool may enter, winning wonder if the man's appetite be that empty way; and when he has obtained it, crying out, "Lo, this is also vanity!"

"Dr. Edmond Dickenson," says Mr. Hargreave Jennings (*Rosicrucians*, pp. 34-35), "physician to King Charles the Second, a professed seeker of the hermetic knowledge, produced a book entitled *De Quinta Essentia Philosophorum* which was printed at Oxford in 1686 and a second time in 1705.... In correspondence with a French adept, the latter explains the reasons why the Brothers of the Rosy Cross concealed themselves. As to the universal medicine, *Elixir Vitæ*, or potable form of the preternatural *menstruum*, he positively asserts that it is in the hands of the 'Illuminated,' but that, by the time they discover it, they have ceased to desire its uses, being far above them; and as to life for centuries, being wistful for other things, they decline availing themselves of it. He adds that the adepts are obliged to conceal themselves for the sake of safety, because they would be abandoned in the consolations of the intercourse of this world (if they were not, indeed, exposed to worse risks), supposing that their gifts were proven to the conviction of the bystanders as more than human; when they would become simply abhorrent. Thus, there are excellent reasons for their conduct: they proceed with the utmost caution, and instead of making a display of their powers, as vainglory is the least distin-

* Extracted from *The Rosicrucians* by Hargreave Jennings (John Camden Hotten, Piccadilly, W. London). These pages, as the author tells us, "occur in a letter published by some anonymous members of the Rose-Croix, and are adduced in a translation from the Latin by one of the most famous men of the order, who addressed from the University of Oxford about the period of Oliver Cromwell; to which University the great English Rosicrucian, Robertus de Fluctibus (Robert Fludd) also belonged in the time of James the First and Charles the First."

guishing characteristic of these great men, they studiously evade the idea that they have any extraordinary or separate knowledge. They live simply as mere spectators in the world, and they desire to make no disciples, converts, nor confidants. They submit to the obligations of life, and to relationships¹ — enjoying the fellowship of none, admiring none, following none, but themselves. They obey all codes, are excellent citizens, and only preserve silence in regard to their own private beliefs, giving the world the benefit of their acquirements up to a certain point; seeking only sympathy at some angles of their multi-form character, but shutting out curiosity when they do not wish its imperative eyes. . . . Thus is the reason that the Rosicrucians pass through the world mostly unnoticed, and that people generally disbelieve that there are such persons; or believe that, if there are, their pretensions are an imposition. It is easy to disregard things which we do not understand. . . .”

We came across the above, the other day, in the course of reading, and copy it to show that the difficulty which our sceptical public feels in crediting the existence of the *trans*-Himalayan recluses is no new thing. The jeering pleasantry of Archdeacon Baly, who told the Church Missionary Convention that “Theosophy was a new religion based on juggling tricks,” is but the echo of the sneers of the generations in which Thomas Vaughan, Robert Fludd, Count St. Germain, Theophrastus Paracelsus and other “Hermetic” philosophers lived and studied. Our Theosophical Society pays the penalty of its reaffirmation of the Truth of Hermetic Science, not merely in receiving the world’s ridicule, but also in having it try to ignore a deal of honest work of the practical sort, which we have done, and are doing.

¹ Not at all in every instance: it depends upon the degree of their advancement, their earthly ties snapping one after the other as their new spiritual ones are formed.—ED.
[*The Theosophist*]

CHELAS

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Notwithstanding the many articles which have appeared in this magazine upon the above subject, much misunderstanding and many false views seem still to prevail.

What are Chelas, and what are their powers? Have they faults, and in what particular are they different from people who are not Chelas? Is every word uttered by a Chela to be taken as gospel truth?

These questions arise because many persons have entertained very absurd views about Chelas, and when it was found that those views should be changed, the reaction has been in several cases quite violent.

The word "Chela" simply means *a disciple*; but it has become crystallized in the literature of Theosophy and has, in different minds, as many different definitions as the word "God" itself. Some persons have gone so far as to say that when a man is a Chela he is at once put on a plane when each word that he may unfortunately utter is taken down as *ex cathedra*, and he is not allowed the poor privilege of talking like an ordinary person. If it be found out that any such utterance was on his own account and responsibility, he is charged with having misled his hearers.

Now this wrong idea must be corrected once for all. There are Chelas and Chelas, just as there are MAHATMAS and MAHATMAS. There are MAHATMAS in fact who are themselves the Chelas of those who are higher yet. But no one, for an instant, would confound a Chela who has just begun his troublous journey with that great Chela who is a MAHATMA.

In fact the Chela is an unfortunate man who has entered upon "a path not manifest," and Krishna says that "that is the most difficult path."

Instead of being the constant mouthpiece of his Guru, he finds himself left more alone in the world than those who are not Chelas, and his path is surrounded by dangers which would appal many an aspirant, were they depicted in natural colours, so that instead of accepting his Guru and passing an entrance examination with a view to becoming Bachelor of the Art of Occultism under his master's constant and friendly guidance, he really forces his way into a guarded enclosure,

and has from that moment to fight and conquer — or die. Instead of accepting he has to be worthy of acceptance. Nor must he offer himself. One of the Mahatmas has written — “Never thrust yourself upon us for Chelaship; wait until it descends upon you.”

And having been accepted as a Chela, it is not true that he is merely the instrument of his Guru. He speaks as ordinary men then as before, and it is only when the master sends by means of the Chela's Magnetism an actual written letter, that the lookers-on can say that through him a communication came.

It may happen with them, as it does with any author occasionally, that they evolve either true or beautiful utterances, but it must not be therefore concluded that during that utterance the Guru was speaking through the Chela. If there was the germ of a good thought in the mind, the Guru's influence, like the gentle rain upon the seed, may have caused it to spring into sudden life and abnormally blossom, but that is not the master's voice. The cases in fact are rare in which the masters speak through a Chela.

The powers of Chelas vary with their progress; and every one should know that if a Chela has any “powers,” he is not permitted to use them save in rare and exceptional cases, and never may he boast of their possession. So it must follow that those who are only beginners have no more or greater power than an ordinary man. Indeed the goal set before the Chela is not the acquisition of psychological power; his chief task is to divest himself of that overmastering sense of personality which is the thick veil that hides from sight our immortal part — the real man. So long as he allows this feeling to remain, just so long will he be fixed at the very door of Occultism, unable to proceed further.

Sentimentality, then, is not the equipment for a Chela. His work is hard, his road stony, the end far away. With sentimentality merely he will not advance at all. Is he waiting for the master to bid him show his courage by precipitating himself from a precipice, or by braving the cold Himalayan steeps? False hope; they will not call him thus. And so, as he is not to clothe himself in sentiment, the public must not, when they wish to consider him, throw a false veil of sentimentality over all his actions and words.

Let us therefore, henceforth, see a little more discrimination used in looking at Chelas.

“PURUSH VISHESH ISHWARA ”

In each person there resides the Supreme Spirit called Ishwara. He is untouched by desires, sorrows, works and the results of works. He is the Supreme Knower and the first of Teachers. His name is Om.

From these *sutras* emerge the whole philosophy and discipline of the would-be chela. For, if at all they have a message for him, they tell him that neither scriptures, nor books, nor men can impart those teachings which alone make life comprehensible. The Supreme Spirit alone has to become the object of his worship. Once this is recognized, the disciple has to impose on himself a rigid discipline which brooks no relaxation, for the Supreme cannot be approached save by paths acceptable to the Supreme. It cannot be approached through prayers and incantations. Worldly knowledge and wealth bring a man no nearer to It. In these trivialities are not hid the passwords that open the doors of the sanctuary. The grace of the Supreme cannot be won by the offering of the aggrandizement of oneself, one's coterie or one's nation, for the Supreme which pervades the whole is concerned only with the whole. Even self-sacrifice and self-immolation are no credentials for access to Its Presence if these are undertaken to subserve a personal and therefore a limited end. No inviting of sorrows on oneself; no amount of Karma accomplished; no strivings through desires and longings can bring the man nearer to the Supreme. Even in the holy love of a mother for her child, or that of a husband for his wife, there is selfishness in the first and egoism in the second. They are, neither the one nor the other, passports to the Supreme.

The Supreme is higher than the divisible. It is also higher than the indivisible. Says Shri Krishna: "He who being not deluded knoweth me thus as the Supreme Spirit, knoweth all things and worships me under every form and condition." Such an act of worship as this cannot be limited in time, enclosed by space, or hemmed in by circumstance. This worship has to dominate the discharge of duties and to enter into the act of sacrifice. It has to continue through recreation and repose, through meal-time and at work, in the silence and solitude of the still night as in the rush and tumult of public events. For, if Ishwara abides in all forms and is present in all conditions, then reverence has to be paid to the Ishwara within each form and condition.

Such worship does not come readily to men who have been trained to make of their lives a vast competitive arena where thrust and counter-thrust are the routines of a day. It comes gradually, almost labo-

riously. It creeps into the man's life as a result of his silent homage and exclusive devotion. The adoration cannot be completed save by stages. Even to sense the presence of the Supreme “under every form and condition” demands that the man be at peace with all that lives and breathes. The vast brotherhood that this implies reaches out to friend and foe alike, and is to be sought after diligently within all forms of life — the animate as also the so-called inanimate. This devotion to Brotherhood comes only as a result of unselfish work done for humanity in the mass, for all men whether good or bad; for does not the rain fall on the humble and the proud, and the sun shine on the just and the unjust?

The working of the One in the many and the many in the One becomes manifest in the context of a Brotherhood which excludes nobody and nothing. Brotherhood becomes thus the *sine qua non* to knowledge, and that to such an extent that the slightest breath of non-brotherliness shuts the door to Spiritual Wisdom. It therefore follows that fanaticism, claims to exclusiveness and the boasting of attainments are sure outward indications of an inner impoverishment. Where there are rival claims, where pretensions prevail and there does not exist unity of aim, purpose and teaching, there remain no cohesive elements to cement a body of aspirants into one compact homogeneous unit. The aspiring soul has, therefore, to find his own *Sat Sang* — companionship with souls fired by the same holy motive of devotion to Ishwara. It is now this company which must become for him his world and his humanity. It is among these companions that he has to strive to achieve a brotherhood where the hurt of one is felt by each and where the joy of one strikes a chord of cheer in the hearts of all. The first duty of the brother is to be his brother's keeper. No sacrifice can be offered to Ishwara, no worship paid to its ubiquitous presence until all unfriendly thoughts are chased away. In the Sermon on the Mount, the injunction is given in clear, unambiguous language. Says the Scripture: “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” (*St. Matthew*, v. 23-24)

No man desires harm to himself or to his own image. He practises no backbiting and slander against himself. He carries no disparaging tales about himself, starts no whispering campaign with himself as the target. He resents malice, envy or revenge when these are directed against him. He feels hurt at imputed motives and slanderous innuen-

does. Yet, such is the blindness of the age that it encourages the use of these very implements of unbrotherliness against others. The barbed tongue, the repartee which hurts, the veiled malicious gossip that strips another of all esteem — these have become valued possessions in the armoury of the 20th-century gentleman.

The disciple who desires to come out of the nightmare-side of existence is in duty bound to eschew all these. He has now so to merge himself in his *Sat Sang* that none of these emit their sparks of unbrotherliness through him. He dare not condemn, though by worldly standards condemnation would be justified. In the particular group of aspirants to which he is welded he has to go back of all irritating externalities — back of all human foibles — to search for and make his obeisance to the *Purusha* within. He has no right to cry to high heavens because within the group he has been unjustly treated. He has no right to hide behind externalities when truth has to be told to the very face of lie. In sober truth, he has to achieve the realization that all duty stems from the ideal of brotherhood and that no duty is obligatory which serves a lesser cause. It is now one of his duties that he search for ways and means whereby with such powers as are available to him he can lead his neighbour on to the right path of dedication and service.

Each member of the company has a similar duty cast on him, and it does not behove any brother that he pass judgement on the efforts of another lest by doing so he induce his brother to slip into despondency and stop all endeavour. The keeping alive of the vital link which runs through each brother and unites him to the whole is the chief task of any member. That task is Herculean, for, where magnetic influences vary, conflict in one form or another may lift its ugly head. It is on occasions such as these that brotherhood has to be practised most, for the simple reason that brotherhood alone is the cure for strife. St. Paul, faced with one such form of non-brotherliness among the Corinthians, gave his admonition thus:

If one of your number has a dispute with another, has he the face to take it to pagan law Courts instead of to the community of God's people? Must brother go to law with brother... and that before unbelievers? Why not rather suffer injury? Why not let yourself be robbed?

“THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE”

Before we undertake a journey we need to find out all it will involve and to seek advice from those who know the difficulties and pitfalls on the way. We also need to look at ourselves and see if we possess the strength and ability to undertake the journey.

Therefore Fragment I of *The Voice of the Silence* contains instruction as to what the journey we are contemplating is likely to involve, what it leads to, and what qualities and capacities we must possess before starting out.

From this Fragment we learn that the one quality which it is necessary to possess if we would be instructed is the capacity to *listen* carefully to what is being said. Otherwise we may give our own interpretation to what is said, we may even distort the words to suit our own conceptions, and thus miss the real meaning. What, for example, is the meaning to be given to the word “mind,” or to the word “soul,” as used in *The Voice of the Silence*? We need accuracy in listening to place the words in their proper context before we can see clearly.

Listening carefully, therefore, to what is said in the book about ourselves, what do we learn? First, we learn that we have to change many things in ourselves, and to do so we must *admit* that we need changing. The major change to be made is to learn not to be deceived by what we see or hear. This is most important, because as we progress on the inner Path the awakening inner senses give us powers which we may not know how to use properly, and we may encounter one pitfall after another.

Admitting that we have to change ourselves, admitting that we shall meet with pitfalls, we come to see the necessity of having a guide on the journey. This guide we shall not see or hear at first, though He is with us unseen and unheard. The next important fact, therefore, is to know that we do have a guide all the time. He shows Himself to us in terms of our understanding, if we can recognize Him.

If we look at ourselves as we are today, we find that our main characteristic is awareness of our surroundings, of our body, feelings, desires and thoughts. But we also find that we have within us an urge to be better in every way; we realize that there is something we strive to reach up to, some ideal — whether of being a better business man or professional, a better father or mother or husband or wife, or of acquiring a better character. Where does this urge come from? Let us

recognize, mentally at least, that it comes from somewhere higher than our ordinary desires and thoughts. The nearest approach we have to it is our conscience, which, though it does not give positive guidance, at least warns us not to do this or that, that one course or another is not "right." To cultivate an awareness of this conscience is the first step which takes the mind away from excessive awareness of sense-objects, personal desires, etc.

In time, as we become more and more aware of this inner monitor, we shall find that it is not enough just to know what we ought not to do; we also need to know what we ought to do. This calls for knowledge, but we must first learn that much of what we know at present is false, deceptive, illusionary, incomplete. An effort to become aware of a higher code of morality and knowledge will help us to see that we are something other than that which our present mode of awareness makes us believe we are.

Thus we begin to feel a touch of the Inner Guide or Master. A constant effort to remember the Wise Ones of all time will help, for we shall then have a model to copy, and shall see what is right action, right feeling, right thought as taught by them.

Our books, the words of those who have passed this way and learnt; our conscience; our Inner Master or Ruler; and the Bridge, the Great Ones who embody the Path and the Goal—all these are our teachers and guides. As we progress, we shall reach a point where we have to travel on alone. We have been taught; now we must apply. The only reliance at this stage is on the Inner Master. We must merge in Him, become one with Him. Steps as to how this is to be done are given. We must take those steps. Masters stand and beckon, but only our unhelped effort will bring the necessary strength to hold the position once it is attained. Only he who has conquered by his unaided efforts is the victor. We must be taught, but we must practise what we are taught.

It is necessary, therefore, at the very beginning to have a view of this Path and its Goal. Once we reach the stage when we realize (which means more than mental acceptance) that the Goal is within us, that the Master is a higher aspect of ourselves, we find our way lit by a flood of light, and we hear the Voice of Compassion which thrills through all and everything. We and the Light and the Sound are One. We are changeless and eternal:

Thou art THYSELF the object of thy search: the VOICE un-

broken, that resounds throughout eternities, exempt from change, from sin exempt, the Seven Sounds in one.

The whole object of our search, therefore, is to find out who and what we are — to become that which we are. This is the goal.

Our first endeavour in *practice* is to learn to separate the mind from the senses and sensations, from the emotions and from self-centredness. "Thyself and mind, like twins upon a line, the star which is thy goal burns overhead." We must accept the fact that as we are now, we are very ignorant, ignorant as regards knowledge, yes, but more ignorant of our own character and lower psychic faculties. Also, of just what the goal of life is.

We learn that our faculties are of two kinds, the lower and the higher. The lower are those we have at present — to think, desire, feel and perform deeds. The higher faculties we do not know, but they can be known if we train our spiritual powers, powers which give us strength, ability and energy.

If we have these higher powers somewhere, why do they not function today? Because they have to function through the vehicles of the body and brain, through the capacities and energies we possess, and these being untrained as yet, cannot be used by the higher powers. In fact, it is a two-way effort, for the lower has to rise to the higher aspect of ourselves, and the higher has to subdue the lower. It is the constant struggle that goes on between our two natures. Unless we know the character and powers of both, we cannot undertake the necessary preparation, and will be misled by what our senses, thoughts and desires present to us.

Many teachers have given rules for the subjection of the lower mind and its concentration upon the higher. In *The Voice of the Silence* we are asked to cut it off from all external sights and sounds, as also from internal images. This, we are told, is *Dharana* — the stage of "intense and perfect concentration of the mind upon some interior object, accompanied by complete abstraction from everything pertaining to the external Universe, or the world of the senses." This requires the training of the memory, for it is only when the outer is effaced from the mind and memory that the ONE can be discerned at the back or centre of all. This ONE is the eternal and changeless. Hence no change must be allowed to affect the mind; it must remain unchanged through all changes.

This naturally gives us a different sense of Time and of the condi-

tions of life. When we have attained this, we shall be like the wise man described in the second chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

In this struggle not only do we need to exert the mind or awareness *consciously*; we must also analyse why and how the senses affect the mind. We learn that what we see — and it is equally true of the impressions given by the other senses — is not a true picture of things because the senses have for long enjoyed a world of their own making. According to the knowledge we already possess, we analyse and accept the impressions. We have to be more particular now and analyse all that comes to us. We shall see that the eyes are often disturbed and give us distorted pictures. To avoid being affected by them, the mind must be in a state of peace and harmony. In fact, we must learn to use the eyes to see with, not let them bring us impressions that force themselves on our attention. The ears have to be trained in a similar manner, so that they remain unaffected by either the “cries of bellowing elephants” or “the silvery buzzing of the golden fire-fly.”

When, therefore, in time, we have learnt to use the senses and the mind as they should be used, we can begin to hear the Silent Speaker. We begin to live within, and though we see outer sights and hear outer sounds, we are under no illusion as to their character. We begin to live as inner entities and not as lower forms of matter. We begin to see the One in the many, to hear the One Sound in the many sounds. Instead of desiring and feeling for ourselves, we desire and feel for the WHOLE. Our mind is cleansed and its functions on the plane of senses paralysed. Our heart, our whole motive, is purified.

One of the difficulties in our way is that, having started on the journey, we are apt to look back. There must not be any longing for what has been left behind, nor any grief for our loss. We have a glimpse of the importance of this idea in the Bible story of Lot's wife. When she had to leave the city where she had lived, she was warned not to look back; it was a doomed city. But she did look back, and was changed into a pillar of salt.

Let us learn that we can never satisfy longings by their fulfilment; for, if one kind of longing is indulged in to saturation point, the power of longing will still be alive, will in fact be strengthened, and will only change its form.

We learn of the five impediments to success — the knowledge of misery, truth about human frailty, oppressive restraints, the absolute necessity of separation from all the ties of passion and of desires, and

the "Path of Salvation," which is the path of selfishness. We have learnt the Four Noble Truths — suffering, the assembling of temptations, their destruction, and the Path which leads to knowledge. The preliminary work is done and we know in theory what the goal is. We have arrived at the stage where we can ask to be led on.

We learn next that there are two goals — Liberation and Renunciation, between which we have to choose. The second Fragment prepares us for the decision. The third Fragment deals with the steps we have to take after the decision is reached.

The pupil asks the Teacher what he should do to reach to Wisdom and to gain Perfection, and he is told to look at himself first and ask himself whether his heart is clean, whether he can discern the real from the false, the impermanent from the permanent, Head-learning from Soul-wisdom, the "Eye" from the "Heart" doctrine. There are two ways of looking at actions; one that of the head and the other of the heart; one leads to the cessation of sin and faults through non-action; the other to Self-knowledge through action, through loving deeds. The end of both Paths is Bliss: in the case of those who seek the Path of Liberation, the bliss comes at once; in the case of those who choose the Path of Renunciation, it comes at the close of Kalpas without number.

The decision has to be reached. But such a great decision can only be the legitimate result of minor decisions all along the Path.

In Fragment III we are led further, for the choice is made. It is Renunciation that we seek, not Liberation. The way that leads to the goal is through seven gates, to pass each of which we need the key of a particular developed virtue. We are given the keys and an idea of the difficulties to be surmounted. Some important hints are given us. For instance:

Thou shalt not let thy senses make a playground of thy mind.

... thou must have mastered all the mental changes in thy Self and slain the army of the thought sensations that, subtle and insidious, creep unmasked within the Soul's bright shrine.

Thou hast to reach that fixity of mind in which no breeze, however strong, can waft an earthly thought within.

From the Heart point of view we learn:

Thou shalt not separate thy being from BEING and the rest, but merge the Ocean in the drop, the drop within the Ocean.

To put this into practice we must be

in full accord with all that lives; bear love to men as though they were thy brother-pupils, disciples of one Teacher, the sons of one sweet mother.

This is so important that we are again asked whether we have attuned our "heart and mind to the great mind and heart of all mankind."

Then we must learn the pitfalls on the Paramita Path so that we can be prepared not to succumb to them. Let us keep in mind that we must be *prepared* if we would be free from fear. To us, struggling would-be neophytes, the message is — BE PREPARED. If we "remain unselfish till the endless end," we are bound to succeed.

Lest we lose ourselves in the treadmill of life and the struggles to achieve, we have been given a description of the end of the Path. Light and sound unite with the fourfold manifested Powers to blend in one glorious "wordless" proclamation — "Peace to all Beings."

The vision is necessary, or we lose the impetus to make the effort. Hence each Fragment ends with the Vision Beautiful of accomplishment.

Whatever words and deeds are noblest, best,
 Teach me, O Mazda, make my life express,
 Through Love of Fellow-man, through Search for Truth,
 The yearnings and the prayers of my heart;
 Renew, Ahura, through the Strength to Serve,
 My Life, and make it as Thou wishest — TRUE.

—*Gatha Ahunavaiti*

THE LAW OF CYCLES

It is well known to students of Theosophy that the Law of Cycles or Periodicity is the second of the Three Fundamental Propositions — God-Law-Evolution — on which the whole philosophy is based. These Propositions are metaphysical ideas having their corresponding ethical counterpart that has to be assimilated and applied in daily life, in all activities and on all planes, physical, mental, moral and spiritual. Although the Law of Cycles operates in the whole of Nature, it affects the human kingdom more intimately, because man himself, through his own thinking, feeling and acting, determines the action of the Law, and moves in the right or wrong direction, rising to the heights of divinity, or falling down to the level of an animal and at times worse than an animal.

In the chapter on Cycles in *The Occan of Theosophy*, Mr. Judge states at the outset: "The doctrine of Cycles is one of the most important in the whole theosophical system, though the least known and of all the one most infrequently referred to." It is the practical application of the Law that enables man to become the weaver of his own freedom and to break the fetters of the rounds of birth-death-rebirth. Karma-reincarnation-cycles are interrelated, being the three aspects of the Law of Life Eternal.

The word "cycle" means recurrence, and is derived from the Greek *kuklos*, meaning "circle." It is the motion of the One Divine Principle of Life, thrilling and throbbing through space, and according to Theosophy Life and Law are one. This motion is circular, and therefore the word "cycle" is used to describe it. It is best symbolized by a wheel, the wheel of the Good Law. In the boundless and limitless space, numberless universes appear, disappear and reappear, and are known as "the manifesting stars," or the "sparks of Eternity." So, manifestation and non-manifestation recur under this Law of Cycles. There are smaller and larger cycles, wheels within wheels, from a moment of time to *yugas*, *manvantaras*, *kalpas*. One important idea to bear in mind is that the rotatory movement of the cycle is spiral, that when a circle is completed we do not come back to the same spot from which we started, but to a point just above it, on a higher level. Therein lies the hope of onward progress. Life demands change, and it is this spiral motion alone which can take one to unperceived heights and unknown depths.

Just as there are two aspects of Deity, the transcendental and

immanent, so too in order to understand cycles it is necessary to note the two aspects of time, the unconditioned, eternal duration, and conditioned time, however long, represented by past, present and future. In Zoroastrian philosophy they are known as *Zrvane Akarne* and *Zrvane Daregho-Khodate*. The second verse of the very first Stanza of the *Book of Dzyan* states: "Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of duration." During non-manifestation or *pralaya*, which is the resting period for all beings and creatures, even time is non-existent, because it has become one with eternal duration. Past, present and future are merely concepts created by finite minds. One of the great Masters is quoted in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 44) as stating: "I feel irritated at having to use these three clumsy words — Past, Present, and Future — miserable concepts of the objective phases of the subjective whole, they are about as ill-adapted for the purpose as an axe for fine carving."

Thus, in the eternity of time, cycles of manifestation and non-manifestation occur, and these periods of immense duration are known as the days and nights of Brahma. Sri Krishna states in the Eighth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita* that "the day of Brahma is a thousand revolutions of the yugas and his night extendeth for a thousand more. At the coming on of that day all things issue forth from the unmanifested into manifestation, so on the approach of that night they merge again into the unmanifested." So, under the Law of Cycles we have these vast periods of activity and rest. This is the largest cycle. Just as after the nightly rest we wake up each morning to resume our task, whatever it may be, so at the dawn of manifestation everything awakens to take up the thread of its evolution under Karma.

A period of evolution known as the Manvantara is divided into four smaller wheels known as the *yugas* — *Krita*, *Treta*, *Dvapara* and *Kali*. In ordinary language, they are known as the golden, silver, bronze and iron ages, with respect to moral and spiritual development. At present we are in *Kali Yuga*, the dark age, an age as hard as iron, in which spirituality has diminished considerably and materiality is on the increase. Everywhere signs of strife and unrest are visible. But this *Kali Yuga*, being the shortest of the four *yugas*, has the swiftest momentum, and therefore much more can be accomplished in it than in any other age, if one resolves righteously and sustains that resolve without swerving. As Mr. Judge has stated in *Letters That Have Helped Me*, nothing can be done against *Kali Yuga*, but very much can be done in it. So, the cycle can be used to bring about lasting effects for

good, and thus individuals can help themselves and the world. This is the task ahead of every student of Theosophy — to make a practical application of the Law of Cycles for the benefit of the nation and the race.

The operation of this Law in Nature is fully recognized by science in such phenomena as the ebb and flow of the tide, day and night, the phases of the moon, epidemics, famines, earthquakes, etc., which recur at regular intervals, but what science has failed to note is the working of the Law on the inner planes of being and life, in man's heart and mind, and this is one of the most important aspects of the Law of Cycles. Forces are generated from within the man, and not only he but all around him reap the effects, good or bad, as the case may be.

The Law of Cycles is interblended with the Law of Ethical causation. At the proper time, in terms of the forces generated, each one reaps the effects; hence the need to set in motion such causes as may not create a disturbance within or without. *The Voice of the Silence* stresses this particular point: "Teach to eschew all causes; the ripple of effect, as the great tidal wave, thou shalt let run its course." The science of life requires that we learn how to generate right causes on the basis of correct understanding of the unity and harmony of life.

The earth rotates on its own axis every 24 hours and creates the cycle of day and night, light and darkness. Will this cycle affect all in the same manner? Certainly not. In terms of one's own physical, mental and moral make-up, in terms of one's own ideation, in terms of one's own understanding of life and law, will each one be affected by every event, every contact with other human beings. It very much depends on one's attitude whether one spends the day in a haphazard manner, in a mechanical way, or wisely and usefully. As the night is but a continuation of the day, it may bring rest and refreshment to some, and to others a totally different experience. Light and darkness are the world's eternal ways, as Sri Krishna teaches, but man, because of his power of thought and choice, can determine not to succumb to the forces of darkness, ever rising to the heavenly heights of Light Divine.

Similarly, there is the yearly cycle of 365 days, when the earth completes its circle round the sun. Every new year people question: "What will it bring?" Theosophy answers that it will bring everyone his legitimate due; the Law being impersonal, it knows not wrath nor pardon. In *Lucifer* for January 1888, H.P.B. has given very prac-

tical instruction which needs to be followed by every student:

Man's life is in his own hands, his fate is ordered by himself. . . . Thoreau pointed out that there are artists in life, persons who can change the colour of a day and make it beautiful to those with whom they come in contact. We claim that there are adepts, masters in life who make it divine, as in all other arts. Is it not the greatest art of all, this which affects the very atmosphere in which we live? . . . every person who draws the breath of life affects the mental and moral atmosphere of the world, and helps to colour the day for those about him. Those who do not elevate the thoughts and lives of others must of necessity either paralyse them by indifference, or actively drag them down.

This indicates how each individual can live in a responsible way, heeding the words of the wise teachers, and set in motion cycles of peace and harmony.

For this particular reason the great Theosophical Movement was launched, under cyclic law, in the last quarter of the last century, so that men and women might be helped to change their own minds and hearts and live for the good of all. Since the 14th century attempts have been made by the great Adepts of the White Lodge to send their Messenger to the world to give out the Teachings of the Wisdom-Religion to men and women ready to listen to them and follow them. In the last century, a public proclamation of the Message was made to the whole world. Not only were the Eternal Verities given once again in a language understood by the majority in the West, but also the existence of the great Masters of Wisdom and Compassion was broadcast and the way to Them indicated. Sri Krishna states in the Fourth Discourse of the *Gita*: "I produce myself among creatures, O son of Bharata, whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world; and thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness." So at proper times, in terms of the need of the hour, the great Teachers come out into our world of darkness to remove the darkness of ignorance and establish righteousness once again. The Krishnas and the Buddhas, the never failing guardians of the eternal Law, are ever with us to renew the mighty art when it gets lost through the perversity of human beings.

There are ascending and descending cycles, fertile and barren periods, all caused by man in the ultimate analysis. Periods of mental and moral light and darkness follow each other as night does day.

Civilizations rise and fall. Lemuria and Atlantis with their great cultures have gone. Greece and Rome have fallen. Ancient China, Persia and Egypt exist no more. But Theosophy teaches that the souls who lived in ages past are born again and again under the Law of Cycles, and will in course of time form a new race on the continent of America. Madame Blavatsky warns in her *Five Messages to the American Theosophists*:

Your position as the forerunners of the sixth sub-race of the fifth root-race has its own special perils as well as its special advantages. Psychism, with all its allurements and all its dangers, is necessarily developing among you, and you must beware lest the Psychic outruns the Manasic and Spiritual development.

Another important aspect of the Law of Cycles is the return of impressions, the return of moods, good and bad. Whatever we think, feel or do, it creates an impression in us, and these impressions return cyclically. If they are good, they can be changed to better and to best. If our moods are of high aspirations, they can be sustained and nurtured and made more noble. If our tendencies are of a wrong nature, they can be overcome by setting into motion opposite causes. All this needs constant watching and vigilance, which will enable each one to bring about the necessary changes within himself and therefore also outside himself, thus making the animal man human, and the human man divine.

Cycles usually overlap one another, that is, there is no exact point where one cycle begins and the old one ends. Just as there are intervals of dawn and twilight between day and night — the *Sandhya* periods — so also there are intervals between the larger cycles of *Yugas*, *Kalpas*, and *Manvantaras*. In Nature, nothing proceeds by jumps and starts, in a hurried way, but there is a gradual process of transformation and change. As there are the four seasons, so in the life of an individual there are four stages, childhood, youth, maturity and old age, which also overlap one another. How these periods are used depends upon the temperament of each and the degree of maturity achieved. Theosophy indicates the goal of human perfection, and each can hasten the process of reaching it instead of waiting till the end of the cycle of necessity. Theosophy helps us to complete the journey of the eternal pilgrim in a shorter time. The Theosophical teachings of Karma — the law of cause and effect; of cycles — the recurrence of events at regular periods of time; and of reincarnation — the rebirth of the same immortal soul in different bodies and personalities on the basis of

Karma and cycles — help individuals in that task. A new life of responsibility and duty begins. As *The Voice of the Silence* teaches:

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

Are you willing —

to forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you;

to ignore what the world owes you and to think what you owe the world;

to put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground;

to see that your fellow men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts hungry for joy;

to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life;

to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe, and to look around for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness;

Are you willing to do these things even for a day?

—HENRY VAN DYKE

REPLIES TO AN ENGLISH F.T.S.

[The first part of the reply to Question VII relating to Lord Buddha is reprinted here from *The Theosophist* for November 1883. The question was:

Buddha's birth is placed [in A. P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*] in the year 643 B.C. Is this date given by the Adepts] as undoubtedly correct? Have they any view as to the new inscriptions of Asoka (as given by General A. Cunningham, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. I, pp. 20-23), on the strength of which Buddha's Nirvana is placed by Barth (*Religions of India*, p. 106), etc., about 476 B.C., and his birth therefore at about 556 B.C.? It would be exceedingly interesting if the Adepts would give a sketch, however brief, of the history of India in those centuries with authentic dates.

The reply will be continued in our next issue.—EDS.]

QUESTION VII

PHILOLOGICAL AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL "DIFFICULTIES"

Two questions are blended into one. Having shown the reasons why the Asiatic student is prompted to decline the guidance of Western history, it remains to explain his contumacious obstinacy in the same direction with regard to philology and archæology. While expressing the sincerest admiration for the clever modern methods of reading the past histories of nations now mostly extinct, and following the progress and evolution of their respective languages, now dead, the student of Eastern Occultism, and even the profane Hindu scholar acquainted with his national literature, can hardly be made to share the confidence felt by Western philologists in these conglomerative methods, when practically applied to his own country and Sanskrit literature. Three facts, at least, out of many are well calculated to undermine his faith in these Western methods:

1. Of some dozens of eminent Orientalists, no two agree, even in their *verbatim* translation of Sanskrit texts. Nor is there more harmony shown in their interpretation of the possible meaning of *doubtful* passages.

2. Though Numismatics is a less conjectural branch of science, and when starting from well-established basic dates, so to say, an exact one (since it can hardly fail to yield correct chronological data, in our case, namely, Indian antiquities), archæologists have hitherto failed to obtain any such result. On their own confession, they are hardly justified in accepting the *Samvat* and *Salivahana* eras as their guiding

lights, the real initial points of both being beyond the power of the European Orientalists to verify; yet all the same, the respective dates "of 57 B.C. and 78 A.D." are accepted implicitly, and fanciful ages thereupon ascribed to archæological remains.

3. The greatest authorities upon Indian archæology and architecture — General Cunningham and Mr. Fergusson — represent in their conclusions the two opposite poles. The province of archæology is to provide trustworthy canons of criticism, and not, it should seem, to perplex or puzzle. The Western critic is invited to point to one single relic of the past in India, whether written record or inscribed or un-inscribed monument, the age of which is not disputed. No sooner has one archæologist determined a date — say the first century — than another tries to pull it forward to the 10th or perhaps the 14th century of the Christian era. While General Cunningham ascribes the construction of the present Buddha Gaya temple to the first century after Christ, the opinion of Mr. Fergusson is that its *external form* belongs to the 14th century; and so the unfortunate outsider is as wise as ever. Noticing this discrepancy in a *Report on the Archæological Survey of India* (Vol. VIII, p. 60) the conscientious and capable Buddha Gaya Chief Engineer, Mr. J. D. Beglar, observes that "notwithstanding his [Fergusson's] high authority, this opinion must be unhesitatingly set aside," and forthwith assigns the building under notice to the sixth century. While the conjectures of one archæologist are termed by another "hopelessly wrong," the identifications of Buddhist relics by this other are in their turn denounced as "quite untenable." And so in the case of every relic of whatever age.

When the "recognized" authorities agree — among themselves at least — then will it be time to show them collectively in the wrong. Until then, since their respective conjectures can lay no claim to the character of history, the "Adepts" have neither the leisure nor the disposition to leave weightier business to combat empty speculations, in number as many as there are pretended authorities. Let the blind lead the blind, if they will not accept the light.¹

As in the "historical," so in this new "archæological difficulty," namely, the apparent anachronism as to the date of our Lord's birth, the point at issue is again concerned with the "old Greeks and Romans." Less ancient than our Atlantean friends, they seem more dangerous

¹ However, it will be shown elsewhere that General Cunningham's latest conclusions about the date of Buddha's death are not at all supported by the inscriptions newly discovered.—T. SUBBA ROW

inasmuch as they have become the direct allies of philologists in our dispute over Buddhist annals. We are notified by Professor Max Müller, by sympathy the most fair of Sanskritists as well as the most learned — and with whom, for a wonder, most of his rivals are found siding in this particular question — that “everything in Indian chronology depends on the date of Chandragupta,” the Greek Sandracottus. “Either of these dates (in the Chinese and Ceylonese chronology) is impossible, because it does not agree with the chronology of Greece” (*Hist. of Anc. Sans. Lit.*, p. 275). It is then by the clear light of this new Alexandrian Pharos shed upon a few synchronisms casually furnished by the Greek and Roman classical writers, that the “extraordinary” statements of the “Adepts” have now to be cautiously examined. For Western Orientalists the historical existence of Buddhism begins with Asoka, though, even with the help of Greek spectacles, they are unable to see beyond Chandragupta. Therefore, “before that time Buddhist chronology is *traditional* and full of absurdities.” Furthermore, nothing is said in the *Brahmanas* of the Bauddhas — *ergo*, there were none before “Sandracottus,” nor have the Buddhists or Brahmans any right to a history of their own, save the one evolved by the Western mind.

As though the Muse of History had turned her back while events were gliding by, the “historian” confesses his inability to close the immense lacunæ between the Indo-Aryan supposed immigration *en masse* across the Hindu-Kush, and the reign of Asoka. Having nothing more solid, he uses contradictory inferences and speculations. But the Asiatic Occultists, whose forefathers had her tablets in their keeping, and even some learned native Pundits, believe they can. The claim, however, is pronounced unworthy of attention. Of late the *Smṛiti* (traditional history) which, for those who know how to interpret its allegories, is full of unimpeachable *historical* records, an Ariadne’s thread through the tortuous labyrinth of the Past — has come to be unanimously regarded as a tissue of exaggerations, monstrous fables, “clumsy forgeries of the first centuries A.D.” It is now openly declared as worthless not only for exact chronological but even for general historical purposes. Thus by dint of arbitrary condemnations, based on absurd interpretations (too often the direct outcome of sectarian prejudice), the Orientalist has raised himself to the eminence of a philological mantic. His learned vagaries are fast superseding, even in the minds of many a Europeanized Hindu, the important historical facts that lie concealed under the exoteric phraseology of the *Puranas* and other *Smṛitic* literature. At the outset, therefore, the Eastern Initiate declares the evidence of those

Orientalists who, abusing their unmerited authority, play ducks and drakes with his most sacred relics, ruled out of court; and before giving *his* facts he would suggest to the learned European Sanskritist and archæologist that, in the matter of chronology, the difference in the sum of their series of conjectural historical events proves them to be mistaken from A to Z. They know that one single wrong figure in an arithmetical progression will throw the whole calculation into inextricable confusion: the multiplication yielding, generally, in such a case, instead of the correct sum something entirely unexpected.

A fair proof of this may, perhaps, be found in something already alluded to — namely, the adoption of the dates of certain Hindu eras as the basis of their chronological assumptions. In assigning a date to text or monument they have, of course, to be guided by one of the pre-Christian Indian eras, whether inferentially, or otherwise. And yet — in one case, at least — they complain repeatedly that they are utterly ignorant as to the correct starting point of the most important of these. The positive date of Vikramaditya, for instance, whose reign forms the starting point of the *Samvat* era, is in reality unknown to them. With some, Vikramaditya flourished “B.C.” 56; with others, 86; with others again, in the sixth century of the Christian era; while Mr. Fergusson will not allow the *Samvat* era any beginning before the “10th century A.D.” In short, and in the words of Dr. Weber, they “have absolutely no authentic evidence to show whether the era of Vikramaditya dates from the year of his birth, from some achievement, or from the year of his death, or whether, in fine, it may not have been simply introduced by him for astronomical reasons.”² There were several Vikramadityas and Vikramas in Indian history, for it is not a name but an honorary title, as the Orientalists have now come to learn. How then can any chronological deduction from such a shifting premise be anything but untrustworthy, especially when, as in the instance of the *Samvat*, the basic date is made to travel along, at the personal fancy of Orientalists, between the first and the tenth century?

Thus it appears to be pretty well proved that in ascribing chronological dates to Indian antiquities, Anglo-Indian as well as European archæologists are often guilty of the most ridiculous anachronisms. That, in fine, they have been hitherto furnishing History *with an arithmetical mean, while ignorant, in nearly every case, of its first term!* Nevertheless, the Asiatic student is invited to verify and correct *his* dates by the

² *The History of Indian Literature*, Trübner's Series, 1882, p. 202.

flickering light of this chronological will-o'-the-wisp. Nay, nay. Surely "An English F.T.S." would never expect us in matters demanding the minutest exactness to trust to such Western beacons! And he will, perhaps, permit us to hold to our own views, since we know that our dates are neither conjectural nor liable to modifications. Where even such veteran archæologists as General Cunningham do not seem above suspicion, and are openly denounced by their colleagues, palæography seems to hardly deserve the name of exact science. This busy antiquarian has been repeatedly denounced by Professor Weber and others for his indiscriminate acceptance of the *Samvat* era. Nor have the other Orientalists been more lenient; especially those who, perchance under the inspiration of early sympathies for biblical chronology, prefer in matters connected with Indian dates to give heed to their own emotional but unscientific intuitions. Some would have us believe that the *Samvat* era "is not demonstrable for times anteceding the Christian era at all." Kern makes efforts to prove that the Indian astronomers began to employ this era "only after the year of grace 1000." Professor Weber, referring sarcastically to General Cunningham, observes that "others, on the contrary, have no hesitation in at once referring, wherever possible, every *Samvat* or *Samvatsare*-dated inscription to the *Samvat* era." Thus, e.g., Cunningham (in his *Arch. Survey of India*, iii. 31, 39) directly assigns an inscription dated *Samvat* 5 to the year "B.C. 52," etc., and winds up the statement with the following plaint: "For the present, therefore, unfortunately, where there is nothing else (but that *unknown* era) to guide us, it *must generally remain an open question which era we have to do with in a particular inscription, and what date consequently the inscription bears.*" (*Op. cit.*, p. 203)

The confession is significant. It is pleasant to find such a ring of sincerity in a European Orientalist, though it does seem quite ominous for Indian archæology. The initiated Brahmans know the positive dates of their eras and remain therefore unconcerned. What the "Adepts" have once said, they maintain; and no new discoveries or modified conjectures of accepted authorities can exert any pressure upon their data. Even if Western archæologists or numismatists took it into their heads to change the date of our Lord and Glorified Deliverer from the seventh century "B.C." to the seventh century "A.D.," we would but the more admire such a remarkable gift for knocking about dates and eras, as though they were so many lawn-tennis balls.

(*To be continued*)

THE EXPERIENCE CALLED DEATH

Man lives in the midst of uncertainties. He is never sure of what may happen to him at any moment. There is one thing, however, of which he is sure — death. The truth of the *Gita* verse needs no demonstration; it is self-evident: “Death is certain to all things which are born.”

The *Bhagavad-Gita* is a highly practical book and it advises “meditation upon birth, death, decay, sickness and error.” It is not only because of the desire to improve one’s after-death state that this advice is to be followed; intelligently acted upon, it reveals the purpose of life in the body and endows our service of our fellow men with a new and truer goal. Even when a person considers the subject with the aim of “gaining Heaven for himself,” if he is consistent and practical he will soon change the mode of his thought and life. Virtue will be pursued. Generosity will take the place of greed.

Humanity in the mass lives as if death did not exist. The philosophical basis of such unphilosophical conduct may be that man, the Soul, is immortal, as his body is mortal. The pursuit of worldly aims is not carried on by the body, but by some force or energy working in and through the body. The mind of man unconsciously holds the truth that the Soul is immortal, and, because it does not reason out, its unconscious feeling glammers that mind, which then acts as if the body could cheat death and live on and on! Man desires to live, not because of the body, but because of that which he can experience with the aid of that body. A quiet consideration of what death is very soon reveals this fact. Another fact which is noted when a person reflects upon the subject of bodily death is that decay and disease are almost universal attendants of Yama.

Now, illness and diseases are very intimately related to this very zest of sense-experience. The *Gita* verse quoted above associates death with the decay which results from sickness, and every sickness without exception is rooted in some kind of error. Doctors of different schools prescribe for the curing of diseases, and sanitation and hygiene prevent the arising of diseases; but as for the ultimate “why” of disease, the answer is not forthcoming from modern knowledge. Ancient knowledge, however, has traced all sickness to wrong desires. The second of the Buddha’s four Great Truths is that the cause and root of sorrow is *Tanha*, desire and thirst for sense-life.

Among the diseases rooted in sense-life are not only bodily ailments; there are mental diseases and heart sicknesses. Death itself contributes prolifically to mental and moral pain; when death takes away a near relative or a dear friend people are stricken with sorrow. Such mournful events compel them to enquire, but most men and women are so hard set in the belief that "no one knows," that even such a tragic experience, arousing as it does their desire to know, does not push them on to seek correct information as to what happens at death, what becomes of the constituent cells of the corpse, what of the noble or vicious character of the defunct, what of the reasoning consciousness which energizes the brain, and finally, what of the immortal Soul.

Religious beliefs speak of Heaven and Hell. To uphold their profession, the priests confirm the belief of the people, imparting partial, and more often false, information. Instead of providing real arousals and stimulating the people to seek facts and truths, the priests keep them busy with rites and ceremonies and superstitions. The mourning relatives and friends are none the wiser, and soon sink back into their routine of life, now and then remembering him or her "who is not lost but only gone before." Gone where? For what purpose? What is he or she doing? Such questions are considered idle. The answers of ancient philosophy, repeated by modern Theosophy, are, however, acceptable because they are rational and can illumine the whole field of life; and they are verifiable by whoever will qualify himself for the task.

The first point to note is that *life is continuous*. It does not begin with conception or with the birth of the body; the death of the body does not interrupt it. Just as day is succeeded by night, which is followed in turn by another day, so death succeeds life in the body, and life in a body in its turn follows what we know as the after-death conditions. Life in and out of the body is one and indivisible, beginningless and endless. Immortality means pre-existence as well as survival.

We can understand neither the mystery of death nor spiritualistic phenomena without understanding that within this dense outer body is an inner, finer garment, the exact model of the physical body, interwoven with it fibre by fibre. Its substance is subtle, electric and magnetic in its essence; it is called the astral body because its stuff is luminous or starry. This astral body is called *Linga Sharira* in Sanskrit, and it is the vehicle of *Prana*, or Life-Energy.

Another of man's mortal constituents is the group of desires and emotions, which in the average man today is closely linked up with

his thoughts, so that we call the combination *Kama-Manas*, Passion-Mind.

So man's mortal nature is composed of the physical body or *Sthula Sharira*, the astral body or *Linga Sharira*, Life-Energy or *Prana*, and Passion-Mind or *Kama-Manas*. Beyond and above these four is the human Soul.

When the body dies, the Soul withdraws, taking with it part of the astral body and *Prana*-Energy and all of *Kama-Manas* or Passion-Mind. The shock of separation from its physical vesture throws the Soul into a condition of sleep, in which it is turned in upon itself, unconscious of all outside of its own ideation. Very soon it passes through what is called "the second death," in which it throws off, unknown to itself, the astral body, *Prana*, and all that was evil in *Kama-Manas*. This second corpse, made up of the mortal and impure elements of the late personality, is called *Kama-Rupa*, Passion-Form. That soulless *Kama-Rupa* visits the séance room and is mistaken by the Spiritualists for the spirit of the departed.

The real Soul, the immortal entity, cannot return to communicate with those on earth. It is in a purely subjective state, a state of blissful meditation called *Devachan*, the Land of the Gods, for the human Soul freed from the senses and passions is like a god. There the Soul rests and is refreshed. It is not lonely, for within its ideation or imagination are the living pictures of all those it loved, whether still on earth or whether they themselves had preceded it to that blissful subjective state. And because the Soul is free from the limitations of its last personality, it can perceive in its loved ones all that is good and noble, so that what it sees is much nearer the divine reality than when those Souls were masked by their personalities and weaknesses on earth.

Devachan is in one sense a dream, but it is not a waste of time. It is actually a creative state, although subjective. The Soul is intensely busy, living over again the happy experiences of its last life, carrying to fruition all its aspirations into the attainment of which it had put sufficient effort while in life, and building into faculty the net result of all it had gained in its life in the body. Just as our daily meditation inspires us and prepares us for the activities of the day, so *Devachan* prepares us for the task of the next life.

As the human Soul passing through many experiences reaches the bliss of creative meditation in which faculties and powers are unfolded,

so also in course of time that Soul, feeling hunger for earth-experiences, comes out of that condition and slowly, step by step, enters into a new body of flesh and blood. Life after death has two phases — the ascent of the Soul from pain to bliss, and then the descent of the Soul with added powers and faculties into a new body.

Life in or out of the body belongs to the Self in us, which is immortal. We are building our *Devachanic* experience now, in our daily life. It is possible for all of us to come to the position of the truly spiritual man, who lives a spiritual life in the body and shows forth the glory of the Spirit, even in the mortal body.

There are two points of vital importance to the living which we must consider.

All of us must pass through the experience of death one day. But before our hour strikes, many a time we may have to be present at the passing of another. Knowledge of what death implies is most useful, for it teaches us the way we should behave when attending at a death-bed. We cannot do better than quote at length the following from an article by H. P. Blavatsky — “Memory in the Dying” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 25*):

We find in a very old letter from a MASTER, written years ago to a member of the Theosophical Society, the following suggestive lines on the mental state of a dying man:

“At the last moment, the whole life is reflected in our memory and emerges from all the forgotten nooks and corners, picture after picture, one event after the other. The dying brain dislodges memory with a strong, supreme impulse; and memory restores faithfully every impression that has been entrusted to it during the period of the brain’s activity. That impression and thought which was the strongest, naturally becomes the most vivid, and survives, so to say, all the rest, which now vanish and disappear for ever, but to reappear in Devachan. No man dies insane or unconscious, as some physiologists assert. Even a madman or one in a fit of *delirium tremens* will have his instant of perfect lucidity at the moment of death, though unable to say to those present. The man may often appear dead. Yet from the last pulsation, and between the last throbbing of his heart and the moment when the last throb of animal heat leaves the body, *the brain thinks* and the Ego lives, in these few brief seconds, his whole life over again. Speak in whispers, ye who assist at a death-bed and find yourselves in the solemn presence of Death. Especially have ye to keep quiet just after Death has laid her clammy hand

upon the body. Speak in whispers I say, lest you disturb the quiet ripple of thought and hinder the busy work of the Past casting its reflection upon the veil of the Future....”

At the time of death, instead of remaining quiet and composed, people are apt to mourn, to cry loudly and to speak with great feeling and emotion. It is natural to feel a sense of grief, but if they knew that noises and outbursts of feeling disturb their relative or friend who is actually passing through the gate of death, who is then and there experiencing the solemnity and the majesty of death, they would realize that the expression of their grief should be controlled. It is selfish, however understandable, to give vent to sorrow; it is unselfish, however hard, to remain collected and calm at such an hour. We do not disturb a sleeping man or one who is engaged in prayer or meditation, because we know what is happening to the sleeping body or to the praying heart and the meditating mind. When we learn about what actually is taking place in the brain and the consciousness of the dying man, we also are led to act correctly, to behave properly.

The second point is about our making certain of the occurrence of death and the consequent disposal of the corpse. A doctor's certificate is no final guarantee that the body is dead. It is unwise to cremate or bury or otherwise dispose of the body too quickly. The practice of embalming the body, with a view to preserving it and actually prolonging the hour of actual disposal, is highly objectionable. The corpse is not composed of dead matter — there is no dead matter anywhere. The method of disposal of the dead body affects the man's future in certain ways, and also that method, if not hygienic and sanitary, adversely affects the living. A study of the question is necessary.

As a closing thought this must be said: There is knowledge available on the subject of the different ways in which the separation between Soul and body, named death, takes place; also, about what occurs at the time of death and immediately after; about what happens to the different constituents of the human individual — his body, his weaknesses and wickedness, his knowledge and virtues, his Soul-consciousness; about Heaven and Hell; about the nature of the meeting between the so-called dead and the so-called living. This is useful knowledge — not only useful for us when we have passed through the portal of death, but also useful now when we are preparing ourselves for the life which awaits us after the death of the body.

ARE YOU ONE?

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The earnest *working* members are few.—H. P. B.

If you are not an earnest *working* member already, are you trying to become one?

W. Q. Judge once wrote that “no Branch should depend on one person, for, if so, it will slump, sure; nor, on two or three either.” And again — “Times change, men go here and there, and places need to be filled by those who can do the best sort of work and who are full of the fire of devotion and who have the right basis and a sure and solid one for themselves.”

The earnest working member pays attention to his own soul progress only as a means, and does not make it an end in itself. He who thinks of his own spiritual unfoldment may be in earnest, but he is not a working member in the real sense of that term. A working member works and thinks of the work all the time. The service of human souls is his objective and he is not agitated if his progress is nil. But a man intent on serving human souls is bound to unfold his own: unconscious of the process, he grows as the flower grows. On the other hand, if a working member toils and moils, neglecting adequate and proper soul-nourishment for himself, he may be labouring very hard but he is weak in his earnestness. A wise doctor who prescribes tonic and nourishment to others makes time to eat adequate and proper food himself.

There are many who are earnest about the work of the U.L.T. but who are somewhat vague about its nature, about the basic principles underlying its programme and policy. The very first principle which we need to grasp is this: We are building up a large and united body of people for the promulgation of Theosophy as recorded in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge. This promulgation requires a careful study of those writings; and full understanding of them demands application through assimilation, to some extent at least. Unity — Study — Work, as a Triad, will make any associate of the U.L.T. an earnest *working* member. Such an associate, taking what share he can in the work, will help it on, and he should try to do so by every means in his power. H.P.B. wrote that “No one is asked to give more than he can afford, whether in devotion, time, work or money,” but she added that “No fellow has a right to remain idle.”

There are five methods mentioned by H.P.B. which the earnest working associate of the U.L.T. should employ in order to serve the Cause founded upon our noble Declaration. They are:

- (1) To comprehend the Theosophical doctrines, so that he may teach others, especially the young.
- (2) To explain to others what Theosophy is and what it is not, removing misconceptions and spreading an interest in the subject.
- (3) To assist in circulating our literature, by buying books when he has the means, by lending and giving them and by inducing his friends to do so.
- (4) To defend Theosophy from the unjust aspersions cast upon it, by every legitimate means in his power.
- (5) Most important of all — to make his own life an example to others.

The failure of the Parent Theosophical Society was caused by personal ambitions which obscured whatever Theosophical knowledge was acquired by some of those on whom it fell to carry on the work after the passing of H.P.B. Personalities pushing themselves to the fore, all unconsciously elbowed out those who could have served the Cause with the power of their own Inner Egos.

Robert Crosbie, the Founder of the U.L.T., having gained considerable experience in the workings of the Theosophical Movement, devised a way which is safe for the student to take and which ensures the good of the Cause, so much more vital than the good of individual associates.

The impersonal basis of the U.L.T. is well known to all associates; but certain phases thereof are not clearly understood. For example, all earnest working members should find out the implications of the following statement by Robert Crosbie:

It is difficult to help individuals as such, especially where all the strength is needed for a general effort. It is quite easy to be drawn into this helping of individuals by our sympathies, and sometimes we do things that are not helpful at all, although perhaps a pleasure to both giver and receiver.

Therefore the earnest working member has to learn more and more to confine his work for the promulgation of Theosophy to the U.L.T. platform. He should endeavour to avoid giving aid and help in a per-

sonal way. Instead of talking to an individual here or corresponding with another there he should use the impersonal platform and the impersonal periodical to spread broadcast the teachings of Theosophy. Every grade of intelligence can receive help from the platform and through the periodical, as well as through the impersonal correspondence the Lodge carries on. This foundational idea is also given by Mr. Crosbie:

It should be our policy to state at each meeting what our purposes are — namely to disseminate the fundamental principles of Theosophy and to answer questions on the subject-matter provided. . . . There will be difficulty in getting many to see the importance of this continual reiteration, but it is essential to all true progress.

Thus the U.L.T. should sow seeds in the hearts of men, which will in time flower, and under more propitious circumstances lead to a healthy reform, conducive of more happiness *for the masses* than they have hitherto enjoyed.

So, Brother Associate of the U.L.T. — are you an earnest *working* member?

If not — are you trying to become one?

Would you have war? Wage it within your heart upon your heart. Disarm your heart of every hope and fear and vain desire that make your world a stifling pen, and you shall find it broader than the Universe; and you shall roam that Universe at will; and nothing shall be unto you an hindrance.

That is the only war worth waging. Engage yourself in such a war, and you shall no longer find the time for any other wars which would become to you abhorrent beastliness and diabolic tricks meant to distract your mind, and sap your strength, and cause you thus to lose the great war with yourself which is indeed an holy war. To win that war is to win undying glory. But victory in any other war is worse than rank defeat. And that is the horror of all men's wars, that the victor and the vanquished equally espouse defeat.

—MIKHAIL NAIMY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

For the past several years scientists have been experimenting with weather modification. It is believed that they may soon be able to produce rain to order, warm up the ocean, and create new seas. But will this be an unmixed blessing? Dr. Walter Orr Roberts, director of the U.S. National Centre for Atmospheric Research, believes that weather modification on a global scale is "in potential for benefit or destruction the analogue of atomic energy."

This is quoted in the article "Change the Weather, Change the World" (*Harper's Magazine*, May 1967) by Doris Peters, the pen-name of a science writer whose own susceptibility to weather and climate has led to her concern about deliberate manipulation of the natural environment. "The uncertainties confronting us deal not so much with what we can do about the weather as with what man-made weather will do to us — to man and his livelihood." In the first place, one cannot be too sure that a planned climate will be better than the old unreliable variety. And on what basis will weather be allocated? "How do we rate the demands of a resort industry which would be ruined by the rain that the farmers in the same area badly need?" asks Doris Peters. Questions of this nature will have to be faced very soon, and already a few lawsuits in the United States have been based on damages allegedly caused by efforts to make rain which led to disastrous downpours.

Most biologists think weather tinkering will do more harm than good.

We do know [writes Doris Peters] that any interference with the environment upsets the equilibrium in which man and all other species exist. The effects of great changes in climate during the advancing and retreating phases of the ice age can be seen in the fossil record. Man's encroachment upon new land has led, and continues to lead, to the decrease, and sometimes the extinction, of entire species. The dislocations after unusual events such as earthquakes or floods are clearly visible. . . .

Before adding man-made weather to all the natural hazards it seems vital that we learn more about how organisms grow, how they react, what they need to thrive and survive, how they fit into the community of living plants and animals. At present we have such data for only a handful of species: man, the speckled trout, the loblolly pine, and a few others. For the rest

— numbering some 250,000 plant species and over a million animals — there are only disconnected bits of piecemeal observations. . . . In general, lack of moisture harms vegetation and animal life; but there is at least a suspicion that a moderate drought may have a regulatory function, just as forest fires are nature's way of controlling forest growth. Induced rainfall, particularly at the wrong season, could affect the reproductive cycle of many plants and animals; it could upset the equilibrium between competing organisms; it might spread pests or diseases through bacteria or insects that thrive on humidity, and lead to the defoliation of plants and eventually to changes in the soil. . . .

The Society of Ecologists regards the prospect of worldwide weather modification as an unmitigated disaster. . . . Certainly we should embark at once on an intensive effort to learn more about the biological, social, and economic impact of weather modification. To do this we will have to collect and analyse information about each of the earth's environments, its plant and animal population, and its range of weather. Eventually, this data can be used for computer programmes which will simulate the total effects of all possible weather modifications.

There were 151 murders in Britain in 1965. In 1966, a year after capital punishment was abolished in that country, the murder rate dropped to 143 (*The Times of India*, June 30). Is the reduction the direct consequence of abolition? Supporters of the death penalty have always maintained that it is an effective deterrent to murder. Yet, in every country which has done away with it, the murder rate has fallen, not risen. If it cannot be said that a drop in the murder rate is the necessary consequence of the abolition of capital punishment, neither can it be maintained that its abolition leads to a rise in that rate.

Here in India, about two years ago State governments wrote to the Centre favouring the retention of the death penalty. They argued that it was an effective deterrent. Yet, as against 11,188 murder cases in 1961, there were 11,586 in 1962. Was this increase the result merely of more efficient police investigation? But the case for ending capital punishment does not rest solely on figures. The death penalty is primitive, retributive justice, and can mean the death of a person whom subsequent investigation may prove to have been innocent. Even those

who do not know the weightier Theosophical reasons for doing away with capital punishment yet do support the abolitionist cause.

As self-conscious individuals we live within the framework of a world of ideas about ourselves and our relations to our fellow men, and about the material universe of which we form so insignificant a part. This ideological world sets the pattern for the culture that we inherit from our forbears, that each generation acquires anew through education and that it enlarges in the measure of its creative capacity. In the past, a number of these cultures, organized on national or regional lines, have coexisted in various parts of the earth, and they have differed from one another not only in their richness but in their outlooks on life. An important consequence of the development of modern science is that it has destroyed this isolation while at the same time providing a body of knowledge about the material world which all advancing cultures share, no matter how different they may be in other respects.

In the article "The Place of Science in Culture" (*Prabuddha Bharata*, June 1967), Dr. Ralph W. G. Wyckoff, Professor of Physics and Bacteriology at the University of Arizona, U.S.A., refers to the international character of science and the better understanding it creates between peoples. It is the focal point, he says,

for the evolution of a single culture common to all men — and this may be a great step forward or a tragedy, depending on the form it takes and the breadth of its vision of man and his destiny. . . . A scientifically oriented civilization for all mankind is inevitable. We can only hope that enthusiasm for the material power and quick riches, as well as the deep understanding of nature, that science brings will not give this civilization, inescapably materialistic in emphasis, a form that interferes with the expression of the non-materialistic aspects of experience which must in the long run shape man's destiny. . . .

Apart from the reconstruction of material existence which science has brought about, it seems to me that its most profound effects are twofold. One is the demonstration that everything that happens in the world of matter follows immutable laws which the human mind can discover and formulate. The other arises from the observation that evolutionary principles correlate the phenomena of life as far backward in time as observation can

reach. The mechanization of world processes initiated by the discovery of physical laws is being completed by the present-day demonstrations through bio-chemistry of the reactions that give life its dynamism. . . .

I would like to assert that both science and the higher values have essential but independent places within a culture that expresses to the full man's potentialities. I would go farther and point out that a society which emphasizes one at the expense of the others is in jeopardy. One could point to national cultures which survive with difficulty through disregard for the facts of material existence; and there are others whose stability is imperilled by overemphasis of the material at the expense of the truly spiritual and of its practical arm, the ethical. . . . We need very badly the knowledge about the material universe and especially about ourselves which only science can give; but we must never forget that science by itself is incapable of creating the better world we seek.

This can only arise through understanding between men who hold such a high goal in life. . . . It seems to me that we must have active cultivation of the three factors we have enumerated: science as the solid background of material reality through which one can develop a sympathetic understanding of other men, the spiritual values whose cultivation gives real meaning and purpose to life, and the æsthetic values that enrich it through cultivation of the beauty and feeling for existence they can bring. This should be our objective both individual and social.

There is no excuse for cruelty in "sports" and for the cruelty of vivisection, but the case is still worse when we come to cruelty for fashion. We must be ashamed of cruelty, ashamed to kill for fashion, ashamed of selfishness.

The recent decision of the Scandinavian authorities to exterminate two million mink (the animals from which the famous fur coat is made) is truly shocking (*The Times of India*, July 5). The massive slaughter is to take place, not for ecological considerations, but simply to safeguard the price and quality of mink coats. A good mink coat requires about 80 pelts. In the past decade, the annual mink production from Scandinavia has risen from two million to six million pelts, largely owing to the greed of fur breeders out to make quick money. The result has been a fall in the quality and price of mink coats.

In our issue of November 1937 we reprinted some comments of

H.P.B.'s from her *Lucifer* for November 1887, on the subject of cruelty for fashion, under the heading "Sin Against Life." H.P.B. wrote:

A newspaper paragraph lately declared that a certain American lady of great wealth, residing in London, had conceived the strange desire to possess a cloak made of the soft warm down on the breasts of birds of Paradise. Five hundred breasts, it was said, were required for this purpose, and two skilful marksmen, the story went on to aver, had been sent to New Guinea to shoot the poor little victims whose wholesale slaughter must be accomplished to gratify this savage whim. We rejoice to observe that the whole statement has been flatly contradicted by the *World*, apparently on the best possible authority; but, however little the lady concerned may deserve the reproach which the authors of the calumny endeavoured to evoke against her, the feeling it may have excited is worth analysis in a world where, if bird of Paradise cloaks are rare, most women who dress luxuriously adorn themselves in one way or another at the expense of the feathered kingdom. The principle involved in a bonnet which is decorated with the plumage of a single bird, slaughtered for its sake, is the same as that which would be more grotesquely manifest in a garment that would require the slaughter of five hundred. Too many rich people in this greedy age forget that the grandest privilege of those who possess the means is that they have the power of alleviating suffering. Too many, again, forget that the sympathies of those who rule the animate world should extend beyond the limits of their own kind; and thus we have the painful spectacle of human "sport" associated in civilized countries still, with pursuits which should no longer afford pleasure to men who have emerged from the primitive life of hunters and fishers. But how is it possible, let us consider, to stoop lowest from the proud estate of humanity in search of ignoble gratification? It is bad to kill any sentient creature for the sake of the savage pleasures of the chase. It is bad, perhaps worse, to cause their destruction for the sake of coldly profiting by their slaughter, and it is bad to squander money in this hard world of want and wide-spread privation on costly personal indulgence. But the acme of all that is reprehensible in these various departments of ill-doing is surely reached when women — who should, by virtue of their sex, be helping to soften the ferocities of life — contrive to collect the cream of evil from each of these varieties, and to sin against a whole catalogue of human duties by cruel acquiescence in an unworthy fashion.
