

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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A SCIENTIFIC RELIGION AND A RELIGIOUS SCIENCE

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The Esoteric Philosophy is alone calculated to withstand, in this age of crass and illogical materialism, the repeated attacks on all and everything man holds most dear and sacred, in his inner spiritual life. The true philosopher, the student of the Esoteric Wisdom, entirely loses sight of personalities, dogmatic beliefs and special religions. Moreover, Esoteric Philosophy reconciles all religions, strips every one of its outward, human garments, and shows the root of each to be identical with that of every other great religion. It proves the necessity of an absolute Divine Principle in nature.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I. xx

OUR AGE continues to be one of crass and illogical materialism, though the materialism of the 19th century received a deathblow in that century's last decade. And again, though religious fanaticism received a very severe check from the comparative study of all religions, ancient and modern, such study having begotten tolerance for other people's creedal beliefs, yet in the case of very few has there been any inner conversion from the dogmas which they originally held.

Man still continues to live in the illusion that his religion is that in which he was born and bred, that to which his parents and his family belong. This atavistic illusion contributes substantially to his concept of God, the Soul, the Hereafter, and so forth. This religion of a man's body and family is, of course, greatly coloured by his education, which is increasingly dominated by science and technology. Materialism and

mechanistic ideas often make short work of his religious beliefs.

Thus scientific evolution enables him to throw away his belief in Adam and Eve if he happens to be born in one of the Semitic faiths, or his belief in Ameshaspentas or in Devas and Sons of Prajapati if he happens to be born in a Zoroastrian or a Hindu family. As the Adam and Eve story is not understood, nor are God and Gods seen with the eyes or heard with the ears, modern man either throws religion overboard or follows it spasmodically, not to hurt the feelings of his elders. Ignorance accepts superstition and no effort is made to enquire what Adam and Eve, etc., stand for. Most men of today are split consciousnesses, parading alternately their "knowledge" of science and "belief in our ancestors."

There is, however, one factor of immense value in the 20th-century civilization. Modern science having established the supremacy of Law throughout the manifested universe, though it does not yet teach that a non-material — psychical and spiritual — world exists, the mind of the common man applies what is implicit in the scientific teaching: If Law is supreme in the universe of atoms and molecules, it must be equally supreme in the universe of souls and minds. Kant recognized this great truth in his *Critique of Practical Reason*:

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them — the starry heavens above and the moral law within.

"The moral Law within" is so fundamental a factor of faith in the make-up of the common man that he turns to his own religious books and often to volumes which explain other religions so that he may gain some understanding of that Moral Law.

Dogmatic scientists are like dogmatic theologians — each must proceed on his own special road to further knowledge. But the common man who has the spirit of enquiry and the aspiration to be better, for his own sake as for that of others, sheds his dogmatism and is seeking for facts and truths. In the case of many another, the prejudices and superstitions, of which very often he is unconscious, prevent strong search and persistent questioning and he assumes a facile but somewhat dangerous position: "Let me be good and kind and serviceable according to my lights." Seeking stops, and he continues part good and part evil, part kind and part cruel, part altruistic and part selfish.

Sometimes good karma (which some call luck, others God's grace

and others still the influence of the stars, and so forth) brings a man to the Esoteric Philosophy mentioned in the quotation at the top of this article. Even a little study of Theosophy — not pseudo-Theosophy but the genuine teachings of the Wisdom-Religion — opens to his vision this stupendous truth — that his outer religion, the one into which his body was born, is not his real religion. That his hopes and wishes, his aspirations and longings, his thoughts and desires form his real religion. What are his beliefs and why does he hold them? How far are they true in the light of accurate knowledge?

These and like questions bring him to the truth — that each man, each woman, has an inner religion which expresses itself in his or her character, words and deeds. The Religion of Virtue is one thing and the creed of organized religion is altogether another. There are men and women of virtue — truthfulness, kindness, unselfishness, etc. — in every religion; also every creed harbours liars, sadists, and egotists. The student of the Esoteric Philosophy is able to cut across the sectional world of organized creeds — part beneficent and part maleficent — and to alight upon the true classification of Religion and religions. He sees how “Truth is obscured by that which is not true, and therefore all creatures are led astray.”

Not the outer religion of body-birth, but the inner religion of the soul in the body is of fundamental, nay, of vital importance. The Esoteric Philosophy teaches that man is desire-formed; as his desire is, so he thinks. Again, man is thought-formed; as he thinks, so is his faith. And, lastly, man is faith-formed; as is his faith, so is he.

Worldly wisdom has entangled man in the meshes of sensuous desires and he thinks in terms of his desires and their fulfilment. His desires colour and energize his thinking. His desire-mind speaks through his lips and acts through his hands. His feet walk towards the objects of sense which his desire craves and to which his mind directs him. His desires and thoughts hammer out a new layer of faith which covers over the inner faith of his soul-being.

The student of the Esoteric Philosophy examines the faith of his own being, the faith which proceeds from his Soul and has in it truth, rhythm and light. Therefore he proceeds to ideate and to imagine in terms of that inner faith. His mind requires increasing knowledge, his desires require the deepening light of purity and of love. Unlike the worldly-wise, the esotericist proceeds from within without. Knowledge enlightens his mind; compassion suffuses his heart; he sees the fact of

Brotherhood and lives to be fatherly to all the young, to be brotherly to all his fellows, to be filial to all his elders. Thus he becomes devoted.

When the Givers of Light kindled the fire of Self-consciousness in the humanity of our Earth some 18 million years ago, They bestowed the gift of knowledge and devotion. Self-consciousness implies the existence of both. Infant humanity perceived, by the Light of Wisdom, that all nature was alive, one and impartite, and that each man was part of that Living, Intelligent Nature. Infant humanity felt by the Fire of Devotion that each man should remain trustful and faithful to the Givers of the Great Good.

These two — Wisdom and Compassion, Knowledge and Devotion — are the very foundation for the living of the Higher Life. The Esoteric Philosophy teaches the sublime truth about both Wisdom and Compassion. Our civilization misunderstands and misinterprets Wisdom as well as Compassion. The growth of modern knowledge on materialistic lines militates against the birth of wisdom. Religious faith suffers and is choked by creedal beliefs and theological superstitions. Spiritual liberty is almost dead in modern humanity. It is not a matter for surprise that intellectual, moral and social liberties are on the decline.

Theosophy alone, combining knowledge with devotion, offers a scientific religion and a religious science. These are to be found in the Esoteric Philosophy of the Wisdom-Religion.

KNOWLEDGE *is* religion — not a supposed “revelation” from some superior being who created us as inferior beings, but an actual knowledge gained through myriads of years and many existences by Those who have experienced them all. Those beings above us on the ladder of evolution, who are greater than any “Gods” we can conceive of, passed through the same trials and the same sufferings which we are undergoing, until they learned to know their innermost nature and to act in accordance with it. They came to know that true religion is a knowledge of one’s own self, and action in accordance. Drawing nearer in themselves to the very Source of their being, they found the source of every other being to be the same — only the knowledge acquired and the use of that knowledge making the differences between all beings. Their knowledge is an absolutely accurate knowledge of the essence of everything in nature, which alone is the foundation of all true religion.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND

IV. — THE DARKNESS BEFORE THE DAWN

Unless there is complete devotion to Bhagavan, you cannot have the real Guru or the true Shastra.

—*Yoga-Vasishtha*

THE SECOND CHAPTER of the *Gita* continues the theme of Arjuna's despondency. For a few verses, the recitation of Arjuna's woes continues. Incidentally, it is the only chapter of the *Gita* which continues the burden of the preceding chapter. It opens on a startling note. Whereas according to human and earthly considerations Arjuna's despondency could be expected to be natural in a man of scruples, it is characterized as a "despicable weakness of the heart" by Krishna. To the eye of spirit, the human failing of depression in matters of difficulty appears to be disgraceful, contrary to duty, and the foundation of dishonour. This seemingly harsh judgement of a human reaction has its own lesson for the disciple, because like Arjuna he is too prone to give inverted values to men and matters and to judge of things by standards which have no roots in the spiritual. Self-pity has no relevance in spirituality.

We have seen that, moving from premises to conclusion, Arjuna of the first chapter succeeded only in a further accentuation of the gloom which a review of the contending forces had induced in him. Caught in the web of his own reasoning, he found duty poised against duty and his "compassion" breeding cowardice. When Krishna characterized his dejection as unworthy of the honourable, Arjuna failed to see the truth behind the rebuke. He therefore repeated the arguments which continued to perplex him. If, honouring his duty, he carried on the fight, he would have to kill friends, relatives and preceptors. This would make him a partaker in sin. If, on the other hand, he refused to do battle, he would be a renegade from duty. Tossed on the horns of this dilemma, he admits that there is in him the fear of doing wrong and the dread of harm. He feels that by trying to escape the one he will inevitably fall into the other. Shall he fight and in fighting kill? Shall he by refusing to fight get himself slaughtered unopposed and defenceless? He has no answer to the problem which gnaws at his vitals. He says that he can see nothing that will assuage his grief and that caught in so great a despondency his faculties have dried up and refuse to function.

These opening verses of the second chapter have a deep and abiding

message for the modern disciple. All his previous training obtained through teachers of such high stature as Bhishma and Drona will be found useless to resolve his crisis of conscience. No help can be invoked from nor asylum sought with erstwhile companions, teachers and friends. When negation surrounds the man with darkness, then fear comes — a fear that is almost palpable and that numbs the man, making him inert and helpless. The darkness of the void deepens when doubts arise as to whether the spiritual can give guidance on things mundane. Has it not been said that the spiritual should not be dragged down to the terrestrial plane? Can even Krishna have an answer for purely mundane problems? Caught in this condition of doubt and fear, Arjuna finds himself forced to assume contrary positions. Knowing, or rather sensing, his own inability to find a solution, he calls upon Krishna as his chosen Guru to give him guidance. Yet, he does not await his pleasure. He seems to take it that Krishna will have no solution to offer, and therefore in the same breath he makes his choice and says that he will not fight. This phenomenon of the pupil acknowledging the eminence of his teacher, yet acting as though his own judgement is better than that of his guru, is not an uncommon one. Advice is sought, and often enough either not awaited or ignored on the instant. So, Arjuna in his grief, though he may have erred grievously, had sufficient strength to ask for the help of his guru. Having proclaimed himself Krishna's disciple, he stands exhausted and silent between the two armies, a picture of gloom and despair.

It will be seen that when the soul of man realizes that it is futile to seek any comfort from mundane considerations, it enters the blank void of a total darkness. He lives, but his motivation is frozen because the mind finds no stable anchorage. The previous moorings have proved to be insecure, and on abandoning these he finds himself a derelict on a storm-infested sea. It is in this condition, when after a period of intense and agonizing activity the cerebration stops frustrated, that the mind finds itself unable to work on once familiar ground. Bewildered, it falls into stupor and silence. It is now in a critical stage. Water is about to become steam, and the properties which belonged to water have to be abandoned for the rules and laws which obtain in the newer condition. It is only when such a critical state is reached that the mind becomes receptive of ideas which it would previously have tried to measure by mundane knowledge, and so measuring would have passed judgement on the spiritual by formulae which can have their relevance

only for things material. The gloom and the silence descend. Then follow the Instructions.

If the difficulties that beset Arjuna are analysed, it will be found that the disciple is more likely to be attacked through the heart than through any other centre of his complex make-up. If the heart has not been properly oriented, it will lead the head astray. The substance and worth of learning is turned to nought if the heart brushes these aside to seek its own satiety in emotional tangles. Emotions that have the power to swamp the heart have therefore to be watched and guarded against. The heart is of a function different from the intellect. High aspirations may for a time move the pupil to seek noble purposes and in its lucid moments the intellect may accept the validity of ethical values; yet, if the heart has not accepted these, it will not be able to stand the strain during moments of crisis or when the movement of cycles pertaining to the man's personal life places it in the midst of fogs.

Before the teachings of the *Gita* can be studied with any benefit, the student must not only understand but realize that the personal is but the shadow of the impersonal cast on a matrix of matter. Therefore, even where these shadows become the objects of scrutiny and study, their primary source has always to be given its due weightage. Any time that its immanence is forgotten, the results are bound to lean towards an overaccentuation of the personal; and in that direction lies frustration which tinges both tears and laughter. The intellectual portion of mankind is too often prone to lose sight of this, and in consequence its behaviour goes counter to moral values and ethical principles. One more proposition is to be understood and accepted. Just as the theorems of Euclid support each other, in fact follow the one upon the other and can never be in conflict, so too with universal principles. They are but the extension, the natural outflow of the many from the ONE and sole.

Arjuna had forgotten the impersonal when he focused his whole attention on the personal. His despondency stemmed from this error. Seeing the present, he projected his vision on to the future. He tried to visualize the effects of the causes he was about to generate. A dangerous exercise this, unless the man through long training is prepared for it. Such an effort has to be undertaken cautiously in the light of the *Paramitas* and under the aegis of his Higher Self. Unless the impersonal within the man is aroused, the higher potentialities will remain dormant, and without these, the man can judge and decide only by the mortal

powers of an earth-bound intellect. The personal — the ephemeral part of the man that perishes in limbo — is no saviour. In point of fact, all despondency will be seen as the outcome of too close a contact with the personal. The weapon that alone can fight despondency, sorrow and discontent is impersonality, is the lifting of the soul from out of the shadow into the shine. Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

No light that shines from Spirit can dispel the darkness of the nether Soul, unless all selfish thought has fled therefrom, and that the pilgrim saith: "I have renounced this passing frame; I have destroyed the Cause: the shadows cast can, as effects, no longer be."

THE *Gita* religion proclaims to all, though nominally to Arjuna, that they should perform lifelong their several worldly duties according to their respective positions in life, desirelessly, for the universal good, with a Self-identifying vision, and enthusiastically, and thereby perpetually worship the deity in the shape of Paramatman (the Highest Atman), which is Eternal, and which uniformly pervades the body of all created things as also the Cosmos; because, therein lies their happiness in this world and in the next. On that account the mutual conflict between Action, Spiritual Knowledge (*Jnana*), and Love (Devotion) is done away with. The single *Gita* religion, which preaches that the whole of one's life should be turned into a Sacrifice (*Yajna*), contains the essence of the entire Vedic religion. When hundreds of energetic noble souls and active persons worked for the benefit of all created things, because they looked upon that as their duty, as a result of their having realized this eternal religion, this country was blessed and reached the height not only of Knowledge but also of prosperity; and it need not be said in so many words, that when this ancient religion, which is beneficial in this life and in the next, lost following, our country reached its present fallen state.

—BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

A WEIRD TALE

[The following tale by W. Q. Judge first appeared in two instalments in *The Theosophist* for July and December 1885.—Eds.]

I

THE READERS of this magazine have read in its pages narratives far more curious and taxing to belief than the one I am about to give fragments of. The extraordinary Russian tale of the adept at the rich man's castle when the infant assumed the appearance of an old man will not be forgotten. But the present tale, while not in the writer's opinion containing anything extremely new, differs from many others in that I shall relate some things I myself saw. At this time, too, the relation is not inopportune, and perhaps some things here set down may become, for many, explanations of various curious occurrences during the past five years in India and Europe.

To begin with, this partial story is written in accordance with a direction received from a source which I cannot disobey and in that alone must possess interest, because we are led to speculate why it is needed now.

Nearly all of my friends in India and Europe are aware that I have travelled often to the northern part of the South American continent and also to Mexico. That fact has been indeed noticed in this magazine. One very warm day in July 1881, I was standing at the vestibule of the Church of St. Theresa in the City of Caracas, Venezuela. This town was settled by the Spaniards who invaded Peru and Mexico and contains a Spanish-speaking people. A great crowd of people were at the door, and just then a procession emerged, with a small boy running ahead and clapping a loud clapper to frighten away the devil. As I noticed this, a voice in English said to me, "Curious that they have preserved that singular ancient custom." Turning, I saw a remarkable-looking old man who smiled peculiarly and said, "Come with me and have a talk." I complied, and he soon led me to a house which I had often noticed, over the door being a curious old Spanish tablet devoting the place to the patronage of St. Joseph and Mary. On his invitation I entered and at once saw that here was not an ordinary Caracas house. Instead of lazy, dirty Venezuelan servants, there were only clean Hindoos, such as I had often seen in the neighbouring English Island of Trinidad; in the place of the disagreeable fumes of garlic and other things usual in the town, there hung in the air the delightful perfumes

known only to the Easterns. So I at once concluded that I had come across a delightful adventure.

Seating ourselves in a room hung with tapestry and cooled by waving punkahs that evidently had not been long put up, we engaged in conversation. I tried to find out who this man was, but he evaded me. Although he would not admit or deny knowledge of the Theosophical Society or of Madame Blavatsky or of the Mahatmas, he constantly made such references that I was sure he knew all about them and had approached me at the church designedly. After quite a long talk during which I saw he was watching me and felt the influence of his eye, he said that he had liberty to explain a little as we had become sufficiently acquainted. It was not pleasure nor profit that called him there, but duty alone. I referred to the subterranean passages said to exist in Peru full of treasure, and then he said the story was true and his presence there connected with it. Those passages extended up from Peru as far as Caracas where we then were. In Peru they were hidden and obstructed beyond man's power to get them; but in this place the entrances were not as well guarded although in 1812 an awful earthquake had levelled much of the town. The Venezuelans were rapacious, and these men in India who knew the secret had sent him there to prevent anyone finding the entrances. At certain seasons only there were possibilities of discovery; the seasons over, he could depart in security, as until the period came again no one could find the openings without the help and consent of the adepts.

Just then a curious bell sound broke on the air and he begged me to remain until he returned, as he was called, and then left the room. I waited a long time, filled with speculations, and as it was getting late and past dinner hour, I was about to leave. Just as I did so a Hindoo servant quickly entered and stood in front of the only door. As he stood there, I heard a voice say as through a long pipe: "Stir not yet." Re-seating myself, I saw that on the wall, where I had not before noticed it, hung a curious broad silver plate brightly shining. The hour of the day had come when the sun's light struck this plate and I saw that on it were figures which I could not decipher. Accidentally looking at the opposite wall, I saw that the plate threw a reflection there upon a surface evidently prepared for that purpose and there was reproduced the whole surface of the plate. It was a diagram with compass, sign and curious marks. I went closer to examine, but just at that moment the sun dipped behind the houses and the figures were lost. All I could

make out was that the letters looked like exaggerated Tamil or Telugu — perhaps Zend. Another faint bell sounded and the old man returned. He apologized, saying he had been far away, but that we would meet again. I asked where, and he said, "In London." Promising to return, I hurried away. Next day I could not find him at all and discovered that there were two houses devoted to Joseph and Mary, and I could not tell which I had seen him in. But in each I found Spaniards, Spanish servants and Spanish smells.

In 1884 I went to London, and had forgotten the adventure. One day I strolled into an old alley to examine the old Roman wall in the Strand which is said to be 2,000 years old. As I entered and gazed at the work, I perceived a man of foreign aspect there who looked at me as I entered. I felt as if he knew me or that I had met him, but was utterly unable to be sure. His eyes did not seem to belong to his body and his appearance was at once startling and attractive. He spoke to the attendant, but his voice did not help me. Then the attendant went out and he, approaching me, said:

"Have you forgotten the house of Joseph and Mary?"

In a moment I knew the expression that looked out through those windows of the soul, but still this was not the same man. Determined to give him no satisfaction I simply said, "No," and waited.

"Did you succeed in making out the reflection from the silver plate on the wall?" Here was complete identification of place but not of person.

"Well," I said, "I saw your eyes in Caracas but not your body." He then laughed and said, "I forgot that. I am the same man, but I have borrowed this body for the present and must indeed use it for some time, but I find it pretty hard work to control it. It is not quite to my liking. The expression of my eyes of course you knew, but I lost sight of the fact that you looked at the body with ordinary eyes."

Once more I accompanied him to his residence and, when not thinking of his person but only listening with the soul, I forgot the change. Yet it was ever present, and he kindly gave me an account of some things connected with himself, of absorbing interest. He began in this way.

"I was allowing myself to deceive myself, forgetting the *Bhagavad-Gita* where it tells us, that a man is his soul's friend and his soul's enemy, in that retreat in Northern India where I had spent many years. But the chance again arose to retrieve the loss incurred by that and I was given the choice of assuming this body."

At this point again I heard the signal bell and he again left me. When he returned, he resumed the story.

If I can soon again get the opportunity, I will describe that scene, but for the present must here take a halt.

II

There are many who cannot believe that I have been prevented from writing the whole of this tale at once, and they have smiled when they read that I would continue it "if allowed." But all who know me well will feel that there is some truth in my statement. It may interest those who can read between the lines to know that I attempted several times to finish the tale so as to send it all in one batch to the magazine, but always found that at the point where the first chapter ends my eyes would blur, or the notes ready for the work became simply nonsense, or some other difficulty intervened, so that I was never until now able to get any further with it than the last instalment. It is quite evident to me that it will not be finished, although I know quite well what it is that I have to say. This part must therefore be the last, as in trying to reach a conclusion much time is wasted in fighting against whatever it is that desires to prevent my going into full details. In order then to be able to get out even so much as this, I am compelled to omit many incidents which would perhaps be interesting to several persons; but I shall try to remember particularly and relate what things of a philosophical nature were repeated to me.

As I sat there waiting for the host to come back, I felt the moral influence of another mind, like a cool breeze blowing from a mountain. It was the mind of one who had arrived at least at that point where he desired no other thing than that which Karma may bring, and, even as that influence crept over me, I began to hear a voice speaking as it were through a pipe the end of which was in my head, but which stretched an immense distance into space¹ making the voice sound faint and far off. It said:

"The man whose passions enter his heart as waters run into the unswelling passive ocean obtaineth happiness; not he who lusteth in his lusts. The man who having abandoned the lusts of the flesh worketh without inordinate desires, unassuming, and free from pride, obtaineth happiness. This is divine dependence. A man being possessed of this

¹ There are some Theosophists who will recognize this. [W.Q.J.]

confidence in the Supreme goeth not astray: even at the hour of death should he attain it he shall mix with the incorporeal nature of Brahm. He who enjoyeth the *Amreeta* that is left of his offerings obtaineth the eternal spirit of Brahm the Supreme."

The atmosphere of the room seemed to give the memory great retentive power, and when on returning to my room that night I fell upon those sentences in the *Bhagavad-Gita* I knew that they had come to me from a place or a person for whom I should have respect.

Occupied with such thoughts, I did not notice that my host had returned, and, looking up, was somewhat startled to see him sitting at the other side of the apartment reading a book. The English clothes were gone and a white Indian dhoti covered him, and I could see that he wore round his body the Brahmanical cord. For some reason or other, he had hanging from a chain around his neck an ornament which, if it was not Rosicrucian, was certainly ancient.

Then I noticed another change. There seemed to have come in with him, though not by the door, other visitors which were not human. At first I could not see them, though I was aware of their presence, and after a few moments I knew that whatever they were they rushed hither and thither about the room as if without purpose. They had yet no form. This absorbed me again so that I said nothing, and my host was also silent. In a few more moments these rushing visitors had taken from the atmosphere enough material to enable them to become partly visible. Now and then they made a ripple in the air as if they disturbed the medium in which they moved about, just as the fin of a fish troubles the surface of the water. I began to think of the elemental shapes we read of in Bulwer-Lytton's *Zanoni*, and which have been illustrated in Henry Kunrath's curious book on the Cabala of the Hebrews.

"Well," said my strange friend, "do you see them? You need have no fear, as they are harmless. They do not see you, excepting one that appears to know you. I was called out so as to try if it were possible for you to see them, and am glad that you do."

"And the one that knows me," said I, "can you identify it in any way?"

"Well," said he, "let us call it *he*. He seems to have seen you — been impressed with your image just as a photograph is on a plate — somewhere or other, and I also see that he is connected with you by a name. Yes, it is ———."

And then he mentioned the name of an alleged elemental or nature spirit which at one time, some years ago, was heard of in New York.

“He is looking at you now, and seems to be seeking something. What did you have or make once that he knew of?”

I then recollected a certain picture, a copy of an Egyptian papyrus of the Hall of Two Truths, showing the *trial of the Dead*, and so replied, regretting that I had not got it with me to show my friend. But even as I said that, I saw the very picture lying upon the table. Where it came from I do not know, as I had no recollection of bringing it with me. However, I asked no questions, and waited, as my host was looking intently at the space above my head.

“Ah, that is what he was looking for, and he seems to be quite pleased,” he said, as if I could hear and see just as he did. I knew he referred to the elemental.

In another moment my attention was riveted on the picture. Its surface bobbed up and down as if waves ran over it, and crackling sounds rose from every part. They grew louder and the motion ceased, while from a certain point arose a thin whitish vapour that wavered unsteadily to and fro. Meanwhile the strange visitors I have mentioned seemed to rush about more in the vicinity of the paper while now and again one of them took what looked like a flying leap from one end of the room to the other, with a queer faint boom of a metallic character following his rapid motion.

Here I must draw the veil unwillingly. Let me violate the unities and the frame of this tale by just putting down a few sentences, leaving it to the imagination to draw inferences.

“Those strange delineations of form? Quite easily. They were seen by the seeresses in the temple. It is quite true that elementals have no form as such. . . . But there are undoubtedly types, and [those] Egyptians were not the men to do anything unscientifically. . . . There is an occult reason why, although without form, these particular shapes were assumed. And having been once assumed and seen thus by the seer, they always repeated that form to those persons. So the representative of the astral light, or of wisdom, or of the recording angel, is yellow in colour, very tall, with a long bill like a stork. Or the one who takes the weight of the soul is always seen with a jackal’s head. . . . No, there is no prohibition against telling the occult reason. It is merely this: were it told, only one in a thousand hearers would see any meaning or reason in it. . . . Let your mind reflect also upon the peculiarity that all

the judges sitting above there have heads alike, while in colour they differ, each one having a feather, the emblem of truth, on his head. . . . No, it is not Hindu, and yet it is the same. They used to say, and I think you may find it in one of their books, that 'everything is in the Supreme Soul, and the Supreme Soul in everything.'² So the great truth is one, while it can be seen in a thousand different ways. We [Egyptians] took a certain view and made every symbol consistent and of a class consonant with our view. . . . And just as the Hindus are accused of being idolaters because they have represented Krishna with eight arms standing on the great elephant, we, who did not picture an eight-armed divinity, are charged with having worshipped jackals, cats and birds. . . . Yes, it is a pity, but the sand that buries Egypt has not been able to smother the great voice of that Sphinx, the *esoteric doctrine*. But not through us except in some such manner as this, now and then. In India the light burns, and in a living people still resides the key. . . ."

Just then the bobbing of the picture began again and the same whitish column wavered over it. The faint boom of the airy elementals recommenced, and again claimed my attention, and then the picture was still.

I may say that the whole of the conversation has not been given. It is not necessary that it should be. My host had maintained perfect silence all the while, and seemed to await my voice, so I said:

"What could have induced you to leave those peaceful places where true progress may be gained?"

"Well," he replied, "very likely they were peaceful, and quite truly progress was possible, but you do not appreciate the dangers also. You have read *Zanoni*, and perhaps have an exaggerated idea of the horrible Dweller of the Threshold, making of her a real person or thing. But the reality is much worse. When you get into what you have called the 'peaceful places,' this power becomes tenfold stronger than it is found to be on the plane in which we now live in London."

"Why, I supposed that there, free from the cankering anxieties of modern life, the neophyte sailed happily on through plain seas to the shores of the fortunate isles."

"Far from that. On that plane it is found that, although from the spiritual sun there falls upon us the benign influence of those great sages who, entering *paranirvana*, throw off their accumulated goodness for our benefit, the evil influence that is focussed by the dark side of

² *Bhagavad-Gita*.

the moon falls as well, and with its power undiminished. The little temptations and difficulties of your life are as nothing compared to that struggle, for then it is realized that the self is the enemy of the self, as well as its friend.”³

“But,” said I, “was the fault committed a great one, that it should condemn you to this task?”

“No, not great as you term it. But quite great enough; and in consequence I had to take my choice. In Caraças you saw me as an illusion of a certain character. There I did what was required, the illusion being perfect except as to the eyes. Now you see another illusion, and yet at the same time a reality such as is connoted by that word when used by modern scientists. It is a body that lives and will die. The Karma is hard perhaps, but I grumble not. But is it not an illusion in every sense when you know that although this body speaks and thinks, still I, the speaker, am not visible to you?”

These words are not mine. If some of them seem meaningless or queer to many readers, do not blame the writer. There are those who can understand. There are yet others who have latent thoughts that need but these words to call them into life. I cannot give any greater detail than the above as to himself, because he had reasons for preventing me, although he might perhaps himself tell more to another.

One curious thing of interest he said, which will furnish some with food for thought. It was when I referred to the use of the body he had, so to say, *borrowed*, that he said:

“Don’t you know that many experiments are possible in that way, and that some students are taught peculiarly? I have stood aside from this earthly tabernacle many a time to let in those who, notwithstanding that they operated the machine well enough and made quite a respectable use of it, did not know what they did. They were, if you like, dreaming. While here, in this body, they were essentially it, for the time, speaking its words, thinking its thoughts, and not able to control it. Not desiring to in fact, because they were completely identified with it. When they waked up in their own apartments either a singular dream whispered a fragmentary song through their brain, or they retained no remembrances whatever of it. In such a case the body, being really master, might do or say that which I would not — or the occupier, temporarily strong, might say out of real recollection things having relation only to that life of which his hearers would have no knowledge.”

³ *Bhagavad-Gita.*

Just then some clock struck. The atmosphere seemed to clear itself. A strange and yet not unfamiliar perfume floated through the room, and my host said, "Yes, I will show you a verse someone tells me to show you."

He walked over to the table, took up a queer little book printed in Sanskrit, yellow with age and seeming to have been much used. Opening it he read:

*"This supreme spirit and incorruptible Being, even when it is in the body, neither acteth, nor is it affected, because its nature is without beginning and without quality. As the all-moving Akas, or ether, from the minuteness of its parts, passeth everywhere unaffected, even so the omnipresent spirit remaineth in the body unaffected. As a single sun illumines the whole world, even so doth the spirit enlighten every body. They who, with the eye of wisdom, perceive the body and the spirit to be thus distinct, and that there is a final release from the animal nature, go to the Supreme."*⁴

—W. Q. J.

To us whose feet tread, often wearily, towards the path of the great quest, and whose eyes strain blindly through the mists that wrap us round, steady perseverance and omnipotent hope must be the watchwords — perseverance to struggle on though the fiends of the lower self may make every step a battle, and hope that at any moment the entrance to the path may be found.

—*Lucifer*, December 1887

⁴ *Bhagavad-Gita*, Ch. XIII, last verses.

WHY DO WE SUFFER ?

Is THERE a human being who has not experienced pain and suffering? And yet, has everyone inquired into the cause of sorrow and its cure?

Roughly speaking, there are three main answers to the problem of pain. Numberless books have been written on the subject, but analysis reduces all the expositions to three somewhat simple propositions.

The first answer is that of modern science. Though it has been able to trace some types of pain to their definite causes, it does not yet know the exact genesis of mental, moral or physical suffering; nor how pain progresses or subsides; nor the exact relation between organic diseases or between bodily pain and mental and moral anguish. One of the foremost men of science, Alexis Carrel, in his *Man, the Unknown*, makes a remark which goes to show that science is working in the dark and is unable to offer any final and precise answer:

Although modern hygiene has made human existence far safer, longer and more pleasant, diseases have not been mastered. They have simply changed in nature.

Much money, time and labour have been spent; for what? Note the significance of these words of the eminent surgeon-scientist:

Medicine is far from having decreased human sufferings as much as it endeavours to make us believe. Indeed, the number of deaths from infectious diseases has greatly diminished. But we still must die, and we die in a much larger proportion from degenerative diseases. The years of life which we have gained by suppression of diphtheria, smallpox, typhoid fever, etc., are paid for by the long sufferings and the lingering deaths caused by chronic affections, and especially by cancer, diabetes, and heart diseases. In addition, man is liable, as he was in former times, to chronic nephritis, brain tumours, arterial sclerosis, syphilis, cerebral hemorrhages, hypertension, and also to the intellectual, moral and physiological decay determined by these maladies.

Thus science so far has not been able to give an answer or to show a way out of the universe of disease and of suffering.

The second answer may be summarized as follows though it has been given in a variety of ways: God, the Creator of all and every thing, created suffering for reasons best known to Him, and it is not for mortal and puny man to question His Will, nor is the mind of the

insignificant creature called man capable of understanding the divine mystery. Theological and theistic philosophers have, however, attempted an explanation of the existence of evil, and particularly of pain. To give but one of them, that of Leibnitz: he maintained that this is the "best of all possible worlds," and any other world would have contained more evil and less good than the one we live in. This argument, by the way, limits the omniscience of the Creator, since it implies the existence of laws or conditions which circumscribe His Will.

Very learnedly and elaborately, and in a hundred different forms, religious creeds have given this answer — suffer in silence and with resignation and you will be somehow compensated if you put your faith and trust in God and God's Will. Priestcraft has crushed the human mind with its curiosity and its longing to understand the meaning of the problem, and has exploited the human heart which yearns for some compensatory feeling in which pain and sorrow can be drowned. And so in the name of their religion millions of men and women endure suffering without seeking for an explanation or a remedy, believing that these are not within their reach. Some fool themselves by fancying that when they say it is God's Will they have answered the question of human suffering.

Again and again, this blind faith of the believer is shattered when pain and sorrow come into his own life. How many have not denied the existence of the very God they had hitherto professed, when death snatches away a loved one! In fact, it is on this very point that atheists have the strongest argument against the existence of a God of Love and of Mercy.

We are not concerned here with the existence and nature of God, but only with the idea that God for good reasons and with a motive and a purpose creates pain and suffering. It ought to be clearly evident to any man of ordinary intelligence that a wise and merciful father, an all-powerful God, could not possibly be made responsible for our pain and suffering. We must look for the cause of our own misery elsewhere.

When the Buddha was starting on his quest of Wisdom which would unveil the meaning of pain, he was face to face with this problem of God as the creator of pain. Ere he left his palace and his princess he soliloquized:

For which of all the great and lesser gods
Have power or pity? Who hath seen them — who?
What have they wrought to help their worshippers?

How hath it steaded man to pray, and pay
 Tithes of the corn and oil, to chant the charms,
 To slay the shrieking sacrifice, to rear
 The stately fane, to feed the priests, and call
 On Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, who save
 None — not the worthiest — from the griefs that teach
 Those litanies of flattery and fear
 Ascending day by day, like wasted smoke?
 Hath any of my brothers 'scaped thereby
 The aches of life, the stings of love and loss,
 The fiery fever and the ague-shake,
 The slow, dull, sinking into withered age,
 The horrible dark death — and what beyond
 Waits — till the whirling wheel comes up again,
 And new lives bring new sorrows to be borne,
 New generations for the new desires
 Which have their end in the old mockeries?
 Hath any of my tender sisters found
 Fruit of the fast or harvest of the hymn,
 Or brought one pang the less at bearing-time
 For white curds offered and trim tulsi-leaves?

And the great Buddha found the answer which the priests of his royal household could not give; that answer is the same as the sages of old, the Buddhas before him and those of recent times have given. It is embodied in the word — Karma. But let it be said at once that the doctrine of Karma is not exclusively a Hindu-Buddhist doctrine. In other religious philosophies also the teaching is given. Thus in the Zoroastrian *Yasna* there is the clear indication — “For the wicked there is long endurance of sorrow, and for the righteous good recompense of happiness.” In Christianity also the doctrine of Karma is advanced. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” In *Al Quran* we read: “He who doeth right, doth it to the advantage of his own soul; and he who doeth evil, doth it again at the same.”

This doctrine of Karma or Justice is the third answer to the problem of suffering. Where modern science and corrupted religions fail, the ancient Theosophia succeeds. Man himself is the creator of his own suffering and the field wherein the seeds of pain are sown is the human mind. Likewise, man himself is the creator of his own happiness and the field wherein the seeds of bliss are sown is the human mind.

Like most doctrines of mystical and religious philosophy, the doc-

trine of Karma has also been corrupted; priests have misinterpreted it and people have misapplied it. An understanding of the doctrine of Karma, through study, restores the lost key to the meaning and purpose of life. If we have taken so much space above in dealing with the religious belief of most people it is for a very simple reason. Unless men and women get rid of false notions about God, life, and their own destiny it is not possible to grasp the meaning of this doctrine, and more impossible still to apply it from day to day.

Just as autocracy and democracy cannot both prevail in any state, so also an autocratic personal God and the omnipresent impersonal law of Karma or Justice cannot both prevail in Nature. Just as in ancient India the law of the state was above and superior to the King, who himself was but its obedient servant, so also in true philosophy God and Gods, all Thrones, Powers and Principalities are subservient to the Law of Karma. Devas and Devatas, Ameshaspentas and Yazatas, Archangels and Angels, Mahatmas and Muktas, are all subject to Law; all are but channels of the majestic sweep of never-erring Karma. The universe is governed not by the caprice of one or many Gods, but by Law that "knows not wrath nor pardon." This Law of Ethical Causation and Moral Retribution is described as "an undeviating and unerring tendency in the Universe to restore equilibrium, and it operates incessantly." (Aphorism on Karma, No. 3)

Just as knowledge of the Law of Gravitation enables an engineer to be master of it, and using his knowledge of this very law he is able to instal a lift, so also adequate knowledge of the Law of Karma enables us to mould and shape the course of our lives, and to begin to prove to ourselves without a doubt that no outer agency has power over us save and except in the measure we allow it sway over our senses or mind or moral nature.

Our bodily ailments and diseases, our moral weaknesses, our mental deficiencies, are the result of our own acts. No God visited them upon us; no Devil can foil us in our effort to overcome them — in fact, the Devil is but the personification of that aspect of the Law of Karma which exacts the debts we have incurred. When a man indulges in sensual thoughts, he sows causes, and the effects are sensual acts. Not remembering when and how he thought sensually, that man when he is overpowered by the force of sensuality and acts accordingly, says he was tempted. The tempter was no other devil than his own evil sensual thoughts of yesterday and many yesterdays.

Today, many do not believe any more in the “nonsense of God and Devil”; they speak of “heredity” and blame their parents and grandparents. Most of them have not studied more than one scientific theory about heredity now holding the field for the researcher. They are blissfully ignorant that modern science has *not* solved the why of heredity and that even the how is only partially explained by them. Heredity, like other factors in Nature, is but an instrument of the Law of Karma.

The subject is a vast one and highly complex. We must grasp the central thought that man creates his own destiny by the use of his mind, and as he thinks today he acts tomorrow. His fancy and imagination, his hopes and aspirations, are so many forces which act from within himself and mould and shape his mind, character and even the texture and the sensitiveness of his body of flesh and blood. We shall close with a very appropriate extract from *The Friendly Philosopher* by Robert Crosbie:

The ideas we entertain of the Supreme, of Laws of nature and of our own Being govern the actions we perform. We are now acting according to the ideas we now hold. Are they the best and the highest possible to us?

If we change our ideas, we change our actions. If we see that Law rules, that this Law is inherent in our highest nature and not outside of us, we shall see that it is the Spirit in us — our very Self — that is the cause and sustainer of all our actions.

We have often adopted and we often change our ideas without any real consideration as to their truth, as to their relation to Life, as to their bearing upon existence. All we have to do is to realize our own real nature, see what our defects are, strengthen our virtues, and move on. Just so surely as we do this, we shall find that our virtues and strength increase, and our defects gradually fall away.

JUST as there are seasons and tides upon the earth and in the ocean, so seasons and tides prevail in the Inner World.

—TIBETAN SAYING

WORDS OF LIGHT

THE PATH

The Ancient Way, the Way of true Be-ing through Non-being.

1. DELIVERANCE IS FOUND

A flower unfoldeth not by striving,
It unfoldeth through indwelling;
That which resteth at the heart of it
Seeketh the Sun.

The power of the Master worketh in thee ever, although thou perceivest it not.

He shall bring thee to birth (*i.e.*, to liberation into light), as the blossom is brought to fruition: by that which is within thee, and still more by that which is His own.

Follow the golden thread of in-leading.
So shalt thou come to the shrine.

There is no separation.
Separation is in the sense of it.

Ten thousand times shalt thou think of Himachal and shalt not be delivered.

But once shalt thou think of THAT which is beyond Himachal and, so thinking, find liberation.

Concern thyself not with that which passeth; concern thyself only with Me.

Rest in Me and I will lead thee.

Abide in Me and I will guide thee whither thou would'st go.

Abide in Me even as a growing thing abideth in the soil from which it hath its being and to which it beareth witness.

I shall not lose thee.

Thou shalt lose thyself only in Me.

Why should'st thou fear, when I am in all?

Wheresoever thou goest, I am there.

I have bidden thee, "Practise no austerities of the body," for these are the lesser part.

Deliverance is found through indwelling.

In the sands of time thou seest the footprints of the Master.
Walk therein and thou shalt come whither thou would'st be.

Now is thy life no longer thine but Mine.
Tend it and cherish it.

Have not I brought thee to Me, even as I promised?
Thine own effort brought thee not, but lo, by My inleading thou comest.
Yield to inleading. At all times, yield to inleading.
Follow not thine own paths of thought.

Look into thine heart. Is not My truth written therein?
What is that truth?

I have told thee already, it is unity — unity of all that hath life, as innumerable streams are but one in the deep; as the multitude of sparks that the morning dew reflecteth are but one in the All-creative Light.

Now knowest thou clearly wherein thy true life consisteth: not in thinking out but in indwelling, not in acting but in abiding in the Self.

Look not to the right nor to the left, but come thou to me who am the Way and the ending thereof.

How shall I come to Thee, my Master?

As thou comest now, step by step, as a child.

Why should'st thou hasten? Art not thou ever in My presence?

Look well upon My words, that through them thou mayest see My light shine.

Not by the folding of the hands,
Nor by the stilling of the mind,
But by the coming of the Light
Is deliverance found.

(To be continued)

THE MONAD

IN THEOSOPHIC LITERATURE pertaining to the Universe and Man, we often come upon the word "Monad." What is the Monad? It is the Unity, the One; but in Occultism it often means the duad, Atma-Buddhi, that immortal essence which reincarnates in the lower kingdoms, and gradually progresses through them to man and then to the final goal of *Nirvana*. In man, the Monad is the unified triad, Atma-Buddhi-Manas. So it is a word connoting different meanings.

Says *The Secret Doctrine*: "The Monad or Jiva *per se* cannot be even called spirit: it is a ray, a breath of the ABSOLUTE, or the Absoluteness rather. . ." (I. 247). This on the highest plane. Coming down to manifestation, we learn that "as above, so below" is the law; that which takes place on the spiritual plane repeats itself on the cosmic plane. "As the spiritual Monad is One, Universal, Boundless and Impartite . . . so the Mineral Monad — being at the opposite point of the circle — is also One." Just as the rays from and of the Spiritual Monad "form what we, in our ignorance, call the 'Individual Monads' of men," so from the Mineral Monad "proceed the countless physical atoms, which science is beginning to regard as individualized." (I. 177-78)

Here it is necessary to note, and meditate upon and remember, that "Those unable to seize the difference between the monad — the Universal Unit — and the *Monads* or the manifested Unity . . . ought never to meddle in philosophy, let alone the Esoteric Sciences." (I. 614)

One other reminder is necessary: "As the Monads are uncompounded things . . . it is the spiritual essence, which vivifies them in their degrees of differentiation, which properly constitutes the Monad — not the atomic aggregation, which is only the vehicle and the substance through which thrill the lower and the higher degrees of intelligence." (I. 179)

Let us now look at the Monads manifesting in the various kingdoms of Nature. "The Monad is a drop out of the shoreless Ocean beyond, or, to be correct, *within* the plane of primeval differentiation. It is divine in its higher and *human* in its lower condition — the adjectives 'higher' and 'lower' being used for lack of better words — and a monad it remains at all times, save in the Nirvanic state, under whatever conditions, or whatever external forms." (II. 186)

The term "human" here needs explanation. "The 'human' Monad, whether *immetallized* in the stone-atom, or *invegetallized* in the plant, or *inanimalized* in the animal, is still and ever a divine, hence also a

HUMAN Monad. It ceases to be human only when it becomes *absolutely divine*. The terms 'mineral,' 'vegetable' and 'animal' *monad* are meant to create a superficial distinction; there is no such thing as a Monad (*jiva*) other than divine, and consequently having been, or having to become, human." (II. 185)

We have, therefore, the Divine or Spiritual Monad, One and Impartite, unconscious on our plane, a Unit; and we have its rays throughout manifestation. "The MONAD emerges from its state of spiritual and intellectual unconsciousness; and, skipping the first two planes — too near the ABSOLUTE to permit of any correlation with anything on a lower plane — it gets direct into the plane of Mentality." (I. 175)

Here we need to pause, for again we are apt to limit "mentality" to the human being. H.P.B. goes on to say, "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, which has in its turn an appropriate smaller plane for every 'form,' from the 'mineral' monad up to the time when that monad blossoms forth by evolution into the DIVINE MONAD. But all the time it is still one and the same Monad, differing only in its incarnations, throughout its ever succeeding cycles of partial or total obscuration of spirit, or the partial or total obscuration of matter — two polar antitheses — as it ascends into the realms of mental spirituality, or descends into the depths of materiality." (*Ibid.*)

Should we, then, think of a Monad as "a separate Entity trailing its slow way in a distinct path through the lower Kingdoms, and after an incalculable series of transformations flowering into a human being; in short, that the Monad of a Humboldt dates back to the Monad of an atom of hornblende"? No, she tells us, it is "the Monadic, or rather Cosmic, Essence in the mineral, vegetable, and animal, which though the same throughout the series of cycles from the lowest elemental up to the Deva Kingdom, yet differs in the scale of progression." (I. 178)

Does the Monad progress through this evolutionary process? "Metaphysically speaking" (note the word, for it is only with the help of metaphysics, using the higher intuition, that we can grasp this point), "it is of course an absurdity to talk of the 'development' of a Monad, or to say that *it* becomes 'Man.' . . . It stands to reason that a MONAD cannot either progress or develop, or even be affected by the changes of states it passes through. *It is not of this world or plane*, and may be compared only to an indestructible star of divine light and fire, thrown

down on to our Earth as a plank of salvation for the personalities in which it indwells. It is for the latter to cling to it; and thus partaking of its divine nature, obtain immortality. Left to itself the Monad will cling to no one; but, like the 'plank,' be drifted away to another incarnation by the unresting current of evolution" (I. 174-75 fn.). "That which propels towards, and forces evolution, *i.e.*, compels the growth and development of Man towards perfection, is (a) the MONAD, or that which acts in it unconsciously through a force inherent in itself; and (b) the lower astral body or the *personal SELF*" (II. 109-10). Growth is, in fact, but the "development into still higher phases of activity of the Monad" (I. 181), in which it is aided by the two other lines of evolution, the Intellectual and the Physical.

Turning to human evolution, we meet another difficulty when, with the descent of Manas into the animal-human form, we seem to have two entities, two "Monads." H.P.B. writes: "To complete the *septenary man*, to add to his three lower principles and cement them with the spiritual Monad — which could never dwell in such a form otherwise than in an *absolutely latent state* — two connecting principles are needed: *Manas* and *Kama*" (II. 79). It is now that "The Sons of Wisdom, or the *spiritual Dhyanis* [who] had become 'intellectual' through their contact with matter, because they had already reached, during previous cycles of incarnation, that degree of intellect which enabled them to become independent self-conscious entities, *on this plane of matter*," entered those forms which were "ready" and became the Arhats or Sages of the new cycle. Others only projected a spark or overshadowed the forms according to the degree of suitability of those forms. But the important factor to note is that "It does not mean that *Monads* entered forms in which other Monads already were. . . . The entrance into a dark room through the same aperture of one ray of sunlight following another will not constitute *two* rays but one ray intensified." (II. 167)

A further description of this relationship is given: "... the *Monad* of every living being, unless his moral turpitude breaks the connection and runs loose and 'astray into the lunar path' — to use the Occult expression — is an *individual Dhyan Chohan*, distinct from others, a kind of *spiritual individuality of its own*, during one special Manvantara. Its *Primary*, the Spirit (Atman) is one, of course, with *Paramatma* (the one Universal Spirit), but the vehicle (*Vahan*) it is enshrined in, the *Buddhi*, is part and parcel of that Dhyan-Chohanice Essence; and it is

in this that lies the mystery of that *ubiquity*. . . . 'My *Father*, that is in Heaven, and I — are one' — says the Christian Scripture; in this, at any rate, it is a faithful echo of the esoteric tenet" (I. 265). Further, "The star under which a human Entity is born . . . will remain for ever its star, throughout the whole cycle of its incarnations in one Manvantara. But *this is not his astrological star*. . . . The 'Angel' of that Star, or the Dhyani-Buddha will be either the guiding or simply the presiding 'Angel,' so to say, in every new rebirth of the monad, *which is part of his own essence*, though his vehicle, man, may remain for ever ignorant of this fact. . . . It is only at the last and supreme initiation, however, that [he] learns it when placed face to face with the bright 'Image.'" (I. 572-73)

Finally, "The monad can be traced through the course of its pilgrimage and its changes of transitory vehicles only from the incipient stage of the manifested Universe. In Pralaya, or the intermediate period between two manvantaras, it loses its name, as it loses it when the real ONE self of man merges *into Brahm* in cases of high Samadhi (the *Turiya* state) or final Nirvana" (I. 570). "The Monads, which have not reached Nirvana, are said to slumber in unconscious inactivity between the Manvantaras." (II. 57 fn.)

Is it not plain that the poet of Nature amid the Cumberland Hills, the Spanish ascetic in his cell, and the Platonic philosopher in his library or lecture room have been climbing the same mountain from different sides? The paths are different but the prospect from the summit is the same. It is idle to speak of collusion or insanity in the face of so great a cloud of witnesses, divided by every circumstance of date, nationality, creed, education and environment.

—DEAN INGE

THE BRAHMANICAL THREAD

[This article by A. Sarman first appeared in *The Theosophist* for February 1883.—Eds.]

THE GENERAL TERM for the investiture of this thread is *Upanayana*; and the invested is called *Upanita*, which signifies “brought” or “drawn near” (to one’s Guru), *i.e.*, the thread is the symbol of the wearer’s privilege.

One of the names of this thread is *Yajna-Sutra*. *Yajna* means Brahma, or the Supreme Spirit, and *Sutra*, the thread, or tie. Collectively, the compound word signifies that which ties a man to his spirit or god. It consists of three yarns twisted into one thread, and three of such threads formed and knotted into a circle. Every Theosophist knows what a circle signifies and it need not be repeated here. He will easily understand the rest and the relation they have to mystic initiation. The yarns signify the great principle of “three in one, and one in three,” thus: the first trinity consists of Atma which comprises the three attributes of *Manas*, *Buddhi*, and *Ahankara* (the mind, the intelligence, and the egotism). The *Manas*, again, has the three qualities of *Satva*, *Raja*, and *Tama* (goodness, foulness, and darkness). *Buddhi* has the three attributes of *Pratyaksha*, *Upamiti* and *Anumiti* (perception, analogy and inference). *Ahankara* also has three attributes, *viz.*, *Jnata*, *Jneya*, and *Jnan* (the knower, the known, and the knowledge).

Another name of the sacred thread is *Tridandi*. *Tri* means three, and *Danda*, chastisement, correction, or conquest. This reminds the holder of the three great “corrections” or conquests he has to accomplish. These are: (1) the *Vakya Sanyama*;¹ (2) the *Mana Sanyama*; and (3) the *Indriya* (or *Deha*) *Sanyama*. *Vakya* is speech, *Mana*, mind, and *Deha* (literally, body) or *Indriya*, are the passions. The three conquests therefore mean the control over one’s speech, mind, and the passions.

This thread is also the reminder to the man of his secular duties, and its material varies, in consequence, according to the occupation of the wearer. Thus, while the thread of the *Brahmans* is made of pure cotton, that of the *Kshatriyas* (the warriors) is composed of flax — the bow-string material; and that of *Vaishyas* (the traders and cattle-breeders), of wool. From this it is not to be inferred that caste was originally meant to be hereditary. In the ancient times, it depended on

¹ *Danda* and *Sanyama* are synonymous terms.—A.S.

the qualities of the man. Irrespective of the caste of his parents, a man could, according to his merit or otherwise, raise or lower himself from one caste to another; and instances are not wanting in which a man has elevated himself to the position of the highest Brahman (such as Vishvamitra Rishi, Parasara, Vyasa, Satyakam, and others) from the very lowest of the four castes. The sayings of Yudhishtira on this subject, in reply to the questions of the great serpent, in the *Aranya Parva* of the *Mahabharata*, and of Manu, on the same point, have already appeared in *The Theosophist* for August 1882, in the valuable contribution by Babu Raj Narain Bose. Nothing further is therefore necessary than to refer the reader to the same. *Rig Veda* makes no mention of caste, and both Manu and *Mahabharata* — the fulcrums of Hinduism — distinctly affirm that a man can translate himself from one caste to another by his merit, irrespective of his parentage.

The day is fast approaching when the so-called Brahmans will have to show cause, before the tribunal of the Aryan Rishis, why they should not be divested of the thread which they do not at all deserve and are degrading by misuse, unless they should work to deserve the privilege of wearing it. Then will be the time for people to appreciate it.

There are many examples of the highest distinctive insignia being worn by the unworthy. The aristocracies of Europe and Asia teem with such.

THE AIM is to establish an *attitude*, not to build an edifice. The Learner should think of himself as a sower of seeds, but not as a harvester of fruits. Harvest time will come in the season, but now it is early spring.

—*Sayings of the Ancient One*

LETTERS TO A LODGE

VII

[Reprinted from *The Irish Theosophist* for June 1895.—EDS.]

COMRADES:

Replying to a former letter of mine, you say that some persons have advanced the following argument, to wit:

“That Masters may use bodies, but they never interfere, or notice, or take interest in temporary affairs.”

This is not an “argument.” It is a statement of belief, unaccompanied, as you put it, by reasons. It would not be noticed among people of good breeding, for the reason that it expresses a dogma, a creed, a personal belief, and one would not criticize such, any more than one would criticize the dress, or the manners, or the features of another. There is a good breeding of the spiritual plane — little as some may think it — and it exists in ethics as well as in psychical life, and everywhere it forms a part of the mental equipment of true souls, freed from the shackles of self-conceit.

If, however, anyone were to ask whether my experience agreed with that statement, I should frankly reply that it does not. Even upon its face it is illogical and against reason. For, why should Masters have or use bodies — which bodies are governed by two brains — if all questions relating to the physical plane are to be excluded from those brains, the engines or motors of this plane of human life? There is some truth in the statement, I believe, but it needs discriminating care. And I must admit that a feeling of indignation will, at times, arise in my heart against the cruelty — that worst form of cruelty which seeks to fetter the mind — exercised by those who make a veiled statement of that kind, knowing that other minds will be entangled in it, while they themselves, the only fit guardians of the truth in their own eyes, are saved from falsehood, and also from laying the truth before the multitude, by verbal double-dealing.

It is true, and may well lift our hearts, that Great Nature always recompenses. Those who bring us to doubt and despair become angel visitors entertained unawares if, through the pain to which they bring us for purposes of their own self-seeking, we learn to think for ourselves. The race has not yet learned how to think; Manas is too recently acquired and is not yet fully involved by that race as a whole.

Let us, then, set aside interlopers and thrash out this matter for ourselves. We understand the "Mahatma" to be a perfect Soul. And by the term "Adept" we mean one far advanced in practical occultism but not yet a Mahatma. It would appear unwise, a waste of energy, that one of the very rarest products of Nature — the Mahatma — should do work for which less advanced members of the GREAT LODGE are fit and able. And this is true, *as a rule*. But just as there is no gap in the ladder of Evolution, so there is no gap in that of the GREAT LODGE, and we may hence expect to find, and I believe that we do find, some one Great Being whose duty it is to preside over all that relates to the evolution of men, from our present plane on to the highest planes, and to assist, both by his own powers, knowledge and action, and by those of his hierarchical supporters, assistants and pupils, in that great work. For to THE LODGE this is the greatest work; it is THE WORK. Those who are engaged in deepest spiritual research, wholly remote from this earthy plane of ours, still pursue that arduous toil for man; Man, the final word of the manifested universe and the first promise of Spirit — perfectible Man and Man perfected. If the Mahatma, in his duly appointed place and work, is to help man, he must take interest in this plane, of which man today almost wholly is, in which he lives and from whose chains he must rise. There always have been and there always will be natural distinctions, departments, duties in the universe, just as white light can always be decomposed into rays. There are Mahatmas whose specialized function it is to watch over the East and others who watch over the West; there are those who watch on the starry confines of this globe and those who watch its teeming interior; there are those who search the Light and those who question the Dark; but each has evolved to his place and his duty, and all pass along the rounds of universal duty, all great and none less. Else analogy has no voice and Law — or the sequence and order of Being — no meaning.

Regard the Master, or Mahatma, whose special function it is at this period of time to watch over the involution of Manas and its evolution by and through Egos now embodied in the West, as a Great Soul known only to some advanced men "BY ITS LIGHTS," and to others by its influence. We may be sure that matters *not* having to do with the evolution of human souls engage him not. Buying and selling, marrying and burying, the mart and the home, all these countless details of human interest are but effects of previous causes, and the Master deals not with them, but the Law runs its course. The Master deals not with them *as such*. But also we do not know when, precisely, any given matter has

to do with the evolution of the soul. A man is a fool who would limit the action of a power he does not fully understand. We may know, and some of us believe this, that the Mahatmas occupy themselves with all men and movements tending towards evolution, by which I mean tending towards universality. It would be strange indeed if they did not. He who climbs helps those below him, else he risks one day to stand upon the peaks of solitude. In such an interior solitude the perfect soul will never be found. So the Master would naturally — *i.e.*, in virtue of his own nature — help the leaders and workers of a spiritual movement so long as these were capable of being helped at all. But he would do so upon strictly hierarchical lines, by duly appointed means and agents and agencies, all evolved to the point where reception and comprehension were possible. Observe the processes of Nature. In Nature, “gratitude” has its cosmic expression in that law by which a stream makes its bed along the line of least resistance and follows that alone.

In the Tao are these beautiful thoughts, sent to me by a friend: “Effecting difficult things while they are easy, and managing great things in their beginnings — this is the way of Tao. . . . Therefore the wise man takes great account of small things and so never has any difficulty. . . . Transact your business before it takes form. . . . The tree which fills the arms grew from a tender shoot.”

The last part refers to the mind, and its purification and wisdom, for from it all actions spring. But also it is very true that in very small things, unobserved by the crowd, lie the great results of the future. And why? Because all exists first upon the astral or etheric plane as a nodule, or embryo form. When these forms first come into activity upon one plane — and it is usually as what we call “thoughts” in human minds — they appear trivial; yet the right impetus can make them great. And that man or woman who has power to evoke the soul, and the high qualities of the soul, in others, that person has touched diviner things. Moreover, the life elementals are less obstructive while the grosser energies are inactive or subdued.

There is not space for me to extend these suggestions, but you can do that better than I. Yet one word more.

There is far too much talk of proving things of the spirit and soul by the things of sense. Would you smell, touch, hear, see the perfect Soul? When you know that Soul, there may be further lessons for you in the way the vibrations of its ethereal body or its thought-body affect your nervous fluid; but you will never prove the independent existence

and perfectibility of the Soul to the world by any such means. You will only fall amid jeers and laughter. Rather say boldly: "I know the Soul by its touch upon my soul, and the Spirit by that which is nameless among men." In *The Voice of the Silence* we find that all senses must merge in the *concealed* sense before we can find the Master.

Moreover, such appearances are more rare than you suppose. In a letter published in *The Occult World*, Mahatma K.H. says how very rare such an appearance is, that it is only in great crises. The ocean rolls between me and my books, but seek the quotation for yourselves. And the use of physical terms is forbidden to Chelas in this connection.

You will find, I think, that in most cases the Teacher teaches through the mind. He may, and doubtless does, instruct his special agents in other ways. But the appearance of his form is so rare because the student's mind creates an ideal image in his own mental sphere, which image can be made visible. The Master can use it as a vehicle of communication, but a special training on the part of the student is necessary before he knows how to *form such an image out of the proper grade (or plane) of nerve fluid*. In this secret lies the whole difference between right or wrong interpretation of the message sent through that form or vehicle, which may appear to speak, so far as your eyes and ears are concerned. Consider a moment. The "message" is vibratory, if real — a vibration sent along the *Akasha*. If the atoms of which you have composed this image are not atoms of a very highly evolved etheric substance ("light," as the occultists call it), those atoms do not vibrate "purely," *i.e.*, in consonance with the vibration, and you get a sense impression which is incorrect. It is for this reason, among others, that at least seven years of scientific training are required before the pupil can even begin, and far longer before he can be exposed to the energetic play of the real *Mayavi-Rupa* of a Mahatma unless there is an Adept near at hand to protect him without undue waste of energy.

—JASPER NIEMAND

(*To be continued*)

THE GOAL of yesterday will be the starting point of tomorrow.

—CARLYLE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In the *Times Weekly* for July 16, Subhash Kirpekar describes Swami Rama's work in what scientists call "biofeedback." Swami Rama, who obtained a diploma in anatomy from West Germany, lectures on yoga in six American universities and is leading a research project on "Voluntary Control of Internal States" at the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas, one of the world's biggest psychiatry centres. It is believed that the research will, among other things, help in teaching man to control the functioning of his organs, relieve ailments like ulcers and hypertension, and help mentally retarded children and those with a weak memory through "sleep teaching." This is what a team of science reporters wrote in *The New York Times* (September 12, 1971) on the basis of Dr. Elmer Green's work with Swami Rama (Dr. Green is director of research, Menninger Foundation):

Swami Rama's agile and controlled transitions from one state of consciousness to another would, no doubt, be considered abnormal. By the convention of sleep researchers, our deepest, most oblivious slumber is characterized by EEG patterns known as delta waves — very slow, high amplitude waves (about 300 microvolts, at a frequency of about one wave per second). It is very hard to arouse a person from this stage of sleep, and usually people seem a little disoriented if awakened rapidly. Swami Rama, who called this state "yogi sleep," could enter it at will. He did so in the laboratory, producing an EEG record much like deepest sleep with 40 per cent delta waves.

While he was in this sleep and snoring gently, Alyce Green softly repeated a number of phrases, such as "It is raining today but tomorrow the sun will shine." When he reawakened, Swami Rama recited 85 per cent of the phrases verbatim and paraphrased the rest. Most people remember nothing that is said in the room while they are deeply asleep. Yet Swami Rama's ability to be aware during deep sleep — and recall later — reopens the possibility that sleep learning could be effective.

Dr. Green holds that "what is of significance in our work with Swami Rama is not the revealing of scientific evidence that some kind of unique human can do highly unusual things with his body and brain. The importance lies in the demonstration that these abilities and expanded states of awareness reside potentially in all of us."

While modern education trains the conscious mind, Swami Rama says that his method begins with training the subconscious mind.

“When you are awake,” he explains, “your conscious mind is too busy to learn, but when you are asleep, your conscious mind is at ease. Actually one sleeps soundly only when one’s ‘I-ness’ (sense of ego and possession) goes. If one can stop the conversation that goes on almost constantly during the waking state inside one’s conscious mind, one can do with a couple of hours of voluntary rest instead of six or eight hours of sleep.”

Swami Rama claims that of the 15 cases (all children) he has so far taken up for a sleep-learning course, in three months there were definitely positive results in 13 cases. Their IQ went up noticeably. One is left wondering, however: Are these results lasting, and strengthening to the child? And if “sleep is a sign that waking life has become too strong for the physical organism, and that the force of the life current must be broken by changing the waking for the sleeping state” (*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*), is it not possible that interference with deep sleep induces psychic and mental weariness? Exponents of sleep learning disregard the fact that it is the *waking* consciousness through which we must learn, and also fail to realize that there can be no substitute for what is learnt through one’s own self-effort.

Subhash Kirpekar’s article continues:

Exposing himself to sensitive scientific equipment like electronic computers, cardiographic machines and biofeedback apparatus, the swami has shown that the power of the mind over the body can have a dramatic impact on medicine, psychology, industry and education.

It is now known that the involuntary nervous system can actually be voluntarily controlled. The “biofeedback” method is one in which the internal conditions and rhythms of the body are translated by powerful amplifiers into light or sound or the fluctuations of a needle on a dial. Once he can watch his heart rate or listen to his brain waves, an ordinary man can learn to influence them at will without any noticeable effort. Scientists also report that it is possible to control consciously other body phenomena like blood pressure, skin temperature, muscle tension and even glandular secretion.

This implies that many heart diseases and circulatory and psychosomatic diseases may one day be treated without scalpel or pill. Psychologists say that biofeedback opens new doors into the mind, improving memory, insight, learning ability and creativity.

Teaching the development of such yogic powers to the ordinary man can do more harm than good for reasons that have been gone into several times in this magazine. (See *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*, July 1972, p. 325)

The following is from an editorial in *The Times of India* for July 21, entitled "A State of Mind":

Just as happiness is a state of mind, sickness — of all kinds — appears to be an essentially mental process. Else it is difficult to explain some of the astonishing things being done in the world's oldest technology. A green leaf is placed over a festering sore, and it is gone in a few hours. A seriously hurt man is half buried in loose soil and is taken out completely cured of the deep flesh wounds. A patient eats a light meal as surgeons work on him and gets up and walks out of the theatre after a major abdominal operation. How are all these inexplicable things to be accepted as real and scientific? Apparently the Navajo Indian knows the answer, which may dismay the most imaginative psychiatrist. Tom Large Whiskers, a well-known medicine man, puts it this way: "What I learned from my grandfather is that there is a part of the mind that the person does not really know about. That is the part of the mind that is most important in determining whether somebody becomes well or remains sick."... The Navajo Indian can trace his history and theories of knowledge back to prehistory, in which case the mystery deepens further. Has his knowledge been handed down to him in strange circumstances? Medicine men of this ancient tribe are no amateurs or dilettantes; they must learn hundreds of chants and the uses of some 250 pharmacological herbs. And they get remarkable results, too. So much so the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health is now financing the training of new medicine men on the Navajo reservation. The trouble with white medicine, a Navajo practitioner once said, is that they treat the illness, not the person. This is straight out of Ayurveda. How are such coincidences possible? Perhaps the entire business of curing the sick is a puzzle and modern medical scientists have a lot to be humble about.

In the magazine *Life* (December 3, 1971), Jane Howard writes of her experiments in silence. Most of us "talk too much and say too little," and seldom enjoy the benefits of silence:

The absence of talk makes us edgy and, somehow, guilty. Our

dialogues, like our calendars, have thin margins. We are bred to savour nonstop activity and quickly passing, seldom quiet fads.

If we must have fads, I wish some trend setter would start a new one: silence. I think it's time. . . . The benefits of such a craze would not be merely psychic. They'd be medical. By talking less we might reduce the volume of noise that engulfs us. This volume is bothersome even in the country, where the sound of an airplane is never far off. In cities, where only at great pains can we escape the sound of traffic, jackhammers, transistor radios and each other's voices, it's downright dangerous.

Urban noise, scientists have found, is now twice what it was in 1955. If it keeps up at its present alarming rate, we will all be stone deaf by 2000. . . . Prolonged silence, on the other hand, can induce great peace and euphoria. It can make a person positively high.

The author, a compulsive talker, having resolved to try an experiment in abstinence from all speech, sought the quiet of a Zen monastery in California. Despite a few setbacks, within three days she learnt that

silence is not just a negative void; it can evoke a mysterious, buoying calm. . . . Silence is conducive to attention, which sage minds have likened to prayer. . . . "Silent," it strikes me, contains the same letters as "listen." . . .

There are silences, of course, and silences. Not all are natural or noble. They can be truculent and brooding, timid or nervous or awkward, or even, if accompanied by too many gestures, noisy. . . .

Silence with somebody you like, especially in nature, seems richer than silence alone or among strangers. To be silent alone, to sound the depths (or shallows) of one's internal reserves, can be soothing, or at least instructive. But to bypass talk in the company of others, if the others matter, teaches a more profound lesson.

The lesson, I guess, is that there are times when we don't need words to understand each other. There are times when we can, and should, transcend chitchat. We needn't be as fearful as most of us are about ten-second pauses in conversations. Maybe such pauses, or even longer ones, are more eloquent than the inanities with which we frequently fill them. Wise men, I think, know this instinctively. American Indians, somebody told me, had a custom of waiting ten silent minutes together before they'd start any important conversation, just to get used to each other. Maybe we ought to try that, too. Maybe words get in our way.

The author goes on to write of a day spent in silence with Martin Carey, an artist who lives near Woodstock, N.Y., and never talks on Mondays because Mahatma Gandhi didn't. "It blew my mind," Carey says, "to read that somebody who was that involved in international affairs could set aside a day to be silent. I figured if he could do it I, as a sort of homage, could too. Silence makes me feel high and peaceful and centred. . . . Silence makes you understand things better."

Speech is one of the avenues through which soul-energy is frittered away. To learn the value of silence is, therefore, a primary requirement of spiritual life and not just a "fad" or a "craze." A vow of silence, however, does not mean becoming mute and not speaking at all. It consists in:

(1) self-imposition of periodic silence; (2) not indulging at any time in injurious and untruthful speech; (3) not giving way to useless speech; (4) not asking questions on philosophy or practice till what has already been taught or is before us is fully scanned and thoroughly looked into from the point of view of our practical questions; (5) not indulging in ahankaric speech, *i.e.*, not making statements about the Divine Self or Ego in terms of our kamic or lower nature; (6) not indulging in injurious speech regarding our lower nature, our own faults and weaknesses, lest by speaking of them we lend them the strength which ensues from the power of speech; (7) not to speak even that which is true unless at proper times, to proper people, under proper circumstances.

While this sevenfold exercise is practised secrecy has to be observed about it. To refer to or speak about the exercise we have undertaken and are practising, is to vitiate it altogether and make it worse than useless. Such an indulgence gives birth to conceit and enhances it where it already exists. Secrecy and silence are needed and a contemplation on their kinship should precede the sevenfold exercise. ("The Vow of Silence": THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, June 1932)

A UN booklet on *Economic and Social Consequences of the Arms Race and of Military Expenditure* gives some startling figures. A United Nations international committee found that it costs an estimated \$200 billion a year to maintain the world's armed forces. This annual military outlay exceeds the combined income of a third of the planet's population, the 1,300,000,000 inhabitants of Africa, South Asia and the Far

East. The world-wide spending on armaments, personnel and research accounts for 6 to 6.5 per cent of the total world output, two-and-a-half times what all governments spend on health, one-and-a-half times what they spend on education, and 30 times the total official economic aid to developing countries.

In the past decade there has been a steep rise in the world-wide military expenditure. In 1961 it was running at \$120 billion annually and it rose by 1970 to \$200 billion a year. The great bulk of the money — more than four-fifths — is spent by six countries: the United States, the Soviet Union, France, the United Kingdom, the People's Republic of China and the Federal Republic of Germany. The committee calculates the number of people involved, directly or indirectly, in work for military purposes at 50 million. A survey of world military arsenals also shows a steep rise, especially in the nuclear stockpile.

Indeed in the world today "Progress" and military buildup have become inseparable.

Under the title "The Scientist's Moral Responsibility," Anatol Rapoport of the University of Toronto, Canada, and the University of Michigan, writes in *ETC.: A Review of General Semantics* (December 1971):

One of the reasons why the question concerning the moral responsibility of the scientist has become so pressing and so painful is because the noble self-image of science has become tarnished. The harnessing of the forces of nature is now seen to present more threats than benefits to man, not only in the form of death technology but also in the form of irresponsible meddling with the environment. The pursuit of truth within the strict bounds of a specialized investigation divorced from larger contexts, especially from its implications with regard to human lives and the human condition, now appears as morally reprehensible to more and more people. . . . A faith in science as a means of emancipation rather than of enslavement, and as a life-serving instead of a death-serving enterprise, can be restored only if science divorces itself from service to power.
