

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHY

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It will be time enough to pronounce a verdict upon my work after my eyes are closed and this tabernacle is consigned to the flames.

II.—THE RELIGION OF GANDHIJI

Even as a tree has a single trunk, but many branches and leaves, so there is one true and perfect Religion, but it becomes many, as it passes through the human medium. The one Religion is beyond all speech.

After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that (1) all religions are true; (2) all religions have some error in them; (3) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, inasmuch as all human beings should be as dear to one as one's own close relatives. My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith; therefore no thought of conversion is possible.

—M. K. GANDHI

It is from this WISDOM-RELIGION that all the various individual “Religions” (erroneously so called) have sprung, forming in their turn offshoots and branches, and also all the minor creeds, based upon and always originated through some personal experience in psychology. Every such religion, or religious offshoot, be it considered orthodox or heretical, wise or foolish, started originally as a clear and unadulterated stream from the Mother-Source. The fact that each became in time polluted with purely human speculations and even inventions, due to interested motives, does not prevent any from having been pure in its early beginnings.

There are those creeds — we shall not call them religions — which have now been overlaid with the human element out of all recognition; others just showing signs of early decay; not one that escaped the hand of time. But each and all are of divine, because natural and true origin; aye — Mazdeism, Brahmanism, Buddhism as much as Christianity.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

GANDHIJI called himself a Hindu. But what type of a Hindu was he? Orthodox Hindus opposed him tooth and nail. Gandhiji countered numerous orthodox beliefs and practices, and though he reasoned with love and loved the orthodox and even the fanatical on a reasoned basis, he had to pay with his very life the price for his enlightened Hinduism. Who can deny that Hindu orthodoxy is responsible for his assassination? It is, therefore, necessary to determine what he himself implied in his assertion that he was a Hindu. He said:

For me Hinduism is all-sufficing. Every variety of belief finds protection under its ample fold.

My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be best in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism.

But which orthodox Hindu would accept the idea that every variety of belief can be included in Hinduism? What is good in other creeds, but not to be found in the Hindu creed, to be accepted!

Further, Gandhiji rejected orthodox views and even attacked several of them. Here is one instance:

I claim to be as good a Hindu as any orthodox Hindu. I have endeavoured to enforce all precepts of Hinduism in my own life to the best of my ability. I admit that my ability is small. But that does not affect my attitude to and love for Hinduism. Yet, in spite of all that love for Hinduism, with a due sense of my own responsibility, I am here to tell you that so long as the doors of the Benares temple are closed against a single Harijan, Kashi Vishwanath does not reside in that temple and I could not possibly approach that temple with a belief in its sanctity, or in the faith that by worshipping there I should be purified of my sins. I can have no sense of piety in respect of such a temple.

How can the orthodox who worship at Kashi Vishwanath accept this? Still more—

If untouchability was a part of the Hindu creed, I should decline to call myself a Hindu and most decidedly embrace some

other faith, if it satisfied my highest aspirations. Fortunately for me, I hold that untouchability is no part of Hinduism. On the contrary, it is a serious blot upon it, which every lover of it must sacrifice himself to remove. Suppose, however, I discovered that untouchability was really an integral part of Hinduism, I should have to wander in the wilderness, because the other creeds, as I know them through their accepted interpreters, would not satisfy my highest aspirations.

He implies that he would remain a Hindu and by his effort give it a new shape and form. That is why he defines Hinduism as "a relentless pursuit after Truth" and even makes room in its fold for an atheist.

If I were asked to define the Hindu creed I should simply say, search after Truth through non-violent means. A man may not believe even in God and still call himself a Hindu. Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after Truth and if today it has become moribund, inactive, irresponsive to growth, it is because we are fatigued, and as soon as the fatigue is over, Hinduism will burst forth upon the world with a brilliance perhaps unknown before.

A moribund and fatigued Hinduism! An orthodox Hindu might well ask: Why then call yourself a Hindu? Why not take for your brand of Hinduism a different name?

Quotations can easily be multiplied to show that between Gandhiji's Hinduism and the prevailing Hinduism of the Hindu masses as well as classes there is a fundamental difference. Castes, Untouchability, Animal Sacrifices, etc., are all attacked by Gandhiji, and he adds:

The hordes rotting in the name of religion in the various parts of India have made many of these religious institutions a sham, where they have not become hot-beds of corruption.

The key to his position as a Hindu (which he claims to be) is in this assertion: "I am a reformer through and through."

He was a Hindu but a Protestant like Luther. He was a Reformer — iconoclastic but constructive, like the Buddha. Like Jesus, himself a Jew, who fought orthodox Jews, Gandhiji, himself a Hindu, tried to chase the money-changers and priests out of the many *Mandirs*, repeating after the Hebrew Pacifist: "I have come not to destroy but to fulfil the Law and the Prophets."

He did not destroy without constructing. In attacking animal sacrifices he did not attack sacrifice as an eternal verity but pointed to the true doctrine of *yagna* as Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, H. P. Blavatsky and

others taught it. In destroying untouchability he offered the truth of Universal Brotherhood. In demolishing the crude notion of infallible, divine and revealed books — Vedas, Bible, Koran — he pointed to the existence of the accumulated Wisdom of the ancient sages of every continent.

The purification of Hinduism was a very prominent plank in Gandhiji's religious platform. But even that plank was not the main one. His personal Religion was the study, application and promulgation of Truth and Non-violence. He called it *Satyagraha*. Because Hinduism proved to be to him the best and nearest instrument for his Faith called *Satyagraha*, especially as a born Indian he found in existing Hinduism a promising field for fructifying the seeds of his own personal religion. He assessed religion as "the best armour that a man can have," but it is "the worst cloak," as H. P. Blavatsky pointed out, quoting the words of John Bunyan. In describing what true Religion or Theosophy is, H. P. Blavatsky quoted the striking lines of Miller:

... true Religion

Is always mild, propitious and humble;
 Plays not *the tyrant*, plants *no faith in blood*,
 Nor bears destruction on her chariot wheels;
 But stoops to polish, succour and redress,
 And *builds her grandeur on the public good*.

This admirably describes Gandhiji's Religion. He was not an ordinary Hindu; he was a *Satyagrahi*, who adopted Hinduism as a channel for the use and propagation of that personal religion. Everything was subservient to Truth and Non-violence. Therefore whatever conformed to or supported *Satyagraha*, though it went counter to *Shruti* or *Vedas*, *Smriti* or Tradition-Lore, was accepted by Gandhiji. The strength and the breadth of his personal Religion of *Satyagraha* is implicit in his statement:

I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas. I believe the Bible, the Koran and the Zend Avesta to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas. My belief in the Hindu scriptures does not require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired. Nor do I claim to have any first-hand knowledge of these wonderful books. But I do claim to know and feel the truths of the essential teaching of the scriptures.

In this method or technique he drew his own portrait in the words he uttered about the enlightened Buddha himself. These words contain

a real key which unlocks the mind of Gandhiji about himself as a religious reformer of the effete and moribund Hinduism:

The Buddha was saturated with the best that was in Hinduism, and he gave life to some of the teachings that were buried in the Vedas and which were overgrown with weeds. His great Hindu spirit cut its way through the forest of words, meaningless words, which had overlaid the golden truth that was in the Vedas. He made some of the words in the Vedas yield a meaning to which the men of his generation were utter strangers, and he found in India the most congenial soil. And wherever the Buddha went, he was followed and surrounded, not by non-Hindus, but by Hindus, those who were themselves saturated with Vedic law. But the Buddha's teaching like his heart was all-expanding and all-embracing and so it has survived his own body and swept across the face of the earth. And at the risk of being called a follower of Buddha I claim this achievement as a triumph of Hinduism. Buddha never rejected Hinduism, but he broadened its base. He gave it a new life and a new interpretation.

To sum up Gandhiji's position in a few words:

My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself. My life is dedicated to the service of India through the religion of non-violence, which I believe to be the root of Hinduism.

While Gandhiji gave a prominent place to Hinduism in his Credo of *Satyagraha*, he did not reject other religions. He wrote:

Dharma, i.e., religion in the highest sense of the term, includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all. You may recognize it by the name of Truth, not the honesty of expedience, but the living Truth that pervades everything and will survive all destruction and all transformation.

Religion as a Way of Life, of *Satyagraha* — that was Gandhiji's Religion, and the Book on which he took his stand to practise Truth and Non-violence, *Satya* and *Ahimsa*, was the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

Our next article will be on the *Bhagavad-Gita* — the Bible of the *Satyagrahi*.

UNTOUCHABILITY—A BURNING QUESTION

THE CRISIS in our religious and social life that we are now face to face with indicates the need for going to first principles. That untouchability exists in spite of legislation against it is a fact—a degrading and saddening fact—which must be faced. No one can deny that change and reform are overdue; but we must first seek for the philosophical basis of untouchability. Nothing can come out of nothing, and the most debasing and gross forms of life are caricatures of some reality or fact in Nature.

Untouchability is not peculiar to India alone. In one form or another, it exists almost everywhere. It may have an ethnic source; the racial discrimination that exists in some countries is a brand of untouchability. The fight for racial equality goes on, and here, too, legislation alone has not been able to solve the problem. Or its source may be vocational; certain professions in life are regarded as low, bring less earnings compared to other professions, and those engaged in them are looked down upon. A charwoman and those whom she serves do not enjoy the same socio-economic status. Social clubs are a standing manifestation of this type of untouchability—there are commercial clubs and clubs for gentlemen!

Racial and vocational untouchability is not based on religious considerations. In India it has been given a religious basis, which in reality does not exist. If a religion sanctions unbrotherly treatment of one section of human beings by another, then that religion cannot be true. The very function of true religion is to unite man to man and to uphold the Ideal of Brotherhood, for as Souls, immortal and divine, all are but aspects of the One Self. True religion teaches man to look upon all other men as Souls, and all honest labour as sacred, and it cannot support the degradation and the crime of untouchability. The claim that Hinduism sanctions untouchability is a most false one—not true Hinduism at any rate.

The significant question is—by what process has the curse of untouchability arisen? It results as a residue when castes, instead of serving the purpose they were meant to serve, function on a wrong basis of competition and exploitation. It should be noted that castes, too, are a universal phenomenon. They have been known as classes in Western society. Class struggle is but another phase of the same problem. While the division of castes is based on religious beliefs, religious prejudices and religious misunderstanding, the division of

classes is based on social beliefs, social prejudices and social misunderstandings. The struggle between the capitalist-ruler and the working-man has been no less acute than the struggle between the high-caste and the low-caste.

To seek the philosophical basis of castes, classes, and all divisions in human society, we must understand that in the human kingdom diversity persists as naturally as in the other kingdoms. Castes and classes, communities and races, have a basis in Nature herself. They are produced by the urge of the evolutionary process. The course of that urge is from within outwards; that is, the creative urge rises at the centre and spreads to the circumference. This spreading is manifestation, which our ancient philosophers named *Prabhava*. Hence manifestation necessarily means differentiation and diversity. The One Principle of Universal Life starting to manifest or expand from a central point becomes heterogeneous in its countless expressions. Creation is expansion of the will-force of Spirit or Purusha, and we call it the Brahma aspect. What has emerged or what is created is preserved by the Vishnu aspect of Spirit. The change, disintegration and destruction which recreates and regenerates is the Shiva aspect of Spirit. Thus Purusha by its triple activity keeps the different kingdoms of Nature going, cycle after cycle, age after age, replacing one type with another. For example, the animal monsters of past yugas are no more, but their transformations exist today. The human giants of earlier races are extinct, but their transformations are to be found in our day. Castes and classes are no longer recognized as the religious and spiritual institutions they were meant to be in an age when true Religion prevailed, but have degenerated into socio-economic institutions because ours is the Age of Iron, the dark *Kali Yuga*, and our civilization is made and ruled by the machine and by rupees, pounds or dollars. Thus, philosophically examined, we can see that the grouping arrangement in Nature persists in all her kingdoms, including the human.

All thinking men recognize that castes have had their day and that they must cease to exist in their present form. But the grouping arrangement of Nature cannot be destroyed; it should be utilized. It is precisely in using it along right lines that Harmony and Brotherhood can be established.

There is only one way in which the problem of castes as of classes can be solved. For centuries men have fought for their "rights." The problem of distinctions and divisions will not be solved till the ideal of

duty or *dharma*, the property of the Soul within, is substituted for rights wrested from without. Let each individual fulfil his own *dharma*, discharge his own responsibility, and thereby serve not only his own caste or class, but all his fellow beings, irrespective of any distinctions. The only nobility and superiority recognized from the spiritual point of view is that of the Soul and is rooted in the intrinsic value of one's own character and inner perception. No caste is superior or inferior, any more than one colour is superior or inferior to another.

The curse of untouchability arose in India and brought about the degradation of the country because the profoundly true and profoundly practical teachings of the *Gita* were disregarded. Another wonderful opportunity came to India when two thousand five hundred years ago the Great Buddha exposed the absolute fallacy of castes by birth and heredity. India did not listen. When she did, as during the reign of King Asoka, then peace and glory surrounded her. Modern India is determined to do away with the evil, yet is encountering opposition from vested interests. No truly religious thinker can support the idea of maintaining the *status quo* in this matter. Not only India, but the world as a whole is ripening for the practice of *dharma* as taught by Krishna and by Buddha.

What is *dharma*? It is the Law of Life in every kingdom. It is the *dharma* of the fire to burn; it is the *dharma* of the water to find its level; it is the *dharma* of the flower to open and of the fruit to ripen. *Dharma* is the right expression of the inner properties of life. It is a magnificent word, this word *dharma*, and it throws a flood of light on the subject of human duties, human religion, human progress. Its teachings are of universal application.

We must relate the ideal of *dharma* to the existence of castes. The *Gita* says that castes, four in number, exist in the human kingdom as a grouping of Nature. And these four castes arise from *Gunas* and *Karma*. Not our birth or the profession of our fathers, but our own inner disposition and our own actions assign to each one of us his or her caste. Verses 41–45 of the Eighteenth Discourse of the *Gita* should be studied very carefully:

The respective duties of the four castes, of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras, are also determined by the qualities which predominate in the disposition of each. . . . The natural duty of a Brahman compriseth tranquillity, purity, self-mastery, patience, rectitude, learning, spiritual discernment, and

belief in the existence of another world. Those of the Kshatriya sprung from his nature, are valour, glory, strength, firmness, not to flee from the field of battle, liberality and a lordly character. The natural duties of the Vaishya are to till the land, tend cattle and to buy and sell; and that of the Shudra is to serve, as is his natural disposition. Men being contented and devoted to their own proper duties attain perfection. . . .

Making a practical application of this, we shall find that many Brahmanas are only Brahmanas in name; most of them are Vaishyas making money, and poor Vaishyas at that, for they hoard wealth and their charity itself is a bargain. According to one's own inner property of the Soul is one a Brahmana, a Vaishya, a Kshatriya, or a Shudra. And there is no fifth caste! All are Hindus, all are Harijans, the people of the Great God Hari, and each belongs to one of the four castes in terms of his inner character and his outward behaviour and service. The *Gita* teaching on caste, as also what is said on the subject in the other *true* Shastras, needs to be popularized and practised.

These words of Yudhishtira in the *Vanaparva* of the *Mahabharata* should be noted:

Truth, charity, forgiveness, good conduct, gentleness, austerity, and mercy, where these are seen, O King of the Serpents, there is a Brahmana. If these marks exist in a Shudra and are not in a Dvija, the Shudra is not a Shudra, nor the Brahmana a Brahmana.

In the *Vishnu-Bhagavata* we read:

What is said as to the marks of conduct indicative of a man's caste, if those marks are found in another, designate him by the caste of his marks (*i.e.*, not of his body and birth).

And this is what *Manu Smriti* has to say:

As a wooden elephant, as a leathern deer, such is an unlearned Brahmana; these three bear only names. The Brahmana who not having studied the Vedas labours elsewhere becomes a Shudra in that very life together with his descendants.

So that is the first principle. True caste-marks are marks of conduct. From this fundamental principle most naturally follows the second—by changing one's own character one automatically changes one's own Soul caste. It is possible by the performance of right *dharma* to grow and evolve from glory to glory. All of us have this solemn duty, and at least a few of us can begin to practise it.

What is that *dharma*? Each one of us is an untouchable, because who among us is free from disobedience to Nature's laws, from impurity of heart or mind, from fears of a hundred kinds, from selfishness and greed of one sort or another? Let us remove the untouchability in us. We are each one of us a Shudra, and a Vaishya, and a Kshatriya, as well as a Brahmana. We are not perfect, but through right *dharma*, by eliminating our vices and by strengthening our virtues, we move towards perfection. As Shudras, each one of us must remove the sin of disobedience to the voice of conscience, and not only the blemish of negligence. As Vaishyas, each one of us must learn not only to guard against the blemish of speculation and loss, but also to remove the sin of dishonesty. As Kshatriyas, each one of us must kill the sin of cowardice even though many fears possess us. As Brahmanas, each one of us should remove the blemish of ignorance, but not neglect to eradicate the vice of impurity. Let us develop the virtue of efficiency and skill and become true Shudras; the virtue of charity and become true Vaishyas; the virtue of courage and become true Kshatriyas; the virtue of sacrifice and become true Brahmanas. Thus will we make ourselves in the copy of the Great Purusha, the radiant, blazing Divinity of whom the *Purusha-Sukta* hymn sings.

Let us willingly give up what we regard as our caste rights and privileges, and joyfully take up our duties and responsibilities. Let us begin to practise true charity of mind and of heart in our own sphere. Let us treat all we come in contact with with soul-understanding, looking upon all men as our brothers, all women as our sisters. Let the children at school learn to regard all other children as co-pupils, comrades and friends. Let those who have servants in their homes treat them with understanding, trying to educate them and to teach them better modes of living, thus raising them to better conditions. Let the men in their offices and clubs judge merit in terms of honesty, of efficiency and capacity, and not in terms of caste or wealth distinctions. And let all who are happy remember the unhappy! The more we know and the more we have, the greater our responsibility to those who know less and have less. The true Brahmana is he who devotes himself to the truly disinterested service of others, who consecrates his life to teach and help his fellow men. All of us must prepare ourselves for that service in the future, and the best preparation lies in opening our hearts to the misery of the depressed, the submerged, the poor and the ignorant. Their problem, their degradation, are *our* problem and *our* degradation.

THE ANCIENT SCIENCE

From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
The place is dignified by the doer's deed.

—SHAKESPEARE

TOWARDS THE CLOSE of the last century a literature strange in its style and content began to appear in the West. True that its advent was foreshadowed in books like *The Dream of Ravan*, *The Light of Asia*, *Zanoni* and *The Coming Race*. But these were the forerunners of new treatises on an art long lost and forgotten. Centuries back, the Alchemists and the Rosicrucians had produced a mass of literature which, though it used the current language, hid behind the very words which expressed their thoughts, their most profound and recondite mystery. But the ages when persecution, torture and crucifixion were the lot of the mystic and the thinker were past and the 19th century was shaking off the shackles of both religion and science. Max Müller with his team of Orientalists was producing his series of the *Sacred Books of the East*, making Eastern thought and wisdom available to a Western public which was rapidly acquiring a taste for this type of knowledge. For the first time in centuries the moment was opportune for the unravelling of secrets which formerly were not allowed to move out beyond a very charmed and restricted circle.

What was it that was about to be removed from the category of the secret and cautiously given out for the enlightenment of those who were prepared to put in the necessary effort to comprehend it? The primary revelation was that of a new method of reading certain types of literature. The hint was given that certain books when read in the usual way yielded a meaning which though intelligible might not impart the esoteric knowledge, the deeper instruction. The student was invited to take pains to read, not between the lines, but within the words. He was told that the cipher was really in the very words used and he was expected to bend the energies of his Soul in unravelling the mystery. This was no mere exercise set for mental gymnastics. It was hoped that once the learner was convinced of the existence of the mystery language, he would also begin to glimpse the limitations of that thought which is based on ordinary reasoning processes. He, alone and unaided, had to take the next step — the jumping away from old orthodox positions, the abandoning of the lower faculties and the seeking within himself for other and more refined forces and processes which could take him deeper into the arcana of things.

Now, to the average man, the only faculty worth aspiring to is that of moving in an orderly way from premises to conclusions. Because of long-ingrained habits of thought, he is apt to reject *a priori* all claims to the existence of a human faculty which can be considered even remotely to rise superior to reason. To him, intuition is a mere word used by some to express the functions of a faculty the very existence of which is still debatable. Flashes of genius, premonitions, extrasensory perceptions are to him sudden and sometimes frightening glimpses of the unknown which in his blindness he characterizes as "unknowable." Men of high intellect have thus stopped at the threshold of a new horizon, have blinded themselves by rigid intellectual stances to the new dimensions which otherwise would dawn upon their glad understanding. To remove these blinders, voluntarily worn by large masses of men, there arose round about 1875 a devoted band of volunteer servers who undertook the difficult and hazardous task of lifting a little a portion of the veil that hides things uninterpretable from things interpretable. This band was guided in its work by Mahatmas who were also known as Rishis or Sages of the Orient.

Even by using the ordinary processes of reasoning man can understand that the real motivating force behind all manifested forms — from the greatest to the most refined — cannot be seen or measured by instruments which were not designed to deal specifically with it. As well expect a magnifying glass to reveal the mystery of the ectoplasm, or the telescope to bring any nearer the realm of what people have called angels and ghosts. Of recent times the splitting of the atom has led the scientists to more rarefied forms of matter, and so on from the ethereal to the more and more ethereal till at last that which is left and which really is the ensouling element of the atom suddenly disappears because it is not available to instruments which were invented to deal with matter alone. What the scientists have reached is not a vast nothingness but the lintel of a vaster and a deeper kingdom reachable by senses other than those currently in use. The newly rediscovered science of the ancients made the assertion that behind any form of matter — gross or subtle, visible or invisible — there existed a force which was in its nature starry, which shone through its own light, which in fact was luminous. It further asserted that behind the exterior of the man there existed that which was quasi-omniscient and which worked through its own set of senses which were in themselves astral or starry. These senses, when brought into use, opened up a wholly new universe which was governed by laws which were totally different from those which

govern matter as we know it. In this universe of the super-senses there were possibilities of touching a knowledge which no ordinary intellect could experience or grasp. A new world which was not distant in space but which was hidden in the very world we daily contact was shown not only to exist but to impinge upon and affect the life and living of men and creatures, planets and solar systems. That law which rewards the good and punishes the evil and which seemingly with an intelligence higher than our own moves men and events towards righteousness was shown to operate from the centre and core of all existing things.

How was the ordinary man to search for these inner senses and use them for his own enlightenment? That the phenomena of mediumship, psychometry, mind-reading and telepathy had given glimpses of spheres yet to be explored was true. But the average man had no sure guide, no ready manual of instructions to guide him in his quest. For such, the 19th century witnessed the cautious giving out of knowledge in small doses but with sufficient clarity for a reasonably successful effort in time. The student was told that these inner senses had been the common property of men millennia back, but were atrophied by disuse because men chose to give preponderating and later exclusive value to the outer physical senses. To reawaken and re-energize the atrophied part of himself, man had to reverse the process, to pay less and less importance to the physical senses and to learn to rely on the dim first messages that the inner senses brought to him at moments when they were allowed to function.

But in this effort, enormous risks are to be faced and overcome. A premature opening of the inner senses may precipitate the man into psychic and not spiritual realms, and if his desires still form clinging attachments to ignoble things, then is he caught up on planes where no ordinary physician or alienist can help him. Mediums have been known to rush without preparation or precaution into the supersensuous worlds. They ruin their psychic and physical health and end up as doubters and scoffers of that which their own senses had experienced. There is, however, a safer though a more laborious way which a disciple may tread, a track along which he may safely proceed so long as he observes the laws of super-nature. The man who ventures in the deeps of the world's oceans does so with a full understanding that violation of the laws that govern the waters would immediately and adversely react upon him. Why, then, can he not realize that he has to learn to obey the laws of that inner starry region which is his heritage and from which he is a foolish and ignorant renegade or deserter?

One of the early propositions which the disciple is called upon to master and to have no doubts about is that his highest Light, his holiest Fire resides in the still place where no convulsion or oscillation can find an entry. To reach to this vast equanimity, this "blankness" of an utter and absolute stillness and seize its strength and fortitude, the human Soul must have learnt how it can remain unshaken in the foul and clean places through which Life drives its chariot. Neither attraction nor revulsion must find a hold in any part of his being. He must learn to thread his way through vicissitudes and still remain centred in the true, anchored to that which in his own nature corresponds to the stillness of tall and snow-bound peaks which outlast centuries though storms rage around their brows. This is the Primary Law. All else that follow are mere aids to the reshaping of life, the using of the hammer and the anvil to revert to the ancient shape that alone is the Real and the True.

The physical senses are the great portals through which the outside world impinges upon the human soul. They bring messages of pain and pleasure, heat and cold, success and failure, respect and ignominy. In normal times, there are sentries which the Soul places at each point of ingress and whose duty it is to permit entry of the desirable and shut out the undesirable. In the present cycle of existence, the Soul is abnormally lethargic. From constant involvement with the perishable things of matter, it has become inebriated. It behaves like the drunkard who harbours the notion that he is not drunk, and since desire holds him a captive slave, he yearns for longer and deeper draughts of that which dethrones sanity and leaves him an abandoned wreck. The sentries, finding that the hand which guided them is removed, fall into a somnolent lassitude, and with their effectiveness gone, there enter in the citadel of the Soul those clogging attachments which, as in the case of the drunkard, paralyse and stupefy the mind. Discrimination is lost to the man and only a vast and overpowering anger or a lachrymose despondency envelops the Soul, making it blind and bleak and destitute of all hope.

Unless the craving for the perishable is stilled, the control of the senses is not complete. True that the physical senses can be forced not to bring in the knowledge of the outside world, but unless safeguards are taken, such discipline brings no lasting good. People have been known to blind themselves, to inflict self-torture, to subject their bodies to unheard-of penances, but if, within, the Soul remains fettered to its desires and lives upon its past memories, the fires remain unquenched.

There then remains the distinct possibility of desires breaking forth in all fury in the same or subsequent incarnations. The *Gita* calls such persons "false pietists of bewildered soul." Before the super-senses can be allowed to function, the man must have learnt to remain undisturbed amidst the lures and fears that come to him from the outside. The Soul must have accustomed itself to live in an atmosphere where no curbs are put upon it, and yet without these it remains enthroned, supremely free, the faithful servant of its sovereign Lord. When the Yoga of equanimity is reached, the disciple no longer discriminates between things pleasant and things unpleasant. When he attains this stature it is possible and safe to open the flood-gates of his Soul. He continues to live in the world, but to the vast majority he is no different from other men. Yet is he, by reason of his conquest, out of the world. He has separated himself from the common herd, for he belongs to an entirely different strata of consciousness. Under horizons which are new and yet not new, if such a paradox is permissible, he meets his co-disciples — persons dedicated to the same goal to which he has pledged his life. He finds himself recruited to a service which bears no semblance to "service" as he knew it during those moments when darkness lay thick and palpable around his Soul.

Knowledge of this inner Path has been made available to the West from 1875 and confirmed since 1888. Many aspiring hearts have embraced it. Many a storm-tossed Soul has found its haven of peace. What will you be? Servant, Teacher, Missionary, Crusader, Martyr, Friend? Then choose you this day to qualify for the deeper, the divine wisdom.

THE HISTORY of the world is the history of a few men who had faith in themselves. That faith calls out the Divinity within. You can do anything. You fail only when you do not strive sufficiently to manifest infinite power.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

LETTERS ON THE TRUE

III

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MY COMRADES:

As we turn our thoughts in upon ourselves, we find the good on top; the bad is below. We must set the blaze of self-examination to the task and drag out the lurker within. We think we have abandoned ambition and comfort, but we have only given up those of the lower plane, the mere reflection of the great ambitions and joys of a larger life. The rays of Truth burn up the covers we had placed upon those seeds, and then the real seeds begin to sprout and cause new troubles. Do not ignore this; it has cost others many years and tears of blood to self-learn it. Men have been deceived as to their motives up to high passages of the Way.

Indolence is a great deceiver. We trust to the sufficiency of "our Divine Spirit," and so hope to reach the goal easily with the natural evolution of the race. We forget that the kingdom must be taken by violence. It is by no means sure that we shall make the connection with spirit in this life journey. Thousands may and do fail to make it. Your divine spirit is only yours in so far as it is that of all others equally; not yours but *ours*, making us one. The *Bhagavad-Gita* destroys the idea that if there be in us this higher self, it will, even if we are indolent, triumph over the necessity for effort, and lead us to find beatitude in common with the whole stream of man. "The man of doubtful mind enjoys neither this world nor the other (the Deva world) nor finds beatitude." Sometime then during the period of choice for the race this self must be discovered, purified and set free. The period is long—but it ends. The unprogressed soul falls back; it may die, for only the spiritual monad is incorruptible. On the soul itself depends this spiritual polarity; each personality heightens or lessens it by the greater or smaller impetus given by him to the life of the lower self. Its luxurious growth throttles the true self as mistletoe devitalizes the live-oak. "Bitten by the world, like one bitten by a great serpent; darkened with passion, like the night; changing its dress in a moment like an actor; fair in appearance, like a painted wall"—thus the Upanishad warns us against the elemental self.

These warnings are not meant to discourage, but to strengthen. The Way is narrow, but it is there. So narrow it is, and so often lost amid the bustling highways of life, that many who have wandered far afield still think their feet are set upon it. There is oftentimes much to discourage us in the attitude of our nearest friends. They are on far shores, and when we arrive they speak of the small potato patch they tend and see nothing in our talk of what is over the sea, and of the grander interests beyond the little place they stand on. This is a blow dealt the inner man and hurts inside. Life is all up in arms against us. A letter sent me by one of my comrades goes clearly and nobly to the root of this matter:

“Dear Jasper: I gave your letter to a distressed soul: she returned thanks, saying it was a cooling draught to one athirst. The thanks of course are yours.

“Now this lady says it was refreshment to the weary, that letter. True, or she would not say it. But it was not so to me nor to you. It all seems so well understood to be so. We needed it not. But she illustrates a certain state of progress. She is not yet where we are, but which is happier? She is happier, but poorer in hope. We are not all too happy, but are rich in hope, knowing the prize at the end of time, and not deterred by the clouds, the storms, the miasms and dreadful beasts of prey that line the road. Let us, then, at the very outset wash out of our souls all desire for reward, all hope that we may attain. For so long as we thus hope and desire we shall be separated from the Self. If in the Self all things *are*, then we cannot wish to be something which we can only compass by excluding something else. Standing where we are, let us purify ourselves to be all things.

“So being beyond this lady so grateful, we find that everything we meet on this illusory plane of existence is a lure that in one way or another has power to draw us out of our path. That is the point we are at, and we may call it the point where lures of Maya have omnipresent power. Therefore we must beware of the illusions of matter.

“Before we got to this stage we knew the fateful lure, the dazzling mirror of the elemental self, here and there in well-defined places, and intrenched as it was, so to say, in strongly-marked defences. Those we assaulted; and that was what it desired, for it did think that it then had no need to exercise the enchantment which is hard because so subtle, and so distributed here and there that we find no citadels to take.

no battalions in array. But now our dearest friends are in league with this beautiful, deceitful Maya. How strongly do I realize the dejection of Arjuna as he let his bow drop from his hand and sat down on his chariot in despair! But he had a sure spot to rest upon. He used his own. He had Krishna near, and he might fight on.

“So in passing along past those stages where the grateful lady and others are, we may perhaps have found one spot we may call our own and possess no other qualification for the task. That spot is enough. It is our belief in the Self, in Masters: it is the little flame of intuition we have allowed to burn, that we have fostered with care.

“Then come these dreadful lures. They are in fact but mere carcasses, shells of monsters from past existences, offering themselves that we may give them life to terrify us as soon as we have entered them either by fear or love. No matter which way we enter, whether by attachment to them or by repugnant horror, it is all one: they are in one case vivified by a lover; in the other by a slave who would be free but cannot.

“Here it is the lure of enjoyment of natural pleasures, growing out of life’s physical basis; there it is self-praise, anger, vanity, what not? Even these beautiful hills and river, they mock one, for they live on untrammelled. Perhaps they do not speak to us because they know the superiority of silence. They laugh with each other at us in the night, amused at the wild struggles of this petty man who would pull the sky down. Ach! God of Heaven! And all the sucklings of Theosophy wish that some great, well diplomaed adept would come and open the secret box; but they do not imagine that other students have stepped on the spikes that defend the entrance to the way that leads to the gate of the Path. But we will not blame them, nor yet wish for the things — the special lots — that some of them have abstracted, because now that we know the dreadful power that despair and doubt and violated conscience have, we prefer to prepare wisely and carefully and not rush in like fools where angels do not pass uninvited.

“But, Companion, I remind you of the power of the lure. This Path passes along under a sky and in a clime where every weed grows a yard in the night. It has no discrimination. Thus even after weeks or months of devotion, or years of work, we are surprised at small seeds of vanity or any other thing which would be easily conquered in other years of inattentive life, but which seem now to arise as if helped by some damnable intelligence. This great power of self-illusion is strong enough

to create a roaring torrent or a mountain of ice between us and our Masters. Z. . .”

The Path lies not in extremes but midway, like that Sun whose centre is everywhere, like that Eternal Liberty which Boehme says is the middlemost and within all things. We must pin ourselves down to a rigid appreciation of the mathematical workings of Law and trace their connection with our own constitution. It would seem well to take all the suggestions we can get, but I have known travellers on western prairies who preferred to go a day's journey out of their road, rather than make inquiry of a passer-by. If the law of Continuity remains unbroken, as it must if it exists at all, and from its very nature cannot be suspended, then there must be personalities far more progressed than ourselves, somewhere along the vast chain stretching from man to the Deity. I have heard comrades repel the idea that any "Master" could aid them. The western mind detests that word; American boys will not even say "schoolmaster." And yet it is only an equivalent for Teacher, and how glorious are the teachings!

If a man's magnetic sphere be confused, however, he cannot feel the attraction of higher spheres; he does not believe in their existence. If they do not exist to his hope or his intuition, for him they are not, nor will he feel their benefit even indirectly until he shall have evolved enough spiritual energy to enable him to assimilate the currents which unceasingly flow from them to raise the powers of the race. Let every man have his mind within his own power and resolve firmly to believe. Our own is everywhere if we will not take it! We do not justly value the gifts of Truth given us without personal attestation. We clamour for persons and authorities; we have a sense of injury which cries to the echo: "If Truth be true she will sign her name." Not always: for how then can the perceptions of men be tested in the absence of genuine relations? How can those students be discovered who do not depend upon a revenue stamp to recognize a genuine article? If a man receives a gem, does he growl because the jeweller's case came not with it? What lustre can a name add to Truth? We should need no guarantee beyond the spirit of the words; the words themselves are often traps. Nothing avails us at last but the touchstone of our own souls; it is deeply concealed in the heart, far beyond the elemental nature. It is not mind, judgment, reason; it is the fire which tests and welds.

—JASPER NIEMAND, F.T.S.

THE LAW OF PERIODICITY

THE IMPORTANT PART the Law of Cycles plays in the affairs of Nature and of man is well known. But the significance of this Law, also known as the Law of Periodicity, is deeper and wider than men commonly suspect.

Just as God or the Divine Spirit is one aspect of the principle of Life which thrills in every form, and is the highest principle within ourselves, so Law is also an expression of the same Life, Spirit, or God. It is impossible to act intelligently unless we understand Life as an expression of Law, manifesting itself under Law, through Law and by Law. Recognition of Law in Nature and within ourselves gives the true basis for thoughtful action and co-operation with the Law. The "Laws of God" are talked of and people get the idea that God is some Power which transcends the Law. It is not commonly recognized that the highest concept of God is Law itself, which is immutable rigid Justice. It regulates and controls the mental, emotional and spiritual phases of our human nature.

There is no square inch in space where Law does not operate. It is active not only in the material world, where its working can be more or less clearly observed, but also in the invisible or noumenal world, where its operation governs the spiritual fate of humanity as a whole. At our stage we cannot always see the Law working in the invisible realm, so thick is the veil of matter, but we can rest assured that it is always and everywhere acting.

For years science has posited Causation as an actual principle and has recognized that everything is but the legitimate result of a cause and that every cause must produce its legitimate effect. Some think that it proves determinism, or that choices are rigidly determined by prior causes. This strips man of his moral responsibility, the highest aspect of his nature, for it denies him free will and makes him the mere puppet of the rigid Law of Cause and Effect. Still others, recognizing the existence of free action in some aspects of Nature, go to the other extreme and declare that the universe is not regulated by Law and that Life unfolds in lawlessness, so to speak.

The ancient science, as restated in modern Theosophy, asserts that the universe is governed by Eternal Law, which expresses itself in a number of ways. A basis for unity is found in the common subjection to immutable Law. Man-made laws, though they unite a certain number

of people, are sometimes of an arbitrary and unreasonable nature. The just Laws of Nature, impersonal and divine, unite not only all men but all Nature in one Whole. The smallest atom is akin to the vastest system of worlds. As Shelley says:

Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle. . . .

We can recognize our kinship with other souls, therefore, not only because we are of the same substance and essence, but because we are working under the same fundamental laws.

Periodicity is a fundamental aspect of Law. Causation is a correct concept and everything in manifested nature is at the same time an effect of a previous cause and a cause for a future effect, a link in a beginningless and endless chain. The Law of Periodicity is so called because, however instantaneous or however vast, some period always elapses between the generating cause and its effect. There is an actual period of time, however minute, between the generating of sound by a speaker's vocal cords and the effect of that sound reaching the hearers' ears. Science tells us that the light we see as coming from distant stars has taken thousands of years to reach our earth. Every cause takes a certain time to culminate in its legitimate effect. The smaller periods combine to make the greater ones — instants, minutes, hours, days, years, and so on in ever vaster and wider expansion.

The word "cycle" comes from the Greek word "*kuklos*," a circle or ring or wheel. Periods of time are so called because every effect returns to its source. The Wheel of Vishnu represents the great cycle of manifestation, but there are countless smaller wheels within the great wheel.

The astronomical cycles, solar, lunar, etc., are only one expression of the Law of Cycles. The same fundamental periodicity underlies all events in life and human evolution. This Law of Cycles is utilized in the periodic restatement of the truths of the Ancient Wisdom and in the attempt to help humanity spiritually, morally and intellectually. Krishna comes from age to age for the establishment of righteousness. Cycles repeat themselves always on a higher spiral, and ever unfolding greater possibilities.

Everything that comes to birth must die. All things in Nature come to birth, reach maturity and meet with death under this Law. We wake up in the morning because we went to sleep the previous night, and

because we woke up this morning we shall soon go to sleep again. There was never a beginning to Life and Law — never a first cycle. Yesterdays and tomorrows stretch infinitely into past and future, farther than our finite minds can follow, but there is that in us which is of the nature of Eternity. Every tree implies a seed already there; every seed promises a tree. There is no answer to the question — which came first, the tree or the seed? There are, however, definite limits to the life of man and the life of civilizations, even of universes. Each universe is itself a mighty effect of preceding causes, and this universe is becoming the cause of the next.

Side by side with the Law of Cycles is the Law of Karma. It applies as an active principle only during periods of manifestation. Each circle is made of two semi-circles. Periods of activity and rest alternate in sleeping and waking, life and death, manifestation and *Pralaya*, when all are merged in the One, to re-emerge and pick up their Karma when another active period begins. Periods of darkness always are followed by periods of light — a hopeful teaching to remember.

Periods of activity are periods of free choice; those of rest and assimilation are periods of passive acceptance of consequences. In the former, the free will aspect of Karma is to the fore; in the latter, its aspect as fate. We are free to choose our food, but once it is eaten it has to be digested with pain or in comfort. We are free to choose our friends and companions, but then we must submit to their influence. Our actions are under our control during the day, but not our dreams at night, which inevitably reproduce the energies generated during the day. So also we are free to do good or evil while in embodied existence; after death we but feel their effects.

Free choice is the greatest prerogative of the soul. Many do not choose, but live a purposeless life. Few indeed make the great choice of Nature herself, the choice of the Path of Sacrifice. It is in our power to choose now and here. If we master the cycles of our own moods and weaknesses successfully, we can go on to master the greater cycles. We must first realize that we are the makers of our own destiny, and then we can deliberately choose to walk the Path of Purity taught by Zoroaster, the Path of Love pointed to by Jesus, the Path of Wisdom of the great Buddha, the Path of Divine Sacrifice as embodied by Sri Krishna.

“... AND THERE IS MY ‘SECRET DOCTRINE’ ”

THESE WORDS OF H.P.B.'s perhaps give us the clue as to what we need to stress in our Movement today. If we have used *The Secret Doctrine* as the textbook of the 20th century, we shall be able to make greater use of it during the coming years till the time is ripe for the next hundred-year cycle. One of the things we know from the “Conclusion” to *The Key to Theosophy* is that the next Messenger will bring “new truths,” and a “language ready for him in which to clothe” these is necessary. That is part of our work and it links up with what H.P.B. has said elsewhere, that Theosophy “has still a severe battle to fight for recognition.”

There are many books which pass as textbooks of Theosophy, but how many of these reiterate the philosophy as H.P.B. gave it to us and as she had learnt from her Teachers? How far these books differ from *The Key to Theosophy*, which she dedicated “to all her pupils that they may learn and teach in their turn,” is not known to many. Unfortunately, the few who do know do not seem to be spreading the true philosophy in the world at large, but make it known only to the few who attend Theosophical meetings or read Theosophical magazines. Yet we are in duty bound to contribute to the larger world of thought. To find out just what the world's thought needs takes time and effort, but it is necessary.

For example, how many of us remember the last pages of Volume II of *The Secret Doctrine* (pp. 793 *et seq.*) and can correlate them with the excavations being made today, with the opening up of more knowledge of the civilizations of the past, and with the present-day scientific discoveries? All these discoveries will merely add to our “information” unless they are viewed in the light of what is said on page 794 of that volume. H.P.B. wrote:

If coming events are said to cast their shadows before, past events cannot fail to leave their impress behind them. It is, then, by these shadows of the hoary Past and their fantastic silhouettes on the external screen of every religion and philosophy, that we can, by checking them as we go along, and comparing them, trace out finally the body that produced them.

This is an interesting idea when we remember that the present will become the past and the future will one day become the present. We see opening up before us the vista of an immeasurable past and an inconceivable future. It is in the light of this immensity of time that we can understand that “no religion, since the very earliest, has ever been

entirely based on fiction, as none was the object of special revelation.” Where, then, did religions come from? “It is dogma alone which has ever been killing primeval truth,” and this primeval truth is “the religion of Nature.” If we remember that dogmas are the concretization of truths, or the dust that covers them — for the mind gathers dust as it reflects — we can see that in time only the distorted reflection of that primeval truth remains. Therefore, says H.P.B., “no human-born doctrine, nor creed, however sanctified by custom and antiquity, can compare in sacredness with the religion of Nature.” (II. 797)

For the understanding of this religion of Nature we cannot point to the ideas or language of any particular time and say, “This is it.” Seven keys are necessary to unlock fully the mysteries that exist in the various symbols and allegories that have come down to us.

We all know that the majority in the world today have little interest in religion, though in part fanaticism still rules, leading to religious dissensions. We are beginning to be aware that glyphs, symbols, emblems, etc., are coming more and more to the front of everyday life and education. We can see many examples of this. We find an anthropologist saying that “the more the people of the world recognize *certain* symbols, values, and purposes as both their own and those of all the other peoples of the world, and give to those symbols, values, and purposes a high place, the more the world is a community.” (*Anthropology: A Human Science*, by Margaret Mead)

The author, who is dealing partly with religions, points out that there is a difference between identification with certain symbols, values and purposes, and recognition of them. The symbols (we shall keep in this article just to the symbols) must be such that they can be identified as being universal.

In general, it may be said that it is important that these symbols be symbols of the wider general framework within which the various systems of the world can be seen as differentiated but integral parts rather than as unrelated or competing or contradictory elements.

It is this wider framework that should not be lost sight of in order that “the various systems of the world can be seen as differentiated but integral parts” of one whole. They are not “unrelated or competing or contradictory.” It is dogmas and creeds that divide, compete and are contradictory. Where shall we look for the background of those symbols which in every religion are not contradictory, separative or competing

The framework of ideas should be of a sufficiently high level of abstraction to include cultural values which are at the present time seen as competing, or, at the best, incompatible and irreconcilable.

Referring to religion, the author says:

For the idea of one true God, with a specific prophet and institutional forms which are superior to all others, there would be substituted a belief in the value of religion, so phrased that all religious systems would be able to identify with it, plead their causes in terms of it, and communicate with each other through the symbols which would develop.

Is this not where Theosophy comes in? If all religions are traced back to their source, we shall find identical symbols, the only difference lying in their interpretation according to the times. Take, for example, the virgin birth, a so-called Christian doctrine. Is it indeed so? If we trace the idea back to the “primeval” religion, as H.P.B. does in *The Secret Doctrine*, we find that it is a universal symbol of the “ever-youthful mother nature . . . [who] generates and brings forth her ‘mind-born’ son, the Universe.” Many ancient religions have their virgin-birth legends. Thus, in the Egyptian religion we find Ammon-ra saying to King Amenophes (supposed to be Memnon), “Thou art my Son, I have begotten thee” (*S.D.*, 398-99).

With regard to the wearing of certain vestments by the clergy, we have to find out whence they came and how they began to form part of the Christian usage. Here again we find that “there is nothing new under the sun,” for these vestments were adopted from the Pagan religions which preceded Christianity. In “The Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry,” written by H.P.B. in 1889 and reprinted in *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*, September and October 1946, we find the following:

The priests of Jupiter donned a tall, square, black cap . . . the head dress of the *Flamines*. The black *soutane* of the Roman Catholic priest is the black *hierocoraces*, the loose robe of the Mithraic priests, so called from being *raven* coloured (raven, *corax*). The King-Priest of Babylon had a golden seal-ring and slippers kissed by the conquered potentates, a white mantle, a tiara of gold, to which two bandelets were suspended. The popes have the seal-ring and the slippers for the same use; a white satin mantle bordered with golden stars, a tiara with two jewelled bandelets suspended to it, etc., etc. The white linen *alb*

(*alba vestis*) is the garment of the priests of *Isis*; the top of the heads of the priests of *Anubis* was shaven (*Juvenal*), hence the tonsure; the *chasuble* of the Christian "*Father*" is the copy from the upper garment of the Phœnician priest-sacrificers, a garment called *calasiris*, tied at the neck and descending to their heels. The *stole* comes to our priests from the female garment worn by the *Galli*, the male *Nautches* of the temple. . . .

These things are unimportant for a World Community and have to be dispensed with if Religion is not to be lost entirely.

What is true Religion? It can be nothing but living in accordance with Nature's laws, and therefore a knowledge of those laws, which includes a knowledge of Man and his nature, of God in the true sense, and of the meaning of life. God has to be seen as abstract and immanent in all forms — God in Nature and God the abstraction behind all, in the sun and in the ant, in the criminal and the saint, in the black and the yellow races, the brown and the white.

That will be the basis of thought; actions will be in terms of that unity, and therefore we find that the ethics taught by all the great Teachers have been the same. That has to become the symbol for Religious Community, no matter what name is given by the protagonists of one or another religion. But how is it to be expressed? Words are themselves symbols. For example, the Sanskrit word *Karma* is used by us and it has come into common usage today. It symbolizes cause and effect, action and reaction, universal Law, etc. *Buddhi* is another example, for it covers so much that the mere term "soul" does not, and links the universal with the personal. *Manas* is the symbol of thought, mind, and covers more than ordinary thought.

Many new scientific terms and ideas have to be correlated with Theosophical terms and ideas. When, for example, we speak of "parapsychology," what do we mean? How can it be linked up with our philosophy? What are the investigators in this sphere struggling to achieve? To understand what "parapsychology" or "beyond psychology" means, we must first know what psychology itself is. We have to fall back upon the theosophical terms for man and his bodies, and it would seem that these should become symbols for our struggling psychologists and parapsychologists. The same with science. What have we to give them for their new discoveries which will be beyond the simple meaning of the new words they are coining?

It is interesting to note what is stated in "Psychic and Noetic Action," written by H.P.B. in 1890 (reprinted in *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*):

An idea, vague at first, grew in time into a very definite form, and now seems to be working very busily in the minds of some of our members. It is this: if we would make converts the few ex-occult teachings, which are destined to see the light of publicity, should be made, henceforward, *more subservient to, if not entirely at one with modern science*. It is urged that the so-called *esoteric* (footnote: We say “so-called,” because nothing of what has been given out publicly or in print can any longer be termed *esoteric*) — or *late esoteric* — cosmogony, anthropology, ethnology, geology, psychology and, foremost of all, metaphysics, having been *adapted into* making obeisance to modern (hence *materialistic*) thought, should never henceforth be allowed to contradict (not *openly*, at all events) “scientific philosophy.”... Useless to say that we decline the compromise.

This whole article should be well studied by those interested in parapsychology and extrasensory perception. We are told further on:

No physiologist, not even the cleverest, will ever be able to solve the mystery of the human mind, in its highest spiritual manifestation, or in its dual aspect of the *psychic* and the *noetic* (or the *manasic*), or even to comprehend the intricacies of the former on the purely material plane — unless he knows something of, and is prepared to admit the presence of this dual element.... Between the *psychic* and the *noetic*, between the *Personality* and the *Individuality*, there exists the same abyss as between a “Jack the Ripper” and a holy Buddha.

Had we not, therefore, better keep to these terms to understand psychology and what is “beyond psychology,” *i.e.*, the higher or noetic aspect of the mind? Arising from this we have the important concept of “individuality.” If psychology deals with what one might call behaviourism or instinctive actions, then parapsychology deals with the desire-emotional-mind, the *kama-manas*. Next to be dealt with is mind unconnected with *kama* — the *nous* or individuality. Would this not help our friends who are earnestly trying to study these inner aspects of man? Whatever words they are using today for these sciences will be changed tomorrow and we shall have to get back to the basic terms used for countless generations. Hence the use of so many Sanskrit terms which have to become part of the language of our times if the new Messenger is to find a “language” ready for him.

THE GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe...

—*The Voice of the Silence*

ONE OF THE RULES OF DISCIPLESHIP imposes upon the Teacher the responsibility of taking care that the disciple's mind "is thoroughly purified and at peace with all, especially *with his other Selves*" (co-disciples). Otherwise, says the same Rule, "the words of Wisdom and of the good Law shall scatter and be picked up by the winds." Heavy responsibility this, and yet the Teacher has to take up the burden as a loving act of sacrifice, knowing full well the pain and torture which will be his through the thorns which the disciples are likely to sow for his unprotected feet. Hard, indeed, is the Karma of the Teacher for this vicarious responsibility, but how nobler by far is this voluntary act of inviting suffering in order that other Souls may bloom, than the selfish attempt to safeguard the salvation of one's own Soul! All honour and homage to the Gurus and the "little Gurus" who thus act for others. Theirs on a higher plane is the unselfish, the unrequited love of a mother for her young.

But just because this heavy burden is assumed is the responsibility of the disciple heightened. His own love and devotion to the Teacher is a thing of beauty which must grow and flower through the years as his inner perception awakes. But in step with this awakening must also arise the brotherly feelings, the strong coherence which must bind him to each of his co-disciples. It is his preliminary task to achieve this in some slight measure at least, for unless he enters upon this task within the limits of his conscious effort, most if not all of the teaching will remain incomprehensible. The disciple has first to understand why this must be so. Reverence to the Teacher is understandable because it is he who gives that which no money or tears can buy and because it is the Guru alone who can give the disciple his second birth. However, at least in the early stages, the disciple rarely understands or acknowledges to his own Soul the importance and the sacredness of the ties that bind him to his co-disciples through the power of the common aim and the identical resolve to study, to serve and to sacrifice. Since the commingling of the disciples is necessary as an aid towards the living of the higher life and the understanding of the Soul of things, it follows that each disciple is expected to exert himself to find out the particular contribution which each of his co-disciples has made in these

directions, and which he can with safety emulate. Were that contribution lacking, there would have been no entry into the Brotherhood. It therefore follows that the search of that priceless good which made the selection of the disciple possible is incumbent upon the companions. To be worthy of discipleship one must have a vigilant mind and a deeper perception.

If each disciple brings by way of his contribution towards the Brotherhood the pearl of great price which he has with great pain and difficulty retrieved from the ocean depths of life, he also brings into the Brotherhood his follies and his foibles, his lesser and his larger vices, his vanity and his attachments to sense and earth life. If in spite of these severe drawbacks he was permitted entry, it follows that his merit deserved the companionship despite the many hindrances. It may perchance happen that the other disciples see only the weakness and the failure, the clogging dirt and the dimness of intellect, and seeing these, shy away from the companion in revulsion. Such attitudes do spring up, for the personality is ever ready to seek out chinks in the disciple's armour. At such times, the whole group of disciples suffers an eclipse. The inner lines of sympathy which bind disciple to disciple are put in violent disarray like quivering nerves, and for a time all is confusion. Whenever disunity prevails, a companion has failed to recognize the magnetic strength which the other companion contributed to the group and without the help of which the whole disintegrates into fragments.

It is on occasions such as these that valuable lessons can be learnt. For maintaining harmony within the group, the Teacher after all has the more onerous responsibility. He has not only to set the example of a blameless, self-sacrificing life. He has to show patience and resourcefulness of a very high order so as to attune the minds and hearts of those in his charge to the discipline and the Rules which the chelas are pledged to observe. His can never be the "holier than thou" attitude. He cannot attribute the slowing down of progress to the innate weaknesses of the disciples. Too great a care for one pupil's welfare may be as injurious as a marked indifference towards one who lags behind. The Teacher has to keep his own individuality and personality wide apart when dealing with problems that pertain to the inner life of his pupils. Adjustments have to be so made as to bring opposing forces and divergent views into a state of equilibrium. The magnetism of the group has to be maintained at the balance point.

Since any inner strife and imbalance result from the presence of a

thought not consubstantial with the harmonious essence which pervades the inner and higher planes of being, the Teacher has to seek out the thought sequence which in the pupil poisons his inner currents and vitiates his atmosphere. Once the correct diagnosis is achieved, the remedy can be searched for in the Scriptures. The aphorisms of Patanjali, the ethical wisdom of *The Voice of the Silence*; the guidelines to discipline clearly set out in *Light on the Path* — any of these could furnish the basis of a self-cure. But the whole fund of Occult axioms would be useless if the student is unaware, as so often happens, of the fever raging within himself.

It has to be remembered that the disciple who is just emerging from the world of ordinary men is still susceptible to the pitfalls of sense. He may mistakenly think that his actions are based on the unassailable basis of the Wisdom-Religion. He may think that his co-disciple is on the path of error, and in his lofty superior fashion he may consider it his duty to make his brother change to his own ways of thought. It is considerations such as these which are the graveyards of tolerance, humility and brotherliness. It is for an analogous reason that the good law warns against backbiting and slander, the carrying of tales or the unjust criticism of any person or of the work he does for the amelioration of the race. It is no doubt true that before the disciple joined the Brotherhood, he, as a man of the world, had passed through these self-same dark phases of behaviour. By the mere act of joining the Brotherhood he does not bid farewell to these questionable traits of his character. On the contrary, he will find that they have acquired a tenacious pertinacity of return which plagues his life and often nullifies his efforts. He has to learn that what in fact happens is that nature presents the same set pattern of his former desires to see if with added knowledge and nobler companionship he weans himself away from the paths of *avidya* and irresponsibility. This in fact is his great opportunity, his golden chance of leaping across the abyss which separates things impersonal from things personal.

The neophyte becomes a disciple when he no longer desires to break the laws which govern his life.

REALITY AND ILLUSION

MASTER, there are mathematical tables, geometrical axioms, postulates, etc. Are there no such things in our study of the Secret Doctrine? Precise statements which we can apply in times of difficulty, "do our sums" by, so to say? I feel that such would be a great aid.

Friend, surely there are. Have you not noticed in *The Secret Doctrine* how often H.P.B. refers to the Occult Catechism? What is a catechism? It is instruction by means of questions and answers, says the dictionary. It deals with fundamental principles, and as such gives us "key" sentences or ideas which can be applied to difficulties. You will find such key sentences scattered throughout *The Secret Doctrine*, as also in H.P.B.'s other writings.

Master, would you very kindly give me an example or two?

Certainly I will, O Friend. But first tell me what is your specific difficulty.

Master, this question of *maya* puzzles me. If all is *maya*, and if, therefore, I am *maya*, what is the use of doing anything?

O Friend, have you looked in the Index to *The Secret Doctrine* under "Maya" and tried to find some sentence or phrase from the pages indicated which would help you to understand this question? That is the first thing a student ought to do when he finds it difficult to understand an idea. Having done this, he can ask others for help.

If you look in the *Glossary*, you will find that "Maya" is defined thus:

Illusion; the cosmic power which renders phenomenal existence and the perceptions thereof possible. In Hindu philosophy that alone which is changeless and eternal is called *reality*; all that which is subject to change through decay and differentiation and which has therefore a beginning and an end is regarded as *maya* — illusion.

Turn next to *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 39-40):

Maya or illusion is an element which enters into all finite things, for everything that exists has only a relative, not an absolute, reality, since the appearance which the hidden noumenon assumes for any observer depends upon his power of cognition. To the untrained eye of the savage, a painting is at first an un-

meaning confusion of streaks and daubs of colour, while an educated eye sees instantly a face or a landscape. Nothing is permanent except the one hidden absolute existence which contains in itself the noumena of all realities. The existences belonging to every plane of being, up to the highest Dhyan-Chohans, are, in degree, of the nature of shadows cast by a magic lantern on a colourless screen; but all things are relatively real, for the cognizer is also a reflection, and the things cognized are therefore as real to him as himself.

How can this be? Because—

Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities.

In *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 117) H.P.B. writes: "We are a reality during that fit of illusion called life."

Yes, I see, Master, but though I can learn and quote these statements, how can I make them my own and realize what they mean in practice?

Friend, meditate on them. Many students do not think deeply enough over simple statements, and do not correlate them. For example, what is meant when it is said that the things belonging to the plane in which our consciousness functions become for the time being our only realities? What is a practical example of this? Though my body may be *maya*, if it comes in violent contact with another object, also *maya*, on the same plane as itself, it will feel pain. Can two *mayas* hurt one another? Can a *maya* feel the hurt? But two things that are "for the time being . . . realities" can and do, in fact, affect our consciousness. Is consciousness a *maya*? How do we perceive matter or feel hurt?

Turn again to *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 514 and 251):

Matter, to the Occultist . . . is that totality of *existences* in the Kosmos, which falls within any of the planes of possible perception.

. . . the characteristics of matter must clearly bear a direct relation always to the senses of man.

Who perceives? Consciousness, awareness.

There is no plane in the whole universe with a wider margin, or a wider field of action in its almost endless gradations of perceptive and apperceptive qualities, than this plane [of mentality].
(I. 175)

Master, how can there be so vast a field of awareness which takes in the visible and invisible with its "endless gradations"?

Friend, does not this remind you of what is said of the "principles" of man as also of Nature? What Mr. Crosbie says in his *Answers to Questions on the Ocean of Theosophy* comes to our help. He says: "A principle is a basis of thought and action on any specific plane of substance." And in *The Key to Theosophy* (pp. 116-17) H.P.B. says:

In Occultism every qualificative change in the state of our consciousness gives to man a new aspect, and if it prevails and becomes part of the living and acting Ego, it must be (and is) given a special name, to distinguish the man in that particular state from the man he is when he places himself in another state.

Please note that the "principles" are not the man! Note also that what we call the "principles" of the real Ego are, in fact, "aspects."

When any difficulty arises along these lines, apply one or other of these quotations. But meditate on them first so that you can *yourself* understand your own relationship to *maya*.

But, Master, since evolution is for the purpose of perfecting man, when shall we be able truly to separate *maya* from reality?

Friend, do not be impatient! See the continuation of the quotation given above from *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 40):

As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached "reality"; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya.

So let us go stage by stage and remember that there is no stage of "perfection" except relatively — otherwise we would reach stagnation!

THE WANDERING EYE

[The following allegory by W. Q. Judge under the pen-name of Bryan Kinnavan was published in *The Path*, Vol. IV, pp. 49-51, for May 1889.—EDS.]

THIS IS NOT a tale in which I fable a mythical and impossible monster such as the Head of Rahu, which the common people of India believe swallows the moon at every eclipse. Rahu is but a tale that for the vulgar embodies the fact that the shadow of the earth eats up the white disc, but I tell you of a veritable human eye; a wanderer, a seeker, a pleader; an eye that searched you out and held you, like the fascinated bird by the serpent, while it sought within your nature for what it never found. Such an eye as this is sometimes spoken of now by various people, but they see it on the psychic plane, in the astral light, and it is not to be seen or felt in the light of day moving about like other objects.

This wandering eye I write of was always on the strange and sacred Island where so many things took place long ages ago. Ah! yes, it is still the sacred Island, now obscured and its power overthrown — some think forever. But its real power will be spiritual, and as the minds of men today know not the spirit, caring only for temporal glory, the old virtue of the Island will once again return. What weird and ghostly shapes still flit around her shores; what strange, low, level whisperings sweep across her mountains; how at the evening's edge just parted from the day, her fairies suddenly remembering their human rulers — now sunk to men who partly fear them — gather for a moment about the spots where mystery is buried, and then sighing speed away. It was here the wandering eye was first seen. By day it had simply a grey colour, piercing, steady, and always bent on finding out some certain thing from which it could not be diverted; at night it glowed with a light of its own, and could be seen moving over the Island, now quickly, now slowly as it settled to look for that which it did not find.

The people had a fear of this eye, although they were then accustomed to all sorts of magical occurrences now unknown to most western men. At first those who felt themselves annoyed by it tried to destroy or catch it, but never succeeded, because the moment they made the attempt the eye would disappear. It never manifested resentment, but seemed filled with a definite purpose and bent toward a well-settled end. Even those who had essayed to do away with it were surprised to find no threatening in its depth when, in the darkness of the night, it

floated up by their bed-sides and looked them over again.

If anyone else save myself knew of the occasion when this marvelous wanderer first started, to whom it had belonged, I never heard. I was bound to secrecy and could not reveal it.

In the same old temple and tower to which I have previously referred, there was an old man who had always been on terms of great intimacy with me. He was a disputer and a doubter, yet terribly in earnest and anxious to know the truths of nature, but continually raised the question: "If I could only know the truth; that is all I wish to know."

Then, whenever I suggested solutions received from my teachers, he would wander away to the eternal doubts. The story was whispered about the temple that he had entered life in that state of mind, and was known to the superior as one who, in a preceding life, had raised doubts and impossibilities merely for the sake of hearing solutions without desire to prove anything, and had vowed, after many years of such profitless discussion, to seek for truth alone. But the Karma accumulated by the lifelong habit had not been exhausted, and in the incarnation when I met him, although sincere and earnest, he was hampered by the pernicious habit of the previous life. Hence the solutions he sought were always near but ever missed.

But toward the close of the life of which I am speaking he obtained a certainty that by peculiar practices he could concentrate in his eye not only the sight but also all the other forces, and wilfully set about the task against my strong protest. Gradually his eyes assumed a most extraordinary and piercing expression which was heightened whenever he indulged in discussion. He was hugging the one certainty to his breast and still suffering from the old Karma of doubt. So he fell sick, and being old came near to death. One night I visited him at his request, and on reaching his side I found him approaching dissolution. We were alone. He spoke freely but very sadly, for, as death drew near, he saw more clearly, and as the hours fled by his eyes grew more extraordinarily piercing than ever, with a pleading, questioning expression.

"Ah," he said, "I have erred again; but it is just Karma. I have succeeded in but one thing, and that ever will delay me."

"What is that?" I asked.

The expression of his eyes seemed to embrace futurity as he told me that his peculiar practice would compel him for a long period to remain chained to his strongest eye — the right one — until the force of the

energy expended in learning that one feat was fully exhausted. I saw death slowly creeping over his features, and when I had thought him dead he suddenly gained strength to make me promise not to reveal the secret — and expired.

As he passed away, it was growing dark. After his body had become cold, there in the darkness I saw a human eye glowing and gazing at me. It was his, for I recognized the expression. All his peculiarities and modes of thought seemed fastened into it, sweeping out over you from it. Then it turned from me, soon disappearing. His body was buried; none save myself and our superiors knew of these things. But for many years afterwards the wandering eye was seen in every part of the Island, ever seeking, ever asking and never waiting for the answer.

—BRYAN KINNAVAN

DESPISE all those things, which when liberated from the body you will not want; and exercising yourself in those things of which when liberated from the body you will be in want, invoke the Gods to become your helpers.

If you injure no one, you will fear no one.

Esteem those to be eminently your friends who assist your soul rather than your body.

Understand that no dissimulation can be long concealed.

Remind yourself that all men assert that wisdom is the greatest good, but that there are few who strenuously endeavour to obtain this greatest good.

Those alone are dear to divinity who are hostile to injustice.

Wish that what is expedient and not what is pleasing may happen to you.

Everything which is more than necessary to man, is hostile to him.

When you preside over men, remember that divinity also presides over you.

To live, indeed, is not in our power, but to live rightly is.

—PYTHAGORAS

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

A refreshing characteristic of the cosmological work done by Professor Fred Hoyle and Dr. J. V. Narlikar of Cambridge University is the integral view they take of physical discoveries. This is unlike the practice of certain other theoretical physicists who measure and analyse with equal acuity but get choked in a plethora of data about the universe and fail to see an overall pattern. The two researchers have made progress with a theory which attempts to link atomic physics and cosmology, the one at the microscopic end of the spectrum of reality and the other at the macroscopic. They feel that the interactions between sub-atomic particles will be more understandable if proper account is taken of the correspondence between microcosmos and macrocosmos. There is, in their view, "a link between the quantities that specify the properties of atomic particles and those that specify the properties of the universe as a whole." (*The Times of India*, June 26)

This is most significant. The concept of the atomic world following the cosmic pattern has latterly been shown to be true in many ways. Consider the relatively enormous distances between the particles in an atom, the orbital movements of the electrons round the nucleus, the forces of attraction and repulsion that hold the constituents together, the general structural-dynamic orderliness, all parts forming a composite entity. The significance of the new theory which is being developed by the two scientists is that the theoretical calculations of the interactions in the universe can be used to predict and explain some of the puzzling properties of sub-atomic particles.

That microcosmos is a miniature version of the universe was well known to the Scientists of old, who saw the universe not as multiplex but as single and integral. They "traced every atom in the universe, whether an aggregate or single, to One Unity, or Universal *Life*" (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 672). The "one fundamental law in Occult Science" underlines "the radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of the compounds in Nature — from Star to mineral Atom, from the highest Dhyan Chohan to the smallest infusoria, in the fullest acceptance of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual, or physical worlds" (*S.D.*, I. 120). Truly has it been said: "As above, so it is below; as in heaven, so on earth."

Scientists are now acknowledging that there is much more "sympathy" between the earth and the moon than they had thought earlier. It is as if the moon were the earth's mate. This is not at all surprising. The remarkable tidal action shows how an object nearly 400,000 kilometres away exerts a tremendous pull on the seas. Likewise, the earth, the larger body, exerts a gravitational pull on the solid lunar surface. The mate image is further intensified in that wherever the earth goes the moon goes along too, it having no independent existence.

New evidence indicates an even stronger link. Whenever there is a major earthquake it has a marked effect on the moon (*The Times of India*, July 5). A Soviet astronomer has disclosed that he noticed and measured an eruption of gas in the Aristarchus crater a day after tremors were felt in Egypt and off the Japanese coast. Six hundred earth tremors over a period of 65 years were compared with 400 temporary local disturbances on the moon and this showed a decided "echo effect." Two or three days after the terrestrial disturbance there was a sympathetic reaction on the lunar surface. The Soviet scientist suggests that the earth-moon tidal action is responsible for this.

Attention is drawn to the article "The Moon in Occult Philosophy" in our July issue, where the intimate relation between the earth and its "mate" is referred to.

The fear that the search for life outside the earth may be so successful that it contaminates the earth itself with potentially dangerous micro-organisms is put forward in a recent issue of *Nature* by Professor M. Alexander of the Laboratory of Soil Microbiology at Cornell University, New York. This fear is the converse of the more familiar worry that space journeys to the moon and the planets may contaminate them with micro-organisms from the earth.

Professor Alexander, who is a member of a committee of the United States National Academy of Sciences concerned with the environment, is qualified to speak on these matters. He goes so far as to say that even though the search for life elsewhere in the universe is important, it ought not to be carried out in the absence of proper information of the dangers that may be involved.

His argument is that there can be no knowing in advance whether non-terrestrial forms of life would be able to survive and establish them-

selves on the earth. It is possible, he suggests, that any forms of life which may exist on the other planets may not flourish on the earth, but there can be no certainty on these matters. Some terrestrial micro-organisms that live at present in extreme conditions such as the Arctic or in hot water flourish luxuriantly when brought into less harsh circumstances. In the same way organisms from an extreme environment such as that on the moon or Mars might develop even more profusely on the earth than where they came from. One of the particular sources of Professor Alexander's anxiety is the way in which many micro-organisms are particularly suited to life at the expense of certain species of animals. Parasites which are potentially extremely damaging to cattle, for example, may be unaffected even by quarantine procedures.

He is generally sceptical of the arrangements made for the decontamination of astronauts returning from beyond the earth. "Complete sterility," he writes, "is often impossible to achieve." His plea that the search for living things elsewhere should be postponed until more is known of the dangers may not have much effect on the immediate planning of space journeys, yet his warning that "the cost in dollars may be calculable, but the cost in life and in environmental modification cannot be determined" is memorable.

Under the title "We Photographed Thoughts" (*Fate*, June 1969), Dr. Hereward Carrington describes the tests recently carried out under strict laboratory conditions by himself and other researchers. On the basis of these tests he has come to the conclusion that pictures of thoughts are possible.

The subject, Joseph Ruk, is not a medium and is a young man of considerable scientific training. A carefully wrapped photographic plate either was held by him by the edges, with his fingertips, against his forehead, or was tied over the forehead by means of a bandage, his hands remaining in his lap, or was suspended in space before him, some 18 inches to two feet away from his eyes and head. Abnormal markings appeared on nearly every plate he concentrated on. These markings varied greatly and on a few occasions they corresponded in detail to the object of his concentration. For instance, when he was asked to concentrate on the sun, distinct ray-like markings were noted upon the plates. For the most part, however, no real resemblance was found between the visualized and the impressed images. In subsequent

experiments X-ray film was used; again the same odd markings appeared.

The tests were carried out under conditions which made fraud impossible, and there was no taint of mediumship in the performance. Dr. Carrington concludes by saying: "We are forced to assume that these markings represent the manifestation of some supernormal energy or heretofore unknown force."

The genuine "thought photographs," like the "spirit photographs" described in *The Theosophist* for April 1882 (III. 179-80), are more often "objective copies from *subjective* photographs impressed upon the ether of space, and constantly thrown out by our thoughts, words, and deeds." For further comments the reader is referred to "In the Light of Theosophy" for April 1968.

Ancient India had a very large pharmacopœia. The *Rig Veda* mentions over a thousand medicinal plants. Herbs were used as relaxants, antispasmodics and laxatives. Innumerable herbs and plants with curative properties known to modern medicine were familiar to the ancients. Oil from the seeds of the chaulmoogra tree, the traditional specific for leprosy, is still used to treat this dread disease. The acetylsalicylic acid now synthesized as aspirin from coal tar was extracted in ages gone by from infusions of willow bark and used for aching joints and fevers as it is today. Cinchona bark was used for fevers (quinine is made from it), and resins like camphor are still employed in stimulants, diaphoretics and sedatives.

Among the drugs familiar to modern pharmacology and used by the physicians of old India are cocaine, atropin, extracted from belladonna and other nightshades, and tranquillizers for mental and emotional tension, which were first derived from *rauwolfia serpentina* (snakeplant) and served the same purpose in ancient India. (*The Sunday Standard*, July 20)

Truly, modern medicine would profit much by further research into the pharmacology of the ancient Hindus, who knew all the simples, their properties and their use. It is not without interest to remark that Arab physicians, who enjoyed a merited celebrity in the middle ages — Averroës among others — constantly spoke of the Hindu physicians, and regarded them as the initiators of the Greeks and of themselves.
