

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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RISE WITH THE CYCLE

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Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
If He's not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn.
The Cross on Golgotha will never save thy Soul,
The Cross in thine own heart alone can make thee whole.

—ANGELUS SCHEFFLER

DURING this month Christendom will once again celebrate the old pagan festival of Christmas, which celebration will be followed by that of the first day of the New Calendar Year. With decrease in knowledge, man-made calendars have departed from their true prototypal originals, faithful copies of Nature's processes. Calendars were not originally mechanical devices of social and commercial convenience and import only. They were profound instruments to aid mortals to link their lives with the Immortals. They echoed on earth the music of the divine spheres. Therefore a study of the various calendars now in use by men opens a vista in historical knowledge. Such a study reveals the links which bind together civilizations from remote antiquity to modern times.

Fasts, feasts and festivals form parts of the calendars. Through these also valuable knowledge is obtainable. Thus, Christmas as a festival reveals itself as an important link between the Pagan and the Christian worlds. These festivals have not only a historical meaning rooted in mythology; there is also the psycho-mystical key to them which is of value to the student-practitioner of the ancient Esoteric Philosophy. Thus Christmas, the Birth of the Christ Principle, related to the astronomical Winter Solstice, when the Sun begins to move northwards, brings its message of hope and help to the enduring and striving neophyte.

Every physiological process is a reflection of the inner psycho-spiritual intelligence. The birth of the body draws pertinent attention to the moral phenomenon — the birth of the Soul. The contact of the Inner God with its incarnated soul at about the age of seven of the body is but a material reflection of the Second Birth, the renovation resulting from the reorientation of the person — he who was lighted from without via the doors and windows of the senses and organs is now lighted from within by the puissance of the Inner Ruler. He who was the repository of the forces of the matter-world has now become the Shrine of the Powers of the Spirit-World. The Birth of Christ represents the beginning of this transmutation; its end, the glorious consummation, the Risen Christ, is symbolized in the Easter Festival.

This second Birth of Man, the Thinker, has its correspondence in Nature, symbolized in the psychic aspect of the Winter Solstice. The seasonal renovation of the earth which is then begun shows itself in increasing fullness in the tender burgeoning of Spring and then in the blazing glory of Summer. A study of this particular correspondence will prove helpful to the neophyte.

What shall he do to utilize the psycho-spiritual process of the Winter Solstice for his own growth? The Birth of his own Christ Principle becomes possible when his own faith-knowledge of the existence and strength of that principle within him has grown into a conviction. He has to use that conviction steadfastly. In fair enthusiasm he begins; he has to prove that enthusiasm to be genuine by steadfastness. The world of the senses and of mortals moves and moves; the neophyte who has the Light of Christ in him must hold himself steady while his illusory senses attack him, his deluding emotions tempt him. He must become the Guiding Star to the ships tossing on the ocean of sense life.

As by our Devotion to the Christ Principle we prepare ourselves for Its expression in the midst of mortals, we grow in Steadfastness. Steadily comes in our life the birth of Spring, spreading happiness all around for others; but — the beauty of the Spring allures and, looking to our power to please, we are apt to neglect our inner power of steadfast sacrifice of and in the heart, and many never manifest the glory of the Summer.

So let us awaken the Christ in us by Devotion and Steadfastness, for acquiring which Knowledge is necessary. When that awakening takes place, our weaknesses as they are overcome will act as fertilizer to bring to life the buds of Spring and the bright, fragrant flowers of Summer.

CROSS AND FIRE

[This informative article from the pen of H. P. Blavatsky appeared originally in *The Theosophist* for November 1879.

—Eds.]

PERHAPS the most widespread and universal among the symbols in the old astronomical systems, which have passed down the stream of time to our century, and have left traces everywhere in the Christian religion as elsewhere, are the Cross and the Fire — the latter, the emblem of the Sun. The ancient Aryans had them both as the symbols of Agni. Whenever the ancient Hindu devotee desired to worship Agni — says É. Burnouf (*La Science des Religions*, chap. xiii) — he arranged two pieces of wood in the form of a cross, and, by a peculiar whirling and friction obtained fire for his sacrifice. As a symbol, it is called *Swastika*, and, as an instrument manufactured out of a sacred tree and in possession of every Brahmin, it is known as *Arani*.

The Scandinavians had the same sign and called it Thor's Hammer, as bearing a mysterious magneto-electric relation to Thor, the god of thunder, who, like Jupiter armed with his thunderbolts, holds likewise in his hand this ensign of power, over not only mortals but also the mischievous spirits of the elements, over which he presides. In Masonry it appears in the form of the grand master's mallet; at Allahabad it may be seen on the Fort as the Jaina Cross, or the Talisman of the Jaina Kings; and the gavel of the modern judge is no more than this *crux dissimulata* — as de Rossi, the archaeologist, calls it; for the gavel is the sign of power and strength, as the hammer represented the might of Thor, who in the Norse legends splits a rock with it, and kills Medgar. Dr. Schliemann found it in *terra cotta* disks, on the site, as he believes, of ancient Troy, in the lowest strata of his excavations; which indicated, according to Dr. Lundy, "an Aryan civilization long anterior to the Greek — say from two to three thousand years B.C." Burnouf calls it the oldest form of the cross known, and affirms that it is found personified in the ancient religion of the Greeks under the figure of Prometheus "the fire-bearer," crucified on mount Caucasus, while the celestial bird — the *Cyena* of the Vedic hymns — daily devours his entrails. Boldetti: (*Osservazioni*, I, 15, p. 60) gives a copy from the painting in the cemetery of St. Sebastian, representing a Christian convert and gravedigger, named Diogenes, who wears on both his legs and right arm

the signs of the *Swastika*. The Mexicans and the Peruvians had it, and it is found as the sacred Tau in the oldest tombs of Egypt.

It is, to say the least, a strange coincidence, remarked even by some Christian clergymen, that *Agnus Dei*, the Lamb of God, should have the symbols identical with the Hindu God Agni. While *Agnus Dei* expiates and takes away the sins of the world, in one religion, the God *Agni*, in the other, likewise expiates sins against the gods, man, the manes, the soul, and repeated sins; as shown in the six prayers accompanied by six oblations. (Colebrooke: *Essays*, Vol. I, p. 190)

If, then, we find these two — the Cross and the Fire — so closely associated in the esoteric symbolism of nearly every nation, it is because on the combined powers of the two rests the whole plan of the universal laws. In astronomy, physics, chemistry, in the whole range of natural philosophy, in short, they always come out as the invisible cause and the visible result; and only metaphysics and alchemy — or shall we say *metachemistry*, since we prefer coining a new word to shocking sceptical ears — can fully and conclusively solve the mysterious meaning. An instance or two will suffice for those who are willing to think over hints.

The Central Point, or the great central sun of the Kosmos, as the Kabalists call it, is the Deity. It is the point of intersection between the two great conflicting powers — the centripetal and centrifugal forces, which drive the planets into their elliptical orbits, that make them trace a cross in their paths through the Zodiac. These two terrible, though as yet hypothetical and imaginary powers, preserve harmony and keep the Universe in steady, unceasing motion; and the four bent points of the *Swastika* typify the revolution of the Earth upon its axis. Plato calls the Universe a “blessed god” *which was made in a circle and decussated in the form of the letter X*. So much for astronomy. In Masonry the Royal Arch degree retains the cross as the triple Egyptian Tau. It is the mundane circle with the astronomical cross upon it rapidly revolving; the perfect square of the Pythagorean mathematics in the scale of numbers, as its occult meaning is interpreted by Cornelius Agrippa. Fire is heat — the central point; the perpendicular ray represents the male element, or spirit; and the horizontal one the female element — or matter. Spirit vivifies and fructifies the matter, and everything proceeds from the central Point, the focus of Life, and Light, and Heat, represented by the terrestrial fire. So much, again, for physics and chemistry, for the field of analogies is boundless, and Universal Laws are immutable and identical in their outward and inward applications. Without intend-

ing to be disrespectful to anyone, or to wander far away from truth, we think we may say that there are strong reasons to believe that in their original sense the Christian Cross, as the cause, and Eternal torment by Hell Fire — as the direct effect of negation of the former — have more to do with these two ancient symbols than our Western theologians are prepared to admit. If Fire is the Deity with some heathens, so in the Bible, God is likewise the Life and the Light of the World; if the Holy Ghost and Fire cleanse and purify the Christian, on the other hand Lucifer is also Light, and called the “Son of the morning star.”

Turn wherever we will, we are sure to find these conjoint relics of ancient worship with almost every nation and people. From the Aryans, the Chaldeans, the Zoroastrians, Peruvians, Mexicans, Scandinavians, Celts, and ancient Greeks and Latins, it has descended in its completeness to the modern Parsi. The Phoenician Cabiri and the Greek Dioscuri are partially revived in every temple, cathedral, and village church; while, as will now be shown, the Christian Bulgarians have even preserved the sun worship in full.

It is more than a thousand years since this people, who, emerging from obscurity, suddenly became famous through the late Russo-Turkish war, were converted to Christianity. And yet they appear none the less pagans than they were before, for this is how they meet Christmas and the New Year's day. To this time they call this festival *Survaki*, as it falls in with the festival in honour of the ancient Slavonian god Surva. In the Slavonian mythology this deity — Surja or Surva — evidently identical with the Aryan *Surya*, the sun, is the god of heat, fertility, and abundance. The celebration of this festival is of an immense antiquity, as, far before the days of Christianity, the Bulgarians worshipped Surva, and consecrated New Year's day to this god, praying him to bless their fields with fertility, and send them happiness and prosperity. This custom has remained among them in all its primitive heathenism, and though it varies according to localities, yet the rites and ceremonies are essentially the same.

On the eve of New Year's day the Bulgarians do no work, and are obliged to fast. Young betrothed maidens are busy preparing a large *platiy* (cake) in which they place roots and young shoots of various forms, to each of which a name is given according to the shape of the root. Thus, one means the “house,” another represents the “garden”; others again, the mill, the vineyard, the horse, a cat, a hen, and so on,

according to the landed property and worldly possessions of the family. Even articles of value such as jewellery and bags of money are represented in this emblem of the horn of abundance. Besides all these, a large and ancient silver coin is placed inside the cake; it is called *babka* and is tied two ways with a red thread, which forms a cross. This coin is regarded as the symbol of fortune.

After sunset, and other ceremonies, including prayers addressed in the direction of the departing luminary, the whole family assemble about a large round table called *paralya*, on which are placed the above-mentioned cake, dry vegetables, corn, wax taper, and, finally, a large censer containing incense of the best quality to perfume the god. The head of the household, usually the oldest in the family—either the grandfather, or the father himself—taking up the censer with the greatest veneration, in one hand, and the wax taper in the other, begins walking about the premises, incensing the four corners, beginning and ending with the East, and reads various invocations, which close with the Christian “Our Father who art in Heaven,” addressed to Surva. The taper is then laid away to be preserved throughout the whole year, till the next festival. It is thought to have acquired marvellous healing properties, and is lighted only upon occasions of family sickness, in which case it is expected to cure the patient.

After this ceremony, the old man takes his knife and cuts the cake into as many slices as there are members of the household present. Each person upon receiving his or her share makes haste to open and search the piece. The happiest of the lot, for the ensuing year, is he or she who gets the part containing the old coin crossed with the scarlet thread; he is considered the elect of Surva, and everyone envies the fortunate possessor. Then in order of importance come the emblems of the house, the vineyard, and so on; and according to his finding, the finder reads his horoscope for the coming year. Most unlucky he who gets the cat; he turns pale and trembles. Woe to him and misery, for he is surrounded by enemies, and has to prepare for great trials.

At the same time, a large log which represents a flaming altar, is set up in the chimney-place, and fire is applied to it. This log burns in honour of Surva, and is intended as an oracle for the whole house. If it burns the whole night through till morning without the flame dying out, it is a good sign; otherwise, the family prepares to see death that year, and deep lamentations end the festival.

Neither the *momche* (young bachelor), nor the *moma* (the maiden),

sleep that night. At midnight begins a series of soothsaying, magic, and various rites, in which the burning log plays the part of the oracle. A young bud thrown into the fire and bursting with a loud snap, is a sign of happy and speedy marriage, and *vice versa*. Long after midnight, the young couples leave their respective homes, and begin visiting their acquaintances, from house to house, offering and receiving congratulations, and rendering thanks to the deity. These deputy couples are called the *Survakari*, and each male carries a large branch ornamented with red ribbons, old coins, and the image of Surva, and as they wend along they sing in chorus. Their chant is as original as it is peculiar and merits translation, though, of course, it must lose in being rendered into a foreign language. The following stanzas are addressed by them to those they visit:

Surva, Surva, Lord of the Season,
Happy New Year mayst thou send;
Health and fortune on this household,
Success and blessings till next year.

With good crops and full ears,
With gold and silk, and grapes and fruits;
With barrels full of wine, and stomachs full,
You and your house be blessed by the God . . .
His blessing on you all — Amen! Amen! Amen!

The singing *Survakari*, recompensed for their good wishes with a present at every house, go home at early dawn. . . . And this is how the symbolical exoteric Cross and Fire worship of old Aryavarta go hand in hand in Christian Bulgaria. . . .

SYMBOLICAL and later dogmatic and ritualistic Christianity is simply an edition copied, with slight modifications, by the Church Fathers from Pagan symbology and Gnosticism; the old religions of the Gentiles being, in their turn, the more or less faithful echoes of the WISDOM-RELIGION, or — “Theosophy.”

—*Lucifer*, August 1889

THE CHOSEN SPOT

THE SUMMIT of the glistening mountain shone bright like a diamond, pierced by the rays of the sun. The forests and glades were monuments of hushed silence filled with some strange expectancy. Only the footsteps of the Pilgrim echoed through the valleys and woodlands, scattering the fallen leaves as he walked.

His eyes scanned the mountain top which held the Immortal Prize and proclaimed the journey's end for the mortal man who dared to covet it. His heart sang with joy and the invisible chorus of the mountain winds quickened his steps through winding paths and dangerous ravines of the dark forest.

The Goal caught in the eternal web of golden Light — aught else should Man attain? For aught else should he dare and die?

Time paused on the hills, hesitated, and flew away. Suddenly the light grew dim in the distance. A dark shadow fell on the Pilgrim's path and fear chilled his soul. Guidelines disappeared in the trackless labyrinth of the deep jungle.

Where was he? And where the dazzle of the distant mountain? Where had flown the mountain eagle? A black abyss throbbing with wild terrors seemed to envelop him. Seeing, he could not see, his ears could no longer hear, and the music wailed and died within his heart. Rooted to the ground he stood, a wanderer who had wandered far, but could not go on any more. Behind him lay the roar of the world from which he had sought escape. In front lay the path on which he had walked long, with hope in his heart. Someone whose presence he could only feel was by his side, pointing out the way. And the grass was rich under his feet. But now the pointing hand had disappeared, and with that disappeared the cheer and the joy. And the grass he trod on, alas, had turned itself into tiny thorns.

He was alone. Bitter complaint rose within his heart and tears rolled down his cheeks. Is this justice? That the guide should turn and leave the Pilgrim, a betrayed babe in the wild of woods, to crawl or creep, do or die? A tryst broken, Truth beguiled? Is this justice?

Memory became an axe that chopped off the verdant growth at his feet. For walk he must, in spite of himself. His gaze rivetted again on the mountain top. Now the path before him lay dim and thin, running through the darkness of the forest. Unsmiling Pilgrim turned Fighter, he went on.

As he walked, the path bifurcated itself. Twists and turns laid their confusion upon his heart. The perilous path now shot through the thick woods and long fingers of darkness played zigzag upon the foliage around him.

Wild noises now rose like howls in a moonless night. He stood paralysed by something he could not see or comprehend. Bewildered, he wanted to turn back, but behind him there was nowhere to turn.

He heard noises that he could not give a name to; they increased in their crescendo, becoming a wild scream, laughing and jeering and laughing again without a stop. It echoed and re-echoed through the forest.

"You! you!" it shrieked. "A Pilgrim? A pathetic speck, a discarded dream — you!"

Everywhere he turned, the mocking laughter mocked at him mercilessly. He wanted to run away, away, somewhere, somehow. To escape into the woods, into the bushes, away from this thorny path which closed in on him, trapped him where he stood, and might forsake him for ever.

His legs failed him. Dizzy and disheartened, he sat down and wept. The wind carried his heart-rending sobs to the mountain caves and caverns.

Then a strange thing happened. A small voice, inaudible at first and indiscernible, arose from somewhere. He heard it, faint and sweet. He looked for it everywhere within the flood of voices outside, but he could not find it. Then he knew. The still, small voice came from deep within himself. It shaped itself into words:

"Before the soul can hear, the image (man) has to become as deaf to roarings as to whispers, to cries of bellowing elephants as to the silvery buzzing of the golden fire-fly."

He lifted his head and listened. As he listened the thousand jeering voices became as one — the echo of his own silent thoughts. The sounds formed themselves into an image — the image of his own personal self. He saw a thousand reflections and they were all reflections of himself cast upon the screen of Time.

The fear and the doubt left him suddenly. The Pilgrim stood up.

Softly the small voice spoke again: "To remain still amid life and its changes and stand firmly on the CHOSEN SPOT is a feat which can only be accomplished by the man who has confidence in himself and his destiny." The voice continued: "As you widen out, reaching by manifold experience along those lines which centre at the point where you stand

embodied, you will discover that you have touch with all life, that you contain within yourself the Whole.”

The pilgrim smiled as he understood. A new strength seemed to come upon him and the tears dried on his cheeks. He felt refreshed beyond all imagination and knew that the guide was no longer outside of him. His voice lay deep within himself. He took up the thread of his journey, the foliage parted, and the path lay bright and clear before him. The mountain peak glittered and beckoned. He began walking with firm steps straight towards it.

No orthodox Brahmans and Buddhists would deny the Christian incarnation; only, they understand it in their own philosophical way, and how could they deny it? The very cornerstone of their religious system is periodical incarnations of the Deity. Whenever humanity is about merging into materialism and moral degradation, a Supreme Spirit incarnates himself in his creature selected for the purpose. The “Messenger of the Highest” links itself with the duality of matter and soul, and the triad being thus completed by the union of its Crown, a saviour is born, who helps restore humanity to the path of truth and virtue. The early Christian Church, all imbued with Asiatic philosophy, evidently shared the same belief... They had only to turn to the *Bhagavad-Gita* to find Christna or Bhagavad saying to Arjuna: “He who follows me is saved by wisdom and even by works... *As often as virtue declines in the world, I make myself manifest to save it.*”...

Kapila, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato, Basilides, Marcian, Ammonius and Plotinus, founded schools and sowed the germs of many a noble thought, and disappearing left behind them the refulgence of demi-gods. But the three personalities of Christna, Gautama, and Jesus appeared like true gods, each in his epoch, and bequeathed to humanity three religions built on the imperishable rock of ages. That all three, especially the Christian faith, have in time become adulterated, and the latter almost unrecognizable, is no fault of any of the noble Reformers. It is the priestly self-styled husbandmen of the “vine of the Lord” who must be held to account by future generations. Purify the three systems of the dross of human dogmas, the pure essence remaining will be found identical.

—*Isis Unveiled*, II. 535-36

ON WAR AND PEACE

ONE of the most frequent arguments offered in favour of war is that it is inevitable, human nature being what it is. When asked — “Cannot human nature be changed?” — we are told that the processes of evolution are very slow, that it is possible to imagine that a Golden Age will dawn and that peace and good will will reign, but that that is to be — if it is to be at all — in the far-off future. Meantime, nations are arming themselves to the teeth and devising newer and newer methods of murdering human beings by the million.

To gain a better understanding of this problem, let us inquire, “Who is it that wants war, and for what purpose is it wanted?” Stripping the problem to its bare nakedness we find either that ambition and greed desire to possess more, or that the same ambition and greed desire to retain all they possess, even if they renounce the desire to add to their possessions. It may be said that the common people of any nation do not want war. This is true, but only in some measure; the propaganda carried on by the governments colours the mentality of the population. Not only has freedom been curbed, but a far worse condition of non-thinking and of passivity has arisen. The power to think for oneself has been well-nigh lost. Large numbers of people dare not call their souls their own.

And so we come upon a state of affairs which is universal. In each country there are two classes: the few who lead and the many who are led; the former full of the forces of ambition, greed and selfishness, the latter lulled into acquiescence in their leaders’ policy which is described in grandiloquent language of morality and religion, but which has in reality little of religion and less of morality! A handful in each country decide the destiny of millions, and this is so even in the so-called democracies.

So the roots of strife are in the greed, ambition and selfishness of the few, and the passive acquiescence of the many who have not the patience, the courage or the energy to collect accurate data and to think out for themselves how war is an unnatural and abnormal phenomenon in the human kingdom at the present stage of evolution.

Indian philosophy teaches the doctrine of Karma; Jesus and Paul also taught that “with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (*Matthew*, vii. 2), and “Be not deceived; God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (*Galatians*, vi.

7). Nations today do not believe in the doctrine of Karma, do not understand the workings of the Great Law of Justice and Mercy. Students of Theosophy are in an excellent position to appreciate what is happening in the world today because of their understanding and appreciation of the working of the Great Law. For example, wrongs are suffered by one nation at the hands of another, but, though these are condemnable, can the suffering nation say that it has never wronged others? Nations, like individuals, reap the Karma of their own sowing.

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind
exceeding small;

Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness
grinds He all.

So, the Theosophical explanation of the tense conditions that arise from time to time in many parts of the world is — Karma. It says to all countries and governments: “You have sown, now you are reaping.” Does this mean that it is fixed by fate that the chaotic conditions in the world cannot be overcome and some order produced? Of course not. Karma is not fatalism, and as Bhishma taught, lying on his bed of arrows, awaiting his death, “Exertion is greater than destiny.” Among the highly instructive Aphorisms on Karma (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 21*) we find this:

Measures taken by an Ego to repress tendency, eliminate defects, and to counteract by setting up different causes, will alter the sway of Karmic tendency and shorten its influence in accordance with the strength or weakness of the efforts expended in carrying out the measures adopted.

What is true of persons is true of nations.

Then, what measures should be taken to repress the prevailing martial tendencies and what new causes should be set up to eliminate defects? Retaliation never works. To have a real insight into the situation it is necessary to understand what Karma really means. If it is not fatalism, it also “knows not wrath nor pardon.” Explains Madame Blavatsky (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 643):

Karma-Nemesis is the synonym of PROVIDENCE, minus *design*, goodness, and every other *finite* attribute and qualification, so unphilosophically attributed to the latter. An Occultist or a philosopher will not speak of the goodness or cruelty of Providence; but, identifying it with Karma-Nemesis, he will teach that never-

theless it guards the good and watches over them in this, as in future lives; and that it punishes the evil-doer—aye, even to his seventh rebirth. So long, in short, as the effect of his having thrown into perturbation even the smallest atom in the Infinite World of harmony, has not been finally readjusted. For the only decree of Karma — an eternal and immutable decree — is absolute Harmony in the world of matter as it is in the world of Spirit. It is not, therefore, Karma that rewards or punishes, but it is we who reward or punish ourselves according to whether we work with, through and along with nature, abiding by the laws on which that Harmony depends, or — break them.

Therefore, the restoration of Harmony has become pressingly necessary. But such restoration requires sacrifice on the part of the privileged, a sense of justice on the part of all concerned, and the spirit of real altruism as the basis for communication. The principles of practical altruism are set down thus by H. P. Blavatsky:

Nor would the ways of Karma be inscrutable were men to work in union and harmony, instead of disunion and strife. For our ignorance of those ways — which one portion of mankind calls the ways of Providence, dark and intricate; while another sees in them the action of blind Fatalism; and a third, simple chance, with neither gods nor devils to guide them — would surely disappear, if we would but attribute all these to their correct cause. With right knowledge, or at any rate with a confident conviction that our neighbours will no more work to hurt us than we would think of harming them, two-thirds of the World's evil would vanish into thin air. Were no man to hurt his brother, Karma-Nemesis would have neither cause to work for, nor weapons to act through. It is the constant presence in our midst of every element of strife and opposition, and the division of races, nations, tribes, societies and individuals into Cains and Abels, wolves and lambs, that is the chief cause of the "ways of Providence." We cut these numerous windings in our destinies daily with our own hands, while we imagine that we are pursuing a track on the royal high road of respectability and duty, and then complain of those ways being so intricate and so dark. We stand bewildered before the mystery of our own making, and the riddles of life that *we will not solve*, and then accuse the great Sphinx of devouring us. But verily there is not an accident in our lives, not a misshapen day, or a misfortune, that could not be traced back to our own doings in this or in another life. If one breaks the laws of Har-

mony, or, as a theosophical writer expresses it, "the laws of life," one must be prepared to fall into the chaos one has oneself produced. For, according to the same writer, "the only conclusion one can come to is that these laws of life are their own avengers; and consequently that every avenging Angel is only a typified representation of their re-action."

Therefore, if anyone is helpless before these immutable laws, it is not ourselves, the artificers of our destinies, but rather those angels, the guardians of harmony. Karma-Nemesis is no more than the (spiritual) dynamical effect of causes produced and forces awakened into activity by our own actions. It is a law of occult dynamics that "a given amount of energy expended on the spiritual or astral plane is productive of far greater results than the same amount expended on the physical objective plane of existence."

This state will last till man's spiritual intuitions are fully opened, which will not happen before we fairly cast off our thick coats of matter; until we begin acting from *within*, instead of ever following impulses from *without*; namely, those produced by our physical senses and gross selfish body. Until then the only palliative to the evils of life is union and harmony — a Brotherhood IN ACTU, and *altruism* not simply in name. The suppression of one single bad *cause* will suppress not one, but a variety of bad effects. And if a Brotherhood or even a number of Brotherhoods may not be able to prevent nations from occasionally cutting each other's throats — still unity in thought and action, and philosophical research into the mysteries of being, will always prevent some, while trying to comprehend that which has hitherto remained to them a riddle, from creating additional causes in a world already so full of woe and evil. Knowledge of Karma gives the conviction that if—

"... virtue in distress, and vice in triumph
Make atheists of mankind,"

it is only because that mankind has ever shut its eyes to the great truth that man is himself his own saviour as his own destroyer. That he need not accuse Heaven and the gods, Fates and Providence, of the apparent injustice that reigns in the midst of humanity. But let him rather remember and repeat this bit of Grecian wisdom, which warns man to forbear accusing *That* which —

“Just, though mysterious, leads us on unerring
Through ways unmark'd from guilt to punishment . . .”

— which are now the ways and the high road on which move
onward the great European nations.

This lengthy quotation from *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 643-44) offers the message of Theosophy on the subject of war and peace. It was prophesied by H. P. Blavatsky in 1888, that if the nations of the world will not heed this piece of wise instruction, then “the storm will burst, and our boasted western civilization and enlightenment will sink in such a sea of horror that its parallel History has never yet recorded.”

Those who prepare themselves for offensive or defensive war are going about it the wrong way if what they seek is peace and progress. The lesson of the highly righteous war described in the *Mahabharata* has a meaning for all people today.

When Sri Krishna tried with all the force of reason to persuade Dhritarashtra to seize and bind the wicked Duryodhana, he prophesied that, if the impending war were not averted, the whole Kshatriya caste would be destroyed. And so it came to pass.

Such the result of war; now turn to the region of peace.

When Yudhishtira entered *Swarga* he saw Duryodhana “endued with prosperity and seated on an excellent seat. Duryodhana blazed with effulgence like the sun, and more — with all those signs of glory which belong to heroes.” The victorious Yudhishtira would not share the regions of felicity with the vanquished foe. On the other hand, he found his brothers in *Naraka* — Hell. The advice tendered and the instruction given to Yudhishtira by Narada and Mahadeva may be here summarized from the *Swargarohanika Parva* of the *Mahabharata*:

While residing in heaven, all enmities cease. O son, thou should'st not bear in mind the woes inflicted on thee on account of the match at dice. It behooveth thee not to remember the afflictions of Draupadi. It behooveth thee not to remember the other woes which were yours in consequence of the acts of your kinsmen.

Thou should'st not yield to wrath. Listen — All, O son, should without doubt be experienced by all rulers, for, in them there is good and bad in abundance. Thou thyself deceived Drona in the matter of his son and so by that act of deception thou hast seen hell. So a'iso, Bhima and Arjuna and even Draupadi have

all been to the place of sinners. But that is all over now. Do thou meet Duryodhana now according to the rules of polite society. This is Heaven, O lord of men! There can be no enmities here.

What is implicit in this instruction? For heavenly peace we need to forget wrongs and injuries done to us; we need to recognize that we have sinned in the past and must expiate our sins; also, that our enemies have virtues for which due credit should be given to them.

There have been injustice, greed and selfishness all around; also high hope for doing right and noble aspiration to achieve peace. Not by stockpiling armaments can an era of peace and prosperity be ushered in. Those who have killed by the sword have perished by the sword. Alfred Nobel, the originator of dynamite and the founder of the Nobel Prizes, is reported to have predicted that his high explosive would, through sheer terror and carnage, put an end to war. In 1893 he thought that if in thirty years dynamite did not usher in international peace, the world would relapse into savagery. Not peace but war is enveloping the globe. If Nobel had been a philosopher and a Theosophist he would have known that never could explosives do anything else but explode; never could fear beget anything else than hatred; never could war create anything else than war. One of the greatest of Seers, Gautama the Buddha, summed up the whole philosophy of war and peace in two verses of the *Dhammapada*:

In this world never is enmity appeased by hatred; enmity is ever appeased by Love. This is the Law Eternal.

Better than a man who conquers in battles a thousand times a thousand men is he who conquers himself. He indeed is the mightiest of warriors.

Ideas rule the world — not politicians. It is one of the illusions to which the human mind falls prey that legislatures are supreme. Ideas rule politicians and dictators. Ambitious and greedy thoughts obsess people and among them the leaders, who become cross-eyed by their evil feelings and see the world out of focus. Noble and true ideas transform men and women, including the politicians.

The people need to be educated not merely to desire peace but to understand how it can and should be firmly established. The first step in education for peace is to understand that Humanity is one and the folly of a single member poisons the whole body; contrariwise, the wisdom of a single unit transmutes the whole and elevates it to a higher

plane of being.

Children must be taught not to glory in the military powers of their country, but to share appreciatively in its culture; not to exalt the heroes or the victories of war as highly as those of peace.

The great effort on the plane of ideas has to be to elevate above the narrow loyalties of the day the larger loyalty to all mankind, in which alone all lesser loyalties can find harmonious adjustment and fulfilment. Faith that the best in human nature is evoked by a fearless and selfless challenge has been justified time and again by non-violent resisters; the gift of India's freedom as the response to her non-violent struggle led by Gandhiji is a demonstration on a mighty scale that "nobleness enkindleth nobleness." The mutual trust that takes no count of superficial differences but honours man *qua* man; the mutual confidence, between nations as between individuals, which is convinced "that our neighbours will no more work to hurt us than we would think of harming them"; these would bring us far along the road to lasting peace.

We cannot have a peaceful world with individuals at war within themselves and with each other; the work of the individual on himself forms an indispensable feature of the peace effort. The legendary words of Lao Tzu to Confucius in ancient China still point to the roots of war as being in the human heart:

Put away your proud air and many desires, your insinuating habit and wild will. They are of no advantage to you. . . . Why do you not obtain the Tao? This is the reason — because you do not give it an asylum in your heart.

There has to be positive and deliberate effort by the individual to transmute his belligerent passions and his warlike attitudes, and to build firmly into his character *Ahimsa* and *Satya*, Non-violence and Truth. A character so ennobled will radiate Peace as naturally as a flower emanates its fragrance, and as potently for the purifying of the atmosphere. But side by side with this effort in and on oneself must go the development, in all men of good-will, of the ability to co-operate with others in the creation of adequate organizations and the evolving of a suitable machinery in many fields — economic, social, political, religious and other — for educating the public in all countries in the problems of peace.

CAN THE "DOUBLE" MURDER?

[This story by H. P. Blavatsky under the pen-name of Hadji Mora appeared originally in the *New York Sun* for December 26, 1875. The title used there was "A Story of the Mystical." It was republished by her under the title "Can the 'Double' Murder?" in *The Theosophist* for January 1883, where she prefaced it with the following Editorial Note:

"The story which follows was written by the editor of this magazine some years ago at the request of a literary friend in America, and published in a leading journal of New York. It is reprinted because the events actually occurred, and they possess a very deep interest for the student of psychological science. They show in a marked degree the enormous potentiality of the human will upon mesmeric subjects whose whole being may be so imbued with an imparted intellectual preconception that the 'double,' or *mayavi-rupa*, when projected transcorporeally, will carry out the mesmerizer's mandate with helpless subserviency. The fact that a mortal wound may be inflicted upon the inner man without puncturing the epidermis will be a novelty only to such readers as have not closely examined the records and noted the many proofs that death may result from many psychical causes besides the emotions whose lethal power is universally conceded."

In *The Theosophist* for March 1883, in reply to a correspondent's inquiry as to the genuineness of the narrative, H.P.B. said: "We assure our learned correspondent that every word of our narrative is true."—Eds.]

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Sun*.

Sir,— One morning in 1867 Eastern Europe was startled by news of the most horrifying description. Michael Obrenovitch, reigning Prince of Serbia, his aunt, the Princess Catherine, or Katinka, and her daughter, had been murdered in broad daylight, near Belgrade, in their own garden, the assassin or assassins remaining unknown. The Prince had received several bullet shots and stabs, and his body was actually butchered; the Princess was killed on the spot, her head smashed, and her young daughter, though still alive, was not expected to survive. The circumstances are too recent to have been forgotten, but in that part of the world, at that time, the case created a delirium of excitement.

In the Austrian dominions and in those under the doubtful protec-

torate of Turkey, from Bucharest down to Trieste, no high family felt secure. In those half-Oriental countries every Montecchi has its Capuletti, and it was rumoured that the bloody deed was perpetrated by the Prince Kara-Georgevitch, an old pretender to the modest throne of Serbia, whose father had been wronged by the first Obrenovitch. The Jaggos of this family were known to nourish the bitterest hatred toward one whom they called a usurper, and "the shepherd's grandson." For a time, the official papers of Austria were filled with indignant denials of the charge that the treacherous deed had been done or procured by Kara-Georgevitch, or "Czerno-Georgiy," as he is usually called in those parts. Several persons innocent of the act were, as is usual in such cases, imprisoned, and the real murderers escaped justice. A young relative of the victim, greatly beloved by his people, a mere child, taken for the purpose from a school in Paris, was brought over in ceremony to Belgrade and proclaimed Hospodar of Serbia. In the turmoil of political excitement the tragedy of Belgrade was forgotten by all but an old Serbian matron, who had been attached to the Obrenovitch family, and who, like Rachel, would not be consoled for the death of her children. After the proclamation of the young Obrenovitch, nephew of the murdered man, she had sold out her property and disappeared; but not before taking a solemn vow on the tombs of the victims to avenge their deaths.

The writer of this truthful narrative had passed a few days at Belgrade, about three months before the horrid deed was perpetrated, and knew the Princess Katinka. She was a kind, gentle, and lazy creature at home; abroad she seemed a Parisienne in manners and education. As nearly all the personages who will figure in this true story are still living, it is but decent that I should withhold their names, and give only initials.

The old Serbian lady seldom left her house, going out but to see the Princess occasionally. Crouched on a pile of pillows and carpeting, clad in the picturesque national dress, she looked like the Cumaean Sibyl in her days of calm repose. Strange stories were whispered about her occult knowledge, and thrilling accounts circulated sometimes among the guests assembled round the fireside of my modest inn. Our fat landlord's maiden aunt's cousin had been troubled for some time past by a wandering vampire, and had been bled nearly to death by the nocturnal visitor; and while the efforts and exorcisms of the parish pope had been of no avail, the victim was luckily delivered by Gospoja P —, who had put

to flight the disturbing ghost by merely shaking her fist at him, and shaming him in his own language. It was in Belgrade that I learned for the first time this highly interesting fact in philology, namely, that spooks have a language of their own. The old lady, whom I will call Gospoja P——, was generally attended by another personage destined to be the principal actress in our tale of horror. It was a young gypsy girl from some part of Roumania, about fourteen years of age. Where she was born, and who she was, she seemed to know as little as anyone else. I was told she had been brought one day by a party of strolling gypsies, and left in the yard of the old lady, from which moment she became an inmate of the house. She was nicknamed "the sleeping girl," as she was said to be gifted with the faculty of apparently dropping asleep wherever she stood, and speaking her dreams aloud. The girl's heathen name was Frosya.

About eighteen months after the news of the murder had reached Italy, where I was at the time, I travelled over the Banat in a small wagon of my own, hiring a horse whenever I needed one. I met on my way an old Frenchman, a scientist, travelling alone after my own fashion, but with the difference that while he was a pedestrian, I dominated the road from the eminence of a throne of dry hay, in a jolting wagon. I discovered him one fine morning slumbering in a wilderness of shrubs and flowers, and had nearly passed over him, absorbed as I was in the contemplation of the surrounding glorious scenery. The acquaintance was soon made, no great ceremony of mutual introduction being needed. I had heard his name mentioned in circles interested in mesmerism, and knew him to be a powerful adept of the school of Du Potet.

"I have found," he remarked in the course of the conversation, after I had made him share my seat of hay, "one of the most wonderful subjects in this lovely Thebaide. I have an appointment tonight with the family. They are seeking to unravel the mystery of a murder by means of the clairvoyance of the girl . . . she is wonderful; very, very wonderful!"

"Who is she?" I asked.

"A Roumanian gypsy. She was brought up, it appears, in the family of the Serbian reigning Prince, who reigns no more, for he was very mysteriously murdered. Holoah, take care! *Diable*, you will upset us over the precipice!" he hurriedly exclaimed, unceremoniously snatching from me the reins, and giving the horse a violent pull.

"You do not mean Prince Obrenovitch?" I asked, aghast.

"Yes, I do; and him precisely. Tonight I have to be there, hoping to close a series of *séances* by finally developing a most marvellous manifestation of the hidden power of the human spirit; and you may come with me. I will introduce you; and, besides, you can help me as an interpreter, for they do not speak French."

As I was pretty sure that if the somnambule was Froस्या, the rest of the family must be Gospoja P——, I readily accepted. At sunset we were at the foot of the mountain, leading to the old castle, as the Frenchman called the place. It fully deserved the poetical name given it. There was a rough bench in the depths of one of the shadowy retreats, and as we stopped at the entrance of this poetical place, and the Frenchman was gallantly busying himself with my horse on the suspicious-looking bridge which led across the water to the entrance gate, I saw a tall figure slowly rise from the bench and come towards us.

It was my old friend Gospoja P——, looking more pale and more mysterious than ever. She exhibited no surprise at seeing me, but simply greeting me after the Serbian fashion, with a triple kiss on both cheeks, she took hold of my hand and led me straight to the nest of ivy. Half reclining on a small carpet spread on the tall grass, with her back leaning against the wall, I recognized our Froस्या.

She was dressed in the national costume of the Wallachian women, a sort of gauze turban intermingled with various gilt medals and bands on her head, white shirt with opened sleeves, and petticoats of variegated colours. Her face looked deadly pale, her eyes were closed, and her countenance presented that stony, sphinx-like look which characterizes in such a peculiar way the entranced clairvoyant somnambule. If it were not for the heaving motion of her chest and bosom, ornamented by rows of medals and bead necklaces which feebly tinkled at every breath, one might have thought her dead, so lifeless and corpse-like was her face. The Frenchman informed me that he had sent her to sleep just as we were approaching the house, and that she now was as he had left her the previous night; he then began busying himself with the *sujet*, as he called Froस्या. Paying no further attention to us, he shook her by the hand, and then making a few rapid passes, stretched out her arm and stiffened it. The arm, as rigid as iron, remained in that position. He then closed all her fingers but one—the middle finger—which he caused to point at the evening star, which twinkled in the deep blue sky. Then he turned round and went over from right to left, throwing out some of his fluids here, again discharging them at another

place; busying himself with his invisible but potent fluids, like a painter with his brush when giving the last touches to a picture.

The old lady, who had silently watched him, with her chin in her hand the while, put her thin, skeleton-looking hand on his arm and arrested it, as he was preparing himself to begin the regular mesmeric passes.

“Wait,” she whispered, “till the star is set and the ninth hour completed. The Vourdalaki are hovering around; they may spoil the influence.”

“What does she say?” enquired the mesmerizer, annoyed at her interference.

I explained to him that the old lady feared the pernicious influences of the Vourdalaki.

“Vourdalaki! What’s that — the Vourdalaki?” exclaimed the Frenchman. “Let us be satisfied with Christian spirits, if they honour us to-night with a visit, and lose no time for the Vourdalaki.

I glanced at the Gospoja. She had become deathly pale and her brow was strenly knitted over her flashing black eyes.

“Tell him not to jest at this hour of the night!” she cried. “He does not know the country. Even the Holy Church may fail to protect us once the Vourdalaki are aroused. What’s this?” pushing with her foot a bundle of herbs the botanizing mesmerizer had laid near on the grass. She bent over the collection and anxiously examined the contents of the bundle, after which she flung the whole in the water.

“It must not be left here,” she firmly added; “these are the St. John’s plants, and they might attract the wandering ones.”

Meanwhile the night had come, and the moon illuminated the landscape with a pale, ghostly light. The nights in the Banat are nearly as beautiful as in the East, and the Frenchman had to go on with his experiments in the open air, as the priest of the church had prohibited such in the tower, which was used as the parsonage, for fear of filling the holy precincts with the heretical devils of the mesmerizer, which, the priest remarked, he would be unable to exorcize on account of their being foreigners.

The old gentleman had thrown off his travelling blouse, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and now, striking a theatrical attitude, began a regular process of mesmerization.

Under his quivering fingers the odyle fluid actually seemed to flash

in the twilight. Frosya was placed with her figure facing the moon, and every motion of the entranced girl was discernible as in daylight. In a few minutes large drops of perspiration appeared on her brow, and slowly rolled down her pale face, glittering in the moonbeams. Then she moved uneasily about and began chanting a low melody, to the words of which the Gospoja, anxiously bent over the unconscious girl, was listening with avidity and trying to catch every syllable. With her thin finger on her lips, her eyes nearly starting from their sockets, her frame motionless, the old lady seemed herself transfixed into a statue of attention. The group was a remarkable one, and I regretted that I was not a painter. What followed was a scene worthy to figure in *Macbeth*. At one side she, the slender girl, pale and corpse-like, writhing under the invisible fluid of him who for the hour was her omnipotent master; at the other the old matron, who, burning with her unquenched fire of revenge, stood like the picture of Nemesis, waiting for the long-expected name of the Prince's murderer to be at last pronounced. The Frenchman himself seemed transfigured, his grey hair standing on end; his bulky, clumsy form seemed to have grown in a few minutes. All theatrical pretence was now gone; there remained but the mesmerizer, aware of his responsibility, unconscious himself of the possible results, studying and anxiously expecting. Suddenly Frosya, as if lifted by some supernatural force, rose from her reclining posture and stood erect before us, again motionless and still, waiting for the magnetic fluid to direct her. The Frenchman, silently taking the old lady's hand, placed it in that of the somnambulist, and ordered her to put herself *en rapport* with the Gospoja.

"What seest thou, my daughter?" softly murmured the Serbian Lady. "Can your spirit seek out the murderers?"

"Search and behold!" sternly commanded the mesmerizer, fixing his gaze upon the face of the subject.

"I am — on my way — I go," faintly whispered Frosya, her voice seeming not to come from herself, but from the surrounding atmosphere.

At this moment something so strange took place that I doubt my ability to describe it. A luminous shadow, vapour-like, appeared closely surrounding the girl's body. At first about an inch in thickness, it gradually expanded, and, gathering itself, suddenly seemed to break off from the body altogether, and condense itself into a kind of semi-solid vapour, which very soon assumed the likeness of the somnambule herself. Flickering about the surface of the earth, the form vacillated for two

or three seconds, then glided noiselessly towards the river. It disappeared like a mist, dissolved in the moonbeams, which seemed to absorb it altogether.

I had followed the scene with an intense attention. The mysterious operation, known in the East as the evocation of the *scin-lecca*, was taking place before my own eyes. To doubt was impossible, and Du Potet was right in saying that mesmerism is the conscious magic of the ancients, and spiritualism the unconscious effect of the same magic upon certain organisms.

As soon as the vaporous double had soaked itself through the pores of the girl, the Gospoja had by a rapid motion of the hand which was left free, drawn from under her pelisse something which looked to us suspiciously like a small stiletto, and placed it as rapidly in the girl's bosom. The action was so quick that the mesmerizer, absorbed in his work, had not remarked it, as he afterwards told me. A few minutes elapsed in a dead silence. We seemed a group of petrified persons. Suddenly a thrilling and transpiercing cry burst from the entranced girl's lips; she bent forward, and snatching the stiletto from her bosom, plunged it furiously around her in the air, as if pursuing imaginary foes. Her mouth foamed, and incoherent, wild exclamations broke from her lips, among which discordant sounds I discerned several times two familiar Christian names of men. The mesmerizer was so terrified that he lost all control over himself, and instead of withdrawing the fluid, he loaded the girl with it still more.

"Take care," exclaimed I. "Stop! You will kill her, or she will kill you!"

But the Frenchman had unwittingly raised subtle potencies of Nature, over which he had no control. Furiously turning round, the girl struck at him a blow which would have killed him, had he not avoided it by jumping aside, receiving but a severe scratch on the right arm. The poor man was panic-stricken; climbing with an extraordinary agility for a man of his bulky form on the wall over her, he fixed himself on it astride, and gathering the remnants of his will power, sent in her direction a series of passes. At the second, the girl dropped the weapon and remained motionless.

"What are you about?" hoarsely shouted the mesmerizer in French, seated like some monstrous nightgoblin on the wall. "Answer me, I command you!"

"I did — but what she — whom you ordered me to obey — commanded me to do," answered the girl in French, to my amazement.

"What did the old witch command you?" irreverently asked he.

"To find them — who murdered — kill them — I did so — and they are no more! — Avenged — Avenged! They are ——."

An exclamation of triumph, a loud shout of infernal joy, rang loud in the air, and awakening the dogs of the neighbouring villages a responsive howl of barking began from that moment like a ceaseless echo of the Gospoja's cry.

"I am avenged! I feel it; I know it. My warning heart tells me that the fiends are no more." She fell panting on the ground, dragging down, in her fall, the girl, who allowed herself to be pulled down as if she were a bag of wool.

"I hope my subject did no further mischief tonight. She is a dangerous as well as a very wonderful subject," said the Frenchman.

We parted. Three days after that I was at T——, and as I was sitting in the dining-room of a restaurant, waiting for my lunch, I happened to pick up a newspaper, and the first lines I read ran thus:

VIENNA, 186—. TWO MYSTERIOUS DEATHS.

Last evening, at 9.45, as P —— was about to retire, two of the gentlemen-in-waiting suddenly exhibited great terror, as though they had seen a dreadful apparition. They screamed, staggered, and ran about the room, holding up their hands as if to ward off the blows of an unseen weapon. They paid no attention to the eager questions of the prince and suite, but presently fell writhing upon the floor, and expired in great agony. Their bodies exhibited no appearance of apoplexy, nor any external marks of wounds, but wonderful to relate, there were numerous dark spots and long marks upon the skin, as though they were stabs and slashes made without puncturing the cuticle. The autopsy revealed the fact that beneath each of these mysterious discolourations there was a deposit of coagulated blood. The greatest excitement prevails, and the faculty are unable to solve the mystery.

—HADJI MORA

I hold the key of my prison in mine own hand.

—JOHN DONNE

COMETS

[Comet Kohoutek, at present visible from earth, is arousing much interest, and many speculations are being made by astronomers on the nature and origin of comets and of the solar system. It is appropriate therefore to reprint here an article by W. Q. Judge that appeared originally in *The Path* for April 1895.—Eds.]

THE PROBABLE GENESIS, the constitution, the movements, and the functions of comets have engaged the greatest attention of astronomers. They very often appear to defy laws which apply to other celestial bodies. That the laws governing the heavenly bodies are not all known must be admitted upon very little reflection. Two things alone would raise doubts as to whether modern astronomers are acquainted with all those laws. The first is that although the great fixed stars are known to be moving at enormous rates — for instance, that Sirius is receding from us with great velocity every moment — yet for ages they all appear to stand in the same relative positions, and are therefore called “fixed” stars in comparison with the planetary bodies nearer to us, which move with apparently greater rapidity. The other is that some of the planets having one moon seem to have a different law prevailing over them, in that one of the moons will move in a direction opposite to the others. There are, in the first volume of the *Secret Doctrine* (first ed., pp. 203-204), two paragraphs which indicate some of the views of the Adepts in respect to comets:

Born in the unfathomable depths of Space, out of the homogeneous Element called the World-Soul, every nucleus of Cosmic matter, suddenly launched into being, begins life under the most hostile circumstances. Through a series of countless ages, it has to conquer for itself a place in the infinitudes. It circles round and round between denser and already fixed bodies, moving by jerks, and pulling towards some given point or centre that attracts it, trying to avoid, like a ship drawn into a channel dotted with reefs and sunken rocks, other bodies that draw and repel it in turn; many perish, their mass disintegrating through stronger masses, and, when born within a system, chiefly within the insatiable stomachs of various Suns. Those which move slower and are propelled into an elliptic course are doomed to annihilation sooner or later. Others moving in parabolic curves generally escape destruction, owing to their velocity.

Some very critical readers will perhaps imagine that this teach-

ing as to the cometary stage passed through by all heavenly bodies, is in contradiction with the statements just made as to the moon being the mother of the earth. They will perhaps fancy that intuition is needed to harmonize the two. But no intuition is in truth required. What does Science know of Comets, their genesis, growth, and ultimate behaviour? Nothing — absolutely nothing! And what is there so impossible that a laya centre — a lump of cosmic protoplasm, homogeneous and latent, when suddenly animated or fired up — should rush from its bed in Space and whirl throughout the abysmal depths in order to strengthen its homogeneous organism by an accumulation and addition of differentiated elements? And why should not such a comet settle in life, live, and become an inhabited globe?

It is to be observed here that the same war which we see going on upon this plane goes on upon the cosmic planes also, it being stated that when a nucleus of matter begins life it does so under the most hostile circumstances. On this plane, the moment the soul leaves the body the never-ceasing life-energy begins to tear the particles apart and separate them into smaller lives. And it is known that the theory is held by the Adepts that during life one set of cells or points of life wars against another set, and that what we call death results from the balance being destroyed, so that the mass of cells which work for destruction, of any composition in nature, gaining the upper hand, immediately begin to devour the other, and, at last, turn upon themselves for their own destruction as composite masses. That is to say, not that there is one distinct quantity of cells which are destroyers, opposed by another distinct quantity which are conservers, but that the negative and positive forces in nature are constantly acting and reacting against each other. The equilibrium, or natural state, is due to the balancing of these two opposite forces. The positive is destructive, and if that force gains the upper hand it converts all those cells over which it has control for the moment into destroyers of the other, negative cells. Hence a negative cell might at some time become a positive cell, and *vice versa*. After the balance is destroyed, then the positive forces accumulate to themselves more cells under their influence, and then again a division of the two forces takes place, so that a portion of the positive become negative, and in that way, continually dividing and subdividing, so-called death, as known to us, takes place.

It has not been understood what comets are, but these paragraphs indicate that the opinion of the Adepts is that they are the beginnings

of worlds, *i.e.*, that we see in comets the possible beginnings of worlds. The sentence beginning the quotation — “Born in the unfathomable depths of Space,” etc. — means that, a laya centre being formed, the homogeneous mass of matter is condensed at that point, and, the energy of nature being thrown into it, it starts up, a fiery mass, to become a comet. It will then either pursue its course in evolution, if it is accumulating to its matter from other masses, or will be drawn into them for their aggrandizement. The hint is thrown out that the parabolic moving masses, owing to their velocity, escape destruction because they are able to evade the attraction from greater masses.

In the second paragraph quoted a clue is given to those who would be likely to think that this theory could not be consistent with the other, *viz.*, that the moon is the mother of the earth. It is intended to be shown in the paragraph that the starting up, as before suggested, of a mass of matter from the laya centre is due to the energy propelled into that centre from a dying globe, such as the moon is. This having been begun, no matter what may be the wanderings of the fast-moving mass, it will at last come back to the place from which it started, when it shall have grown to a greater maturity. And this is indicated in the last statement — “Why should not such a comet settle in life, live, and become an inhabited globe?”

This theory is as useful, consistent, and reasonable as any that materialistic science has invented in respect of comets or any other heavenly bodies, and, being perfectly in accord with the rest of the theories given out by the Adepts, there can be no objection raised to it, that it violates the general system which they have outlined.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

LAST NIGHT, in the silence which pervaded the darkness, I stood alone and heard the voice of the singer of eternal melodies. When I went to sleep I closed my eyes with this last thought in my mind, that even when I remain unconscious in slumber the dance of life will still go on in the hushed arena of my sleeping body, keeping steps with the stars. The heart will throb, the blood will leap in the veins, and the millions of living atoms of my body will vibrate in tune with the note of the harp-string that thrills at the touch of the master.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

“BE OF GOOD CHEER, O DARING PILGRIM TO THE OTHER SHORE”

THREE GREAT IDEAS to reflect upon and practise as we live our life from day to day are contained in the words from *The Voice of the Silence* quoted in the above title. It is a book dedicated to “the Few.” Those few are fortune’s favoured soldiers who are trying to tread the spiritual path according to the teachings of the dynamic philosophy of Theosophy, they who aspire to live the Higher Life amidst worldly turmoil. They are the daring pilgrims. Every human soul who goes through the circle or cycle of necessity is an eternal pilgrim, according to the Third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*. He generally goes from life to life, bound by his own karma, unaware of why he is here and whither he is going. The daring pilgrim is an awakened soul who has recognized his own duties and responsibilities to himself and to the world, from the spiritual point of view. He has dared to do something that most others are not doing — to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessors, the great Lords of Wisdom and Compassion. He has to fight his way to the supernal Truth out of the mire of lies terrestrial. He has to become his own Master and God, controlling Nature and Nature’s forces and laws. He has to unfold from within his own Self the knowledge acquired through countless ages, and regain the purity and innocence of the child state which was once his and which he subsequently lost. He has to listen to every cry of pain, just as the lotus opens its heart to the warmth of the morning sun. In fact, he has to make altruism the key-note of his life. He has dared to do this slowly and perseveringly. It is a full-time job, and he has, besides, his obligations to his kith and kin.

Such a stupendous task may sometimes weary and overwhelm the aspirant; hence the important and encouraging warning to be of good cheer. On this path, if the aspirant gets distressed and downcast he may stop all progress; he may even think of returning to the ways of mundane existence. Hence the need to keep cheerful in spite of the difficulties, realizing that there are other pilgrims on the path, walking side by side, ahead, or behind, and that those who have successfully reached the other shore had to pass through similar experiences.

Therefore it is essential to cultivate the habit of cheerfulness. Each one of us is his brother’s keeper; he influences and affects others, as he in turn is affected by them. Cheerfulness is as contagious as despon-

dency and gloom. It helps one to extend friendliness and brotherliness. Cheerfulness usually follows true inner contentment, and Lord Buddha calls contentment the greatest wealth. It is like the health-giving sunshine of life which enables the flowers to bloom, and the fruits to ripen, and the birds to sing their sweet melodies. Likewise there is the beneficent light of the Spiritual Sun radiating its spiritual influence and affecting for good those who seek it. The forces of light need to be spread deliberately. Light and darkness are the world's eternal ways, but it is the duty of every aspirant to join the army of light and peace and thus triumph ultimately over the forces of darkness. When one thinks and acts and lives as the Self of all, then the heart begins to sing the song of cheer. When one is plunged in grief and troubles it is difficult to be cheerful, but if the habit of cheerfulness is built day by day in quiet times, it will be a true sustainer and will lighten the burden.

We have to reach the other shore. The sailing may be smooth or rough, the weather may be calm or stormy, but the ocean of *sansara* has to be crossed, and it is only true cheerfulness that can enable one to do so. Just as a soldier joins the army and dares to fight at the peril of his life, so too the daring pilgrim has to move forward and sail onward till the other shore is reached.

What is meant by reaching the other shore? It implies the attainment of perfection in all aspects of life — conscious godhood. The more one dares, the more he shall obtain. Fearlessness is prescribed by Sri Krishna as the foremost of the divine qualities. The aspirant need fear no one and nothing except the tribunal of his own inner self. He starts from where he is, with his merit or demerit, till he completes his voyage, through waking or sleeping, through embodied or disembodied states. Just as a sailor is always watchful of his direction, of the weather, of the stars in the firmament, so too the daring pilgrim has to be well guarded as he passes through various conditions and stages.

Elsewhere in *The Voice of the Silence* the advice is given:

Be of good cheer and rest content with fate. Such is thy Karma, the Karma of the cycle of thy births, the destiny of those who, in their pain and sorrow, are born along with thee, rejoice and weep from life to life, chained to thy previous actions.

Each one must realize that he has made his own fate through his past choices and past exertion. It is no use murmuring about our present circumstances; what we need is the practice of contentment, the

generation of right thoughts, and the performance of unselfish deeds, to build a better future. H.P.B. states: "One little period passed without doubt, murmuring, and despair; what a gain it would be; a period a mere tithe of what every one of us has had to pass through. But everyone forges his own destiny." If we grumble and murmur and lose hope and faith, then before we know it we shall be lost in the wilderness of life. Therefore must we be of good cheer always. We must not fluctuate between smiles and tears. Living in the world of sorrow and misery, the heart must keep steadily cheerful. Not that we are to remain indifferent to the suffering around us; rather are we to help others with the right attitude of mind and heart. Good cheer means brightening up a dreary atmosphere, letting in the sunshine of love and kindness.

The most inspiring idea is that those who have reached the other shore are watching and waiting for the daring pilgrims sailing towards them. It is helpful to keep their great ideal in our hearts, their age-old precepts in our minds, and to sail on with good cheer to the other shore.

It is worthy of special remark that when we are not too anxious about happiness and unhappiness, but devote ourselves to the strict and unsparing performance of duty, then happiness comes of itself.

—KARL VON HUMBOLDT

THE SAGE WHO SAW THE OBVIOUS

II.—THE BURIED DIAMOND

To the little house at the crossroads, where the Sage lay resting in the noonday heat, there came gliding a luxurious motor-car which drew up at the open door. A tall, stately man in early middle age, wearing immaculate white garments, alighted from it, and with a sharp word to the driver, and only the most cursory of knocks, entered like one accustomed to present himself anywhere, at any time, as best suited his own pleasure.

He bowed, however, to the Sage, and greeted him courteously enough. "Honoured sir, I intrude, disturbing your hour of rest. But the claims upon my time are many and I cannot always consult others' convenience."

The Sage roused himself and made a gesture as though brushing aside this half-apology. "I am at your service," he said quietly, "for I assume you seek my poor advice. You would not otherwise have come so far at the hour when Surya's beam is fiercest."

"You know me?" queried the visitor.

"I recognize the renowned dealer in antiques who, chancing to pass through this village some time ago, greatly admired a family heirloom owned by one of my neighbours."

"Ha!" was the other's sole reply. To which he presently added, "Hum!"

"Sad," the Sage continued gently, "that you were unable to come to terms with him, for the ivory was stolen soon after and who knows what may have become of it? Only you, sir, and its owner could appreciate it properly."

"A great pity," said the dealer hastily. "But I have not come to speak of ivories. It is my diamond I am concerned with. You may have heard that I possess a priceless diamond."

"Which none have seen," returned the Sage. "I have heard of it. Do not tell me that it, too, is missing, for in that case, I fear, no advice of mine could help you."

"Of course it is not missing," said the dealer tartly. "It is in an iron box, clamped to the floor, in a room below ground, whose walls are reinforced with iron. But I am sorely disappointed with it, for it is like a dead lump of stone, emitting no sparkle. When I grope my way to it in the dark, I have to content myself with feeling its facets."

“Why in the dark?” asked the Sage.

“Surely it is obvious why,” retorted the dealer impatiently. “For security, sir, what else? I dare not run the risk of having its whereabouts located.”

“So it lies dull, like a lump of stone?”

“Exactly, sir. That is what I said. I also said that it disappoints me sorely. Pray, what am I to do with it?”

“Put it in the light,” the Sage said simply, and even before the words had fallen from his lips, others were sounding, very softly, within him, in the cave of the heart.

“Make hard thy Soul against the snares of Self; deserve for it the name of ‘Diamond-Soul.’”

All unconsciously he repeated them aloud, and was totally unprepared for the dealer’s reaction. The tall, imperious man started like a frightened child and then stood gazing at him with a strange, blank expression.

“I seem,” he said slowly, “to have heard those words before. It was a long, long time ago — in my boyhood. Yes, I remember! My good old father read those very words to me.”

The Sage, for once, was not listening. His whole attention was given to the Voice of the Silence.

“As the diamond buried deep within the throbbing heart of earth can never mirror back the earthly lights, so are thy mind and Soul; plunged in Dhyana-Marga, these must mirror nought of Maya’s realm illusive.”

“Maya’s realm illusive!” he murmured. “Ah, how different such a burial from that other!”

The dealer grew more excited. “Yes, yes,” he cried, “that also I remember. And more is beginning to come back to me. Is not there something about the jewel of the Great Ensnarer, Mara? Upon my word, sir, this is strange!” And he eyed the Sage askance, as though suspecting something uncanny about him.

“Your memory is not at fault,” the Sage said nodding. “But Mara’s jewel is very unlike the Diamond-Soul. Concentrate your thoughts on *that*, my son, I beg of you. Set it in the Light.”

“I will,” said the dealer firmly. “But, honoured sir, I am wholly at a loss. You take my diamond, so to speak, and draw out such memories, such meaning from it! You make it sparkle as it should. How can I thank you for your advice — your illumination?”

“You will act upon it?” said the Sage.

“I will assuredly set my diamond in the light. I can only trust that it will respond — that it has not lain too long in darkness,” the dealer answered meaningfully.

“You will do well, my son,” rejoined the Sage, with his gentle smile, and again he uttered some of the words that were continuing to sound softly from inner silence — “*Thy Soul-gaze centre on the One Pure Light.*”

The dealer bowed low, said farewell, and went away. The Sage was moved to rise from his couch and stand in the doorway, looking after him.

The driver of the car had fallen asleep.

The Sage regarded the two men anxiously.

When he saw the dealer lay his hand kindly on the other’s thin shoulder, he nodded his head.

“I think,” he murmured, “I *think* he understood. His diamond, blest by the Light, may sparkle yet.”

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS weaken men. Do you not find that where parents are constantly taxing their sons to read and write, telling them they will never learn anything, and calling them fools and so forth, the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases?

If you speak kind words to boys and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time. What holds good of children, also holds good of others in the region of higher thoughts.

If you can give them positive ideas people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs. In language and literature, in poetry and the arts — in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will gradually be able to do these things better. Pointing out mistakes wounds a man’s feelings.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Why do people take drugs? If drug-taking is an "underground" activity, should social workers go underground in order to deal with it? Should they aim to bring drop-outs back into society or to help them to choose for themselves life-styles which society may not accept? These were some of the questions tackled at a Unesco seminar dealing with approaches to drug abuse prevention, at Sèvres, outside Paris, from September 10 to 15. The 28 participants invited in their personal capacity from Europe, U.S.A. and Canada included educators, researchers, psychiatrists and social workers. Their difficulties and objectives now go into the dossier Unesco is building up in its search for the general principles of a policy to prevent drug abuse.

Antony Brock, reporting on the seminar in *Unesco Features* (No. 653), states that the "why" of drug-taking interested all the participants more than the "how," on which their attitudes varied. The first point of consensus that emerged was that "drug-taking only constitutes a screen behind which the true problems can be hidden." Most of the participants — particularly those who worked as prison officers and psychiatrists — reported that they knew from experience that young people who used drugs generally had real problems of family relationships or social or work troubles.

All the participants agreed also that repressing, or simply jailing drug-users was not the answer to the problem. Jail was not a deterrent for a drug-user and many shared the conclusions of filmed case studies shown by the Delta Group of Liège, which showed that prison or corrective homes had only increased the confined young people's sense of isolation.

Many of the participants worked in the twilight zones of the big cities among the Hell's Angels, Jesus People, Krishna Kids, macrobiotic food fans and others who had rejected "normal" life styles; all of them worked among the young and so there was a broad agreement on how to approach youth, although circumstances and methods varied from country to country.

There was general agreement that the first thing required was sympathy, to allow the young to develop an idea of their own value and the power to make decisions.

Five steps seemed essential to most of the participants:

First was "complete decriminalization of drug use" — a careful formula that does not go so far as to recommend the legalization of any particular drug nor of drug sale. They also urged that all forms of taking drug users into care should be promoted, whether there were medical, social or "fringe" efforts.

"Complete and objective information on drugs" was another step agreed upon when the seminar discussed the so-called "cool use" technique of informing youth what to expect from taking different drugs and the failure of horror propaganda. In line with this was a call for development of new educational techniques more in keeping with young people's current problems.

Finally, and this seemed to them the essential point, they urged that "all means of education and communication should be used to contribute to the development of the personality and creativity of each individual so that he can participate in building a society where true communication is possible and those who are today on the outside may always make their voice heard."

Simple impartial observation would show that behind every "addiction" to any form of vicious practice lies a mental and moral addiction to some mode of thought, some form of desire, in the victim. Every external action is preceded and accompanied by some internal thought, feeling or volition, its predisposing cause, to which the vicious practice stands in undis severable relation as an effect. Nothing short of true basic ideas of the nature of the triune being called man can ever effect a cure of the ills, physical, mental and moral, which afflict the individual and the race.

Under the title "The Inevitable Change," *Peace News* for October 5 publishes the translation of a little known work by Leo Tolstoy. Once we have recognized our individual responsibility for our own actions and for the social institutions we are part of, what can we do? No one is qualified to arrange the lives of others, comes the reply; start with yourself! In the words of Tolstoy:

It would seem that the hardships which follow in the wake of violence, which people are committing against each other, should reveal to them that they are themselves responsible for their sufferings. And if people are responsible — and I am one of them — then I am responsible. It would seem natural for each one to say this to himself and consequently question himself in what way

he is responsible for the hardships experienced by himself and other people. . . .

“Love must take the place of violence. Admitted,” people will say, “but in what way must and can this change take place? What must we do in order that the way of life based on violence should be replaced by a way of life based on love and peace?”

“What shall we do?” ask both the rulers and masters, as well as their subordinates, the revolutionaries, the social reformers, meaning by the question “What shall we do?” invariably, “How must the life of the people be arranged?”

Everybody is asking how should the life of the people be arranged, *i.e.*, what shall we do with other people? Everybody wants to know what have they to do with other people, but no one seems to ask the question: “What shall I do with myself?”

The superstition about the fixity of religion which has maintained the belief in the lawfulness of power of some people over others has also caused another superstition to follow it, which, more than anything else, prevents people from passing over from the way of life based on violence to one based on love and peace, namely, the superstition that some people should and are qualified to arrange the lives of others. . . .

But no sooner will people get rid of this common superstition than it will at once become clear to them that the life of union of any people is the compound of the ways in which the individuals in the union arrange their own lives. And once all the people, both those who are arranging the lives of others and those who submit themselves to this arrangement, have understood this, it will also be obvious to everyone that nothing can justify one man committing violence against another, and that to do so would not only be contrary to love and justice, but even to common sense. . . .

In our time the continuation of life based on principles which are antiquated, and stand in loud contradiction to the truth of which everybody is conscious, is no longer possible. And, therefore, whether we like it or not, we shall have to change the basis of our life substituting the law of love for violence. But what arrangement of life will there be if love, which excludes violence, were made the basis of it? No one can answer this question and, moreover, there is no need to answer it. The law of love is not the law of a social order of this or that nation or state, which one is willing to support when one knows (or rather imagines that one knows) that it is going to bring about certain preconceived results. The law of love, being the inner law of each individual, is at the

same time the law of life of all mankind...

We know that we are doing the right thing for ourselves when we follow the law of love because it is only then that we achieve the greatest well-being. And we know that we are doing the right thing also for all mankind when we follow this law because the well-being of mankind is in unity, while nothing can unite people so intimately and joyously as the fulfilment of that same law of love which gives also the highest well-being to each individual.

One of the "calumniated but glorious reputations" which H.P.B. set herself to vindicating in her first great work, *Isis Unveiled*, was that of Giordano Bruno. He called himself "an awakener of sleeping souls," and clearly taught the Three Fundamental Propositions of the Secret Doctrine. His authentic works reveal his pure, spiritual perceptions, and prove that his system of thought, for the putting forth of which he was burned at the stake in 1600, was an exalted expression of what is now called Theosophy.

In an article on him in the April *Scientific American*, the authors Lawrence S. Lerner and Edward A. Gosselin show Bruno to have been more of a mystic than a scientist. His real interest in the Copernican theory of heliocentrism was that it implies that the earth is not the only centre of the universe. The implication allowed him to put forth his own views that the universe is infinite in extent, and that it contains an infinite number of worlds, each of which can be considered as much the centre of the universe as any other. Further, according to Bruno, a universe whose "centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere" exhibits the same infinitude physically as the human mind does intellectually. As the authors of the article put it:

The universe is therefore a fitting creation of an infinite God who is All in All. It is also a fitting object of contemplation for the infinite receptacle that is man's mind. The mystical element in all of this is perfectly obvious. According to Aristotelian-Neoplatonic psychology, the mind becomes what it contemplates. Thus man-microcosm becomes universe-macrocosm and as a result is brought closer to the Creator....

Bruno's aim was the reconciliation of man and God. It was by realizing that there is an intimate connection between man and God that man was to attain both material and spiritual redemp-

tion. Moreover, the mystical connection provided a means for manipulating the universe. If God could use the connection in a "downward" fashion to perform supernatural deeds as well as natural ones, man could do the same by working "upward" through the performance of magic. From this standpoint the boundary between magic and scientific investigation, which in modern times is clear, becomes indistinct. The Neoplatonists saw no inconsistency between the two activities; indeed, they were regarded as being complementary and mutually reinforcing. . . .

Even though he was neither a scientific nor a methodological precursor of Galileo, we believe that for two reasons his influence on the birth of the scientific revolution was profound.

First, Bruno was supremely confident that man was at least in part a divine being and not merely the detestable product of the original sin, destined to fall lower and lower in the absence of some more or less capricious divine intervention in human affairs. . . . Bruno's advocacy of the Neoplatonic view made him a leading figure in the rebirth of man's confidence in himself, the like of which had not existed since classical antiquity. . . .

Second, Bruno believed the path to perfection is the path of knowledge. . . . The conviction that man must look to knowledge rather than to faith in order to solve his earthly problems is one without which the scientific and technological revolutions could not have come into being.

Furthermore, Bruno believed in the ability of the human mind to comprehend the universe. He asserted that with such knowledge the savant can operate fruitfully on the world of nature in order to improve the human condition.

A debate currently raging in the United States touches on the ethical content of man's view of his liberties. All men, it has been conceded without much controversy, have a right to life. Is it also their inalienable right to decide to end it? In other words, can a man assume to himself the privilege of committing suicide? Humanitarians insist that he does not have that right nor can he claim such a right. Civil libertarians, on the other hand, say he does.

The debate has arisen from a decision by the city authorities of San Francisco, which has the highest suicide rate of any city in the United

States, to fence in parts of its famous Golden Gate bridge so that it will be all but impossible for anyone to jump from it and end his life. But the larger issue is not the place where a man ends his life or the manner or even the opportunity he creates for such a purpose, but whether he is entitled to suicide.

In the case of one who kills himself, those energies, those thoughts and feelings which compose his mind and soul, are as alive and as connected after expulsion from the physical body as before. They necessarily undergo a continued acting and reacting between themselves. Into thoughts such as suicide men have put tremendous will-energy. Those thoughts have fused with and coloured all the other lines of thinking of the life-period. Together they have formed a mental unit, joined by Nature's law of Cohesion. As the Cohesion making an individual man ceases, the opposite law of Dispersion breaks up the unit and sends the energies elsewhere. That time, for a being who has remained in his body, becomes his natural moment of death. But for an entity who has been thrust out of his body, the power of Cohesion between the mind-energies is not destroyed. The thinking goes on; and since it has now no new objective experiences, it is compelled to busy itself with those it has had; especially with those later and very powerful thoughts that brought on the suicide. Therefore one who kills himself inevitably rehearses the lines of his thinking that led to his last Earth-act — his despairs, his wrongs, his fruitless desires, wicked deeds, and the sudden lawless taking-off. He does this till the time, whether months or years, when the Cohesion between his energies reaches its natural lawful end.

From the standpoint of Theosophy, therefore, suicide, like murder, is highly objectionable. No man has a right to put an end to his existence. It is not for the personality to declare the soul's tenancy at an end.
