

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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MARA—THE TEMPTER

The enemies which rise within the body,
Hard to be overcome — the evil passions—
Should manfully be fought; *who conquers these*
Is equal to the conqueror of worlds.

—*Kiratarjuniya of Bharavi*

Popular beliefs, though often containing some truth, when distorted and corrupted become superstitions destructive to soul-life and, further, obscure the truth. One such soul-destroying concept is that of the Personal Devil.

In her article, “The Fall of Ideals,” H.P.B. wrote:

The Churches tell the world that “man is born in sin,” and John (1st Epist. iii. 8) adds that “He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.” Those who still believe in the rib-and-apple fable and in the rebellious angel “Satan,” believe, as a matter of course, in a personal Devil — as a contrast in a dualistic religion — to a personal God. We, Theosophists of the Eastern school, believe in neither. Yet we go, perhaps, further still than the Biblical dead letter. For we say that while as *extra-cosmic* Entities there is neither god nor devil, that both exist, nevertheless. And we add that both dwell on earth in man, being in truth, *the very man himself*, who is, as a physical being, the devil, the true vehicle of *evil*, and as a spiritual entity — god, or *good*. Hence, to say to mankind, “thou hast the devil,” is to utter as metaphysical a truth as when saying to all its men, “Know ye not that god dwelleth in you?” Both statements are true. But, we are at the turning point of the great social cycle, and it is the former fact which has the upper hand at present. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 27, pp. 2-3*)

The only Devil, therefore, which the Ancient Wisdom recognizes abides *within* man, not outside of him. The horned Devil of popular Christian belief is but a graphic symbol, a poetic personification of human evil and wickedness. So also the Mara of exoteric Buddhism. H.P.B. explains that Mara is "personified temptation through men's vices, and translated literally means 'that which kills' the Soul"; it is symbolized as a King in whose crown shines the jewel of fascination, blinding those who look at it. The power of evil, of human weaknesses and vices, lies in its temptations. To make more graphic the activities of these temptations spiritual teachers have had recourse to the device of personification. Thus the Devil, Mara, Ahriman, are personified; orthodox religions have personalized and carnalized them.

From the time man became a thinking entity, he has been, and is even now, the vehicle of a dual force — good and evil; and these are at eternal strife in him. The problem of this dual force so intimately touches our life that its solution becomes for us the starting point of the quest for truth and wisdom.

Though evil exists in all, as the opposing power to active goodness, and though at the present stage of evolution it seems to be gaining the upper hand owing to man's *ego*-ship or selfishness, yet many aspire to eschew evil and to do good. But Paul-like they give way to weaknesses and vicious tendencies against their well-formed intentions and resolves. Many are left bewildered as to how this comes about, for the meaning of Temptation is not really comprehended. Even students of Theosophy, who speak of "the nefarious influence of the Astral Light," seldom understand the real import of these words.

The earnest and persevering aspirant must learn the art of resisting temptation, of overcoming the spell of fascination that Mara, the Great Ensnarer, has cast over him. Ordinary evils of ordinary lives are a very different proposition from the precipitated evils in the life of Chelaship. Persistent treading of the Inner Path that leads to Adeptship ultimately brings one to that stage when the whole force of evil power is arrayed against the good end he has set before him. Mr. Judge has remarked that every real aspirant will some day, in some life, arouse the "Dweller on the Threshold," of which there is more than one kind. The very act of trying to conquer the inner foe with the help of the Higher Self stirs up the slumbering *Tanhaic* elementals. These, sensing instinctively the danger to themselves, coalesce to become one composite entity and to overthrow if possible the would-be Adept of Light. The neophyte has to drive it out

of his system and face it objectively as his own Elementary. Not till he destroys that Elementary by the power of the Inner Ego is he safe; for, if this "thing of darkness" is allowed to gather strength, it will eject the Ego, usurping its place, ultimately producing the phenomenon of the "Soulless" man. In Hindu Esotericism this human elemental in the devotee is named *Papa-Purusha*, the man of sin.

It is of this peculiar "personified temptation" that *The Voice of the Silence* speaks:

This light shines from the jewel of the Great Ensnarer (Mara). The senses it bewitches, blinds the mind, and leaves the unwary an abandoned wreck. (Pp. 8-9)

Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. Use them as they will thee, for if thou sparest them and they take root and grow, know well, these thoughts will overpower and kill thee. Beware, Disciple, suffer not, e'en though it be their shadow, to approach. For it will grow, increase in size and power, and then this thing of darkness will absorb thy being before thou hast well realized the black foul monster's presence. (P. 13)

The ladder by which the candidate ascends is formed of rungs of suffering and pain; these can be silenced only by the voice of virtue. . . . Woe unto him who dares pollute one rung with miry feet. The foul and viscous mud will dry, become tenacious, then glue his feet unto the spot; and like a bird caught in the wily fowler's lime, he will be stayed from further progress. His vices will take shape and drag him down. His sins will raise their voices like as the jackal's laugh and sob after the sun goes down; his thoughts become an army, and bear him off a captive slave. (Pp. 16-17)

Such a fearful and dangerous experience the beginner is not likely to encounter. In most men and women the force of evil circulates as an inchoate mass. It is the resolve to displace it, taken by the earnest and devoted practitioner of the Theosophic life, that awakens it to life. In the candidate for Adeptship, there rages an ever-strengthening struggle against the "man of sin" within. It is to this that *The Voice of the Silence* refers when it says: "The more thou dost advance, the more thy feet pitfalls will meet." The Great Ensnarer draws the aspirant to the three Gates of Hell — the domain of Mara, the Devil. *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha* — Lust, Wrath, Greed — develop in him, colouring the mental consciousness to such an extent that time and again the would-be Adept forgets his mission; nay, more, allows the Inner Ego to be driven out. Therefore are we told: "Ere thou canst near the goal . . . thou must have mastered all the mental

changes in thy Self and slain the army of the thought sensations that, subtle and insidious, creep unmasked within the Soul's bright shrine."

No devoted and persevering aspirant can escape special tests in the shape of subtle temptations. Each has to pass through the "portal of assembling" where "Maha Mara stands trying to blind the candidate by the radiance of his 'Jewel.'" To prepare himself for the future, the student-aspirant of today is called upon to get his "mental luggage" ready. For all those who know little of the depths of "human nature," H.P.B. wrote the article "Chelas and Lay Chelas" (reprinted in *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*). That memorable article contains everything in germ: the rules, regulations, difficulties, operations of and about Chelaship. A careful study of this article is a must for all those who would take the first step in fitting themselves for the noblest of all pursuits, the study of the Science of Life and the Art of Living.

The beginner's duty to himself, to the race and to the Cause he has resolved to serve requires that he make it his first concern to fight Lust, Wrath and Greed in the small affairs of everyday life. His *present* efforts to purify himself will aid him later when he has to face the Great Tests. Let him control these forces now, at the very start, when they are isolated, even though very strong. Once they coalesce and become one, as sooner or later they will, the subduing of the Personified Temptation which kills the Soul will prove to be an infinitely more difficult undertaking. Forewarned is forearmed.

Light would be incomprehensible without darkness, to make it manifest by contrast; good would be no good without evil, to show the priceless nature of the boon; and so, personal virtue could claim no merit, unless it had passed through the furnace of temptation.

—*Isis Unveiled*, II. 280

SCIENCE—RELIGION—PHILOSOPHY

In this scientific age, many are apt to consider science to be more important than religion or philosophy. Even students of Theosophy sometimes forget that the Ancient Wisdom is not any one of these but is the synthesis of all three. Any one of these branches of knowledge is incomplete if divorced from the others, and the need to synthesize all three is what the world, and our students, do not always appreciate. People are glamoured by the researches of science and by the discovery of knowledge pertaining to the physical world, knowledge that the ancients are supposed to have been ignorant of. Students of Theosophy must bear in mind that much that is unknown to us today or that we think has been newly invented was known in ancient times. Can we build today such structures as the great Pyramids although we believe ourselves to be much more advanced in the knowledge of architecture than were the ancients? Can we make the dyes that Egypt made, or embalm a form as they did their mummies? To avoid being glamoured by science today, let us pause and remember that, besides the need for a right approach to knowledge, there is also to be considered the use of the knowledge gained and the reason for acquiring knowledge, the goal towards which we are evolving, which should lead us to philosophy and religion.

Many writers of the day are drawing attention to the imbalance in the total view of life caused by the glamour of science. Dr. Henry Margenau, former President of the Philosophy of Science Association in America, and Professor of Physics and Natural Philosophy in Yale University, writing in *Ethics and Science* states that "Ethics is a matter of concern to us largely because of its failures; science is the object of admiration because of its successes." And he goes on to say:

Rarely is there an acknowledgement today of the patent fact that human societies would be impossible except for the order and uniformities ethics has indeed achieved, or of the usefulness of ethics as that singular accomplishment which elevates man above nature and thereby enables him to develop such disciplines as science.

In *Mother Earth* for October 1964, in the review by Robert Waller of Jacques Barzun's *Science, The Glorious Entertainment*, we read:

The belief that science deals with some kind of ultimate reality and is therefore reliable when other forms of knowledge are mere speculation has led to our accepting ourselves as mere units in a

statistical analysis. . . . "If he is to climb out of his abyss [says Professor Barzun] man must again learn to philosophize."

In the same magazine, we read in the Editorial Notes:

Nature dies when we believe that reality is what scientific analysis reduces it to: this is objective truth; any other concepts of reality are subjective and personal fantasies. . . . Our anxiety has inevitably shifted from concern for the soul to concern for material existence alone: as a result of the triumph of scientific analysis man and nature are machines and everyone is haunted by the dread that they may go wrong and we shan't know how to put them right. . . .

The unity of theory and practice in science has been a triumph that it would be folly to throw away. . . . But the fact of the matter is that we cannot live by scientific knowledge alone.

This last statement we can well believe, the more so if we ask ourselves: "What has science done for us today?" It has probed the mysteries of the material world and enlarged our vista and knowledge of other parts of the infinite universe. But it has brought its problems. In medicine, for instance, we find new "cures" keeping pace with new diseases. And let us remember that there is no limit to the knowledge that can be gained. What is being uncovered today may become the knowledge taught in the elementary schools of the future, while scientists will keep probing far greater mysteries. What is known today in the various branches of science may seem very rudimentary in comparison with what will be known in the future. Even the greatest missiles and instruments of destruction of today might seem not so formidable compared to what might be discovered tomorrow. Whither are we tending?

A student of life should pause to think what help it is to life and to the evolution of man to send rockets to the moon and to the planets, or to orbit the Earth. When half the world is living in poverty, in famine conditions, without facilities for education, of what value is all this research? Is space research, with all the expense it involves, really worth while? Does knowledge about the moon's surface mean as much to humanity as understanding of life's purpose (religion), or how to progress to the goal of life (philosophy)? Could not the time and money spent on needless "research" in many fields be better utilized for true education, which is the unfolding of the capacities of mind and heart and body, that is, the gaining of the knowledge of how to live better, more useful, lives?

What is the cause of the unrest among the youth of today? Lack of the knowledge of life, its purpose and goal. Religion has ceased to attract the youth because it instils fear of the consequences of one's acts. Man, having grown to the state of responsibility, wants freedom, but the means to attain this freedom are not taught; he wants happiness, but the means to it are not taught; all want to profit by the findings of science, to make physical life more easy, but the means to reach this condition are not taught.

Many writers are stressing the fact that science is but *one* of the ways to knowledge. Certainly it discovers knowledge, but what we sometimes fail to see is that this is changing knowledge. Each advance is treated as final by the ordinary man. Yet we have seen the theories of even the best of scientists disproved by further advances. Knowledge regarding the material universe is only a stepping-stone to further knowledge.

Students of Theosophy should remember that there are the great Scientists who for generations have tested and verified the traditions of old by their own observations and experiences. They are men who have developed and perfected their physical, mental, psychic and spiritual organizations to the utmost possible degree, and who, by the vision they have gained, have studied and recorded the true Science of the Universe. All that modern science is doing is to get nearer and nearer to this Knowledge. *But that Knowledge already exists.* Let us constantly remember that this ancient Knowledge can never change any more than pure mathematics can change, at least for our present earth-cycle. Modern science must be judged in the light of Theosophy, not Theosophy in the light of science, for science changes century by century, while Theosophy, being synonymous with Everlasting Truth, is changeless.

What is of real value to us is the scientific attitude, *i.e.*, believing nothing unless it can be proved by us, either by logic and common sense, or has been proved by others in such a way that we, too, can prove it for ourselves when we have gained the necessary knowledge. In the meantime, we can accept such facts as axioms, practise them, and so prove them for ourselves.

But what shall we accept as axioms? Surely not the ever-changing scientific theories of today. It is in the realm of ethics that we find a more permanent body of knowledge available to all. Most people are not aware of the Ancient Wisdom's teachings as to the *science* of the universe, but everyone is or can be aware of the age-old knowledge of the laws of true ethics as they have been kept alive in the teachings of the Great World

Teachers down the ages. Pseudo-ethics and morals have grown up in terms of material living, and these change from time to time, but the fundamental ethical principles taught by the Teachers remain unchanged, though their practice or non-practice varies from time to time and among different peoples. It is the scientific approach to all true ethical principles that has to be emphasized today, because thus alone can we prove the laws inherent in them. People will not follow these principles as long as they are bound up with the idea of "command" by a God. Taken as means of progress in evolution, which if followed will produce certain results and if not followed will produce other results, they will become more acceptable.

With regard to religion, true religion never alters; pseudo-religion constantly changes. We have before us today the strange anomaly of the Roman Catholic Church changing so many of its dogmas. If it changes its pronouncements now, then that is tantamount to admitting that what it has taught in the past has been wrong; and even now is it sure that what it is setting forth is right? How can people have faith in a Church that changes its doctrines? Can Truth ever change? The essence of true religion never alters, for it is based on Spiritual, Impersonal, Universal and Omnipresent principles, which lie at the core of everything, though in latency. The goal to be reached and the way to reach it constitute true religion, which inspires the heart and lifts man from the purely material or purely intellectual to the recognition of his own divinity.

Philosophy also is changeless at its root, for life in whatever century is fundamentally the same; the details alone alter. But a false philosophy, like false religion, can prove more dangerous than living by the partial truths of science. Neither true religion nor true philosophy can make war between man and man or man and any part of the Whole; both are meant to be lived and experienced; neither can be forced on anyone. Religions, if traced to their source, can never create enmity between men, nor make man turn Nature to his selfish use. Science, though helping to ease the burden of life on the one hand, also has its evils. All scientific advances have both a good and a bad side. Therefore philosophy and religion must keep the balance and show how scientific advances are to be used. "Man shall not live by bread alone," said Jesus. Man must see that religious teachings, the philosophy of the good life, science and its uses on the physical plane, are all tools, instruments, physical, mental and moral. Man remains separate from all three, but only advances by the use of all three for the benefit of the Whole.

COSMIC MIND — SOME THOUGHTS

The concept of a "Cosmic Mind" or an intelligent *Universal* PRINCIPLE that unites into a homogeneous *whole* the purposes and activities of all Nature is as difficult of understanding for the average man of today, or even for the modern philosopher, psychologist and scientist, as it was a century ago. The present-day orthodox savants engaged in the various departments of research are still very much influenced by the concepts evolved by 19th-century materialism, which we have all learned under the present system of education, and these concepts influence the interpretations of the now more refined observations of natural phenomena. The average man is sure of his personality and is usually imbued with the idea of his separateness from others — be they men or things. This attitude is inculcated and encouraged by modern education, based as it is on those social ideas which became confirmed under the influence of 19th-century materialism. We all suffer from them. Part of H.P.B.'s mission it was to break open this mould and to revive the concept that consciousness is universal, that in every organism there exists a Vital Principle independent of any physical or chemical processes. It is known under many appellations in various ancient systems, and is sometimes called the Cosmic Mind.

The archaic Esoteric Philosophy posits as an axiomatic fact the existence of a Universal Mind — cosmic in scope and range, omniscient, timeless, purposeful. It also posits, for our clearer understanding of this, that every atom is an independent entity; that every cell is a conscious unit. All exhibit free will and the power to choose within the limits of natural Law.

On what are these axiomatic principles based?

The Secret Doctrine offers three fundamental propositions: (1) The existence of an impersonal, absolute, *deific* PRINCIPLE — not a personal God — which is unqualified and from which, through a series of emanations, all manifestation springs and into which it returns upon the completion of an evolutionary period. (2) LAW is eternal, immutable, impersonal, ever active, not only on the plane of physical matter, but also on the invisible, inner planes. Motion or emanation from a Spiritual, Deific Essence implies a *plan*, and a plan implies a *Planner* on a cosmic scale — the UNIVERSAL MIND; this underlies, interpenetrates and sustains all forms as the Universal Life-Essence. The Cosmic Plan, under Law, provides for (3) the unity and evolution of all sentient, conscious life. In this

evolutionary scheme the human stage marks an important grade in which the innate sensitivity and awareness has become *self*-reflective, *self*-aware, *self*-conscious; that is, the mind of man is capable of apprehending and reflecting the Universal Mind, of which it is a "ray." The incarnating Ego, Manas (Higher Mind), in every man is one with and a ray from this Universal Mind. Man, therefore, being endowed with free will, has a special responsibility towards the whole of nature.

The Higher Mind, the Individuality, from its habitat, the Akashic plane of Eternal Wisdom, surveys the past, the present and the future with the power of its supersensuous thought. The incarnated personal consciousness (the lower, Kama-tending mind) retains but the limited memories of one incarnation. This lower, psychic mind is the "ambassador," so to say, in the field of incarnation in gross matter, of the higher, noetic mind, the Divine Individual overshadowing each man.

The one common source of all beings, the one common root of life and consciousness, the one common goal of evolution, when apprehended, leads self-conscious man to the path of co-operation and study — the study of all laws — first in his own nature and then in his surroundings, and in all of Nature's departments. Co-operation with all beings that his Karma has put him into relation with — his family, neighbours, city, province, country, continent, and finally the world — arises as the result of this understanding.

The concept of Karma, or the effect that our free-willed thoughts, feelings and deeds have on ourselves and on others, is a natural derivation of the concept of the Universal Mind, or Cosmic Consciousness, which imparts awareness to all Nature and is in all sentient things. Sensitivity to impression is universal. Any disturbance of harmony affects the surrounding conscious beings, and the process of restoring the harmony brings reaction on the disturber, which is Karma.

The average thoughtful person who has been educated into the concepts of constant competition and the goal of massive acquisitions might ask: "If your propositions are true, then why should a man do anything any more? Why not just lean back and permit the general flow of events to carry us 'naturally' forward to the predetermined goal of evolution as you see it?" Another might say: "You have taken away from me my purposiveness! Now that you have told me what the goal of evolution is, you make me seem like a 'plaything of Karma.' You have destroyed my freedom of will because you have destroyed the exciting element of *chance*! I reject your philosophy!" Both these are extreme attitudes which

seem to spring from emotionalism and not from logic or understanding.

The first concept that needs to be borne in mind is that evolution can only proceed if there is *free-willed* action (within the natural evolutionary limits derived from past manifestations). This is evident everywhere in Nature — from the “choice” of the uni-celled amœba in its selection of food to the choice of self-conscious man — to study or reject without further consideration these propositions, for instance. Choice is everywhere evident. Progress in anything is through effort, action, selection, study, experience, and discrimination which leads to true knowledge or wisdom. Nothing in the universe is immobile or static. Motion is a universal manifestation of energy or force, acting under Law on all material forms over a period of time, thus creating cycles of habit and correspondence. Purposeful motion is the Cosmic Mind in action. Each being is involuntarily urged to act by its inherent tendencies. “No one ever resteth a moment inactive,” says Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, where he also states that among the senses and organs he is “Manas”; he is “the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings . . . the beginning, the middle, and the end of all existing things.”

The second important concept we should remember is that the goal of all evolution is perfection of knowledge and the doing of wise actions. The way to it leads through the exercise of discrimination (or choice), using one’s own free will in action in harmony with all other free-willed beings. No one is isolated; each affects others, both when performing actions and when receiving the results thereof. Since the Universe is limitless and eternal, there is no limit to the range of perception and to the acquisition of knowledge; nor is there any limit in time to the seeking individual. This may appear vague, or staggering, as a concept; but, as the personal consciousness widens to the Universal, Cosmic-Mind viewpoint, it becomes omniscient, one with the UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS yet separate as an entity — one with other intelligent consciousnesses in an endless hierarchy. This vision of its own true place in the WHOLE, as a ray undetached from the parent Cosmic Mind, indicates the important position of the individual and the necessity for one’s existence. Once one is satisfied of the *necessity* for one’s continued existence, true contentment and happiness result from such understanding, and one is better able to attune oneself to one’s environment and to the events of everyday life, which, resulting from past choices, offer opportunities *now* for the conscious and deliberate shaping of one’s own future.

Is this concept not satisfactory enough, still? Then, let us look upon

those great examples of perfected men whom we know of through history and tradition — Teachers, Prophets, Saints and Sages of the past who have left their impress on the minds of the men of their own and succeeding generations. What have they all in common? Lofty idealism, exemplary lives, sublime ethical and moral precepts which have influenced and inspired millions of men through the ages, not through organized and orthodox priestcraft, but through their innate worthiness, logic and practicality. These elevated concepts raise men's petty, personal and selfish minds to levels of selflessness and individual perfection, in company with and for the benefit of others. The Knowers and Teachers of these ideas form a Great, Silent, Invisible but ever active and potent Body — a Lodge of Great Men. We revere them as true servants of Nature and protectors of mankind, as Elder Brothers and Masters, to whom we can turn for help and guidance so that we, too, following the Path they show, may some time, some day, reach their plane of sacrifice, of compassion and of duty well done. To these self-made men we offer our reverential salutations.

I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

—SIR ISAAC NEWTON

OTHELLO

THE TALE OF A HYPNOTIZED SOLDIER

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“The Adepts assert that Shakespeare was, unconsciously to himself, inspired by one of their own number.”

—*Echoes from the Orient*, by WM. Q. JUDGE

Adepts, cherishing always the purpose to bring enlightenment and reformation among men, and having always to deal with the mind of the race as They find it, are naturally interested in all men and movements, including the literary and the theatrical, that can aid Their purpose.

Human evils have certain great tap-roots from which spring many branches. If, then, one tries to view European life at and shortly before Shakespeare's time with even a trifle of the insight that an Adept must direct to it, he finds prominent several grievous vices, some standing out with horrid clearness. Among them were overweening ambition, egregious self-pride, much ignorance and fear concerning the spiritual, undue intellectualism with lack of ethical balance and clear judgment, weakness of will or passivity, resulting in openness to many forms of degenerating influences, and most excessive, perhaps, sex corruption.

It was (and still is, of course) impossible to give in fiction and drama broad, accurate pictures of life and omit these evils. What the Adepts must, therefore, have wished to do was, first, to lessen the wickedness in actual life; and, second, through the inspiring of Shakespeare, to augment the moral goodness by such theatrical presentments as would stimulate interest in the triumph of the virtues rather than in a display of the vices. Herein, accordingly, lies one of the differences between Shakespeare's plays and most of those of his contemporaries. And even though in his own life he yielded in a measure, there must have been, native to Shakespeare's deeper character, a degree of superiority to all these vicious habits. If his nature had leaned down into the depravities instead of struggling to rise out of them, he never could have been a focus for Adept Influence. Nor could he have used it.

Chivalry was a blend of idealization of war and idealization of sex, intended to lessen the evils of both. Wherever people sincerely followed in each direction the chivalric training, much benefit was experienced. But when in sex life they became Lancelots and Guineveres, their example was all the worse for the idealized cover. Beneath that fair outside, there

came to be a social rottenness that "smelled to heaven." So prevalent was sensuality, both open and concealed, that no woman was trusted without secret reservations. The moment calumny smirched her, she was almost automatically condemned as false. Only the most startling proofs of innocence could reinstate her.

Thus there resulted from chivalry a very double-sided attitude toward women — one that exalted them as nearly impossible paragons of virtue and beauty, and the other thrusting them like filthy beasts beneath the feet of those deceived. With warriors and in those war-filled ages, the relations of sex and marriage often gained a peculiar intensity. The necessary absence from home of the husband and father, with his consequent fears and quick jealousies, the physical inability of women to be soldiers and the corresponding self-importance of men, the brutal treatment of women prisoners, the degenerating effects of degraded women camp-followers — all these helped to create and intensify that double attitude toward women of idealization and of their debasement. Social customs, too, of the chivalric period and later were extremely ambiguous — as they are today — often permitting personal and bodily familiarities that could and did both suggest evil and yet excusingly shield it.

Besides the chivalric traditions, and fusing with them, were the new and equally powerful thought-currents of the Renaissance. The revival of Greek and Roman learning, customs and ideals brought to Europe a great, fresh vitality, an eagerness to break away from mediæval fetters and a determination to develop to the fullest the individual human self. The period was a magnificent outburst of an intellectual energy that had been lying dormant, of a physical energy that was seeking other expressions than war, and of an emotional energy that had been twisted away from its natural outlets both in domestic life and in perception of the truly spiritual. Yet though the Renaissance forces were liberating and enlightening, they were also confusing and disorganizing. Determined not to be restricted, the mind of the time became guilty of great excesses. Although there was refinement and growth in art and literature, these no more than chivalry could put effective checks on brutal lusts and savage passions. This was especially true in Italy, which set the fashions and moral standards, and produced some particular characters which historians have for convenience called "Italianated." The craving for unrestricted self-development led Italianated men and women to commit the worst crimes without conscience, or even to justify them by a kind of conscience, for self. The crime was little if the individual end was reached. Again, since

education and social freedom existed alike for men and for women, and since both were breaking away from accepted standards, including the ethical, a variation of the type was produced which brought about an increase, even over preceding periods, of open sex immorality and disbelief in loyal marriage.

Hence, as true domestic and sex life are the foundation and nursery of all other forms of morality, it is not strange that Shakespeare, following the lines of general thought, and also following unaware the guidance of the Higher Influence on him, made several of his plays hinge on that double attitude toward women of unwise exaltation and equally erring debasement. By his day the attitude had engendered in men a disbelief in women that was inherent, almost instinctive. In *A Winter's Tale*, for example, the husband, Leontes, turns violently against his wife for no reason except those ambiguous social customs. With Leontes, that disbelief in women becomes an insanity, nothing less. His plan to have the supposedly guilty friend poisoned is frustrated, but he sends away his wife and her just-born daughter. Swift reaction comes upon him by the pining unto death of the little son through grief for his mother. Only gradually, and because of the adverse judgment of an oracle, does the husband come to see correctly his terrible and baseless folly.

In three other important plays the man is fooled by skilful lies intensifying very slight visible evidence (supposed) of the woman's infidelity. The motive of the deceiver is selfish gain. The psychological reason for the quick credulity is that same deeply inherent distrust of women's loyalty. Shakespeare, by showing the injustice and folly of the man's distrust, by revealing the woman's faithfulness and prompt forgiveness, must have done much to break down that common disbelief.

Of those three plays one is a comedy, as its title indicates, *Much Ado About Nothing*, the poet evidently wishing to show the absurdity of what just escaped being tragic. In each of the three appear the same elements — the Italianated intriguer working for self-interest, his foolishly credulous victim dominated by palpable lies, and the innocent, loyal, persecuted, yet forgiving woman. All the chief persons have been bred in the chivalrous social thought and exhibit its virtues as well as its grossness.

In *Cymbeline* the young Briton, Posthumus, having received all possible exhibitions of loving loyalty from his self-sacrificing wife, makes a wager — with an Italian — that her faith will stand against any temptations. Why does Posthumus not see that his shrewd designing opponent, delighting in his self-superiority as an Italian compared with a Briton,

will do anything at all to win his wager? The answer is that Posthumus too, unknown to himself, is infected with the poisonous distrust of a wife's faithfulness. It is worth noting that of the four plays on this theme, three end in peace and the establishment of proper family life, the possibility being thus emphasized.

As for *Othello*, the disbelief in women and the situations arising out of it here reach their climax of heavy tragedy. There is added, however, in this drama another plot element which greatly intensifies the evil conditions — that is, the use of hypnotic power.

Hypnotism is the compulsive influence exerted and the effects produced by a man consciously entering someone else's mental life and transforming it. When not directed to healing physical disease (and at times even when it is), hypnotism is usually a misuse of the tremendous and mysterious power in Nature called will — a misuse because the effort is intended to change or destroy another's individual will and make it follow the hypnotizer's selfish purposes. The one hypnotized may or may not remain wakingly conscious, or may not even be aware of the extraneous influence. Hypnotism for selfish ends was certainly one of the crimes of that earlier day (as of this), which Adepts most strongly rebuked, for it is Black Magic. There is, however, an important element in hypnotism that often is not acknowledged — that is, the victim's own responsibility. For, if he remains able to choose his thoughts and acts, and if then his behaviour under the hypnotic influence is quickly and markedly different from what it has been before and from what is expected, there must be reasons in the mind of the victim himself why that transforming influence can operate. In other words, since man is a chooser and a self-governor, no one's mind can be transformed by another unless he, even though in part unknowingly, permits it to be.

Hence, when one sees Othello's mind change from loving gentleness to blind fury, the questions arise: Why, psychologically, can this happen? What forms are taken by that inherent distrust of women? Further, what are the inmost reasons and the innermost character of the hypnotizer — why is Iago at work on Othello and with such merciless methods?

Perhaps some light may be thrown on these questions by regarding this play as a complex picture of militarists, one of them being the hypnotizer. Othello, Cassio, and Iago are soldiers of fortune who have pledged their services for a time to the City of Venice. The hypnotism exerted on Othello and Cassio concerned their private lives, but through characteristics common to soldiers, they were easily open to the particular

kinds of influence forced upon them by Iago. Cassio was a soldier rather because of the customs of the times. Othello could hardly have been anything else than a warrior.

The mass-belief in the human consciousness of the need of physical war, of the breaking of one will, individual or national, in order that another individual or national will may rule, the belief in the need and inevitableness of destruction and death, in order that there may be an expansion or a defence of national life — these beliefs are primitive, pre-historic, racial. What, then, may be expected in the mentality of professional soldiers but the impulses that create war and the effects of war?

It is important to see that the war impulses — the tendency to iron-handed breaking of other wills, and *the belief in the necessity of destruction, murder and death* — do not lift away from a warrior's mind, as mists do from hills, when he leaves war-conditions to pass into private life. They remain with him, somewhat dulling his reason while putting sharp edges on his emotions. Discipline at one end, slaughter at the other — these nearly make the swing of his mental pendulum. When, therefore, he is angered in the family life, his natural first impulse is to fight. For he expects implicit obedience, and if he does not get it, he often enforces it with severity. All these attitudes and effects may be called part of the race-hypnotism by war. Closely intermingled with these are those attitudes already mentioned toward sex and marriage which, too, make a kind of race-hypnotism — that of sex.

What is called sex exists only on the lower planes of being. There is no sex in the Upper Triad. Yet it does have its ultimate origin in the very highest planes of manifestation, where appears the active creative principle, Spirit, the Moulder, the Ideation; and with this, its necessary complement, the receptive, co-ordinative principle, the Moulded, the ideated Form and Forms. As the Manasic Beings descended into the lower planes of their evolution, carrying along these essential and opposite principles, and as they became more forgetful of the higher duties and purposes of their long manvantaric experience, and more commingled with the ignorant selfishness of animal mind and matter, their active Male principle became clouded with selfish, domineering animal lusts; while the recipient Female principle in them grew less able to resist such domination.

Therein is the root of man's claim of woman as his *property* — a conjoined root of self-aggrandizement on the one side, and on the other of self-passivity becoming weakness. Yet, according to the law of Spirit, it is impossible for one man to be another man's property. And this indi-

vidual self-ownership is a thing that sex does not touch — cannot give and cannot take away.

But recorded history belies this fact. In earlier history, as the brute type of man seized upon a wife-property with brutal hands, and the higher type of man received her bound with stringent human laws, so either type defended her with a sword, often for no better reason than that she was his. All individuality was claimed by the man, the woman having none recognized as her own. And if she stained that thing called his honour — which was always partly his privilege of escaping ridicule from his fellows — he felt justified in holding her to account with her very life because she — his property! — had dared to break his armour of self-esteem. In more recent centuries, if he did not murder her also, he poured his deadly vengeance on the one implicated with her. Few indeed among men and women even today have entirely moved above this traditional deeply entrenched falsity. Divorce and separation do not solve the problem. They only bring postponement.

For reasons mentioned, the thought of wife as property is very strong in the soldier type of man. In Othello it is intense. His modest doubt at first of his ability to win such a woman as Desdemona leads him, after he has won her, to put her on a pedestal which unconsciously is based and supported by all his own secret, deep, turbulent self-valuations. She is HIS — she is the apotheosis of HIMSELF. Most gentle toward her he is, full of an adoring wonder, as long as she remains all compliance; so that to Desdemona's early observation the broad river of his nature seems placid enough. Iago, having seen him in the passions of war, knows or suspects all the other kinds of violence.

Iago's nature has been somewhat forecast by the preceding remarks on the Renaissance. If Iago is not seen against the background of his particular time and country, he can hardly be understood, for he is one of the characteristic Italianated men of that period. Students of Italian biography can probably match Iago point by point with men historically authenticated. The steely intellectualism of the time, the excessive egregious vices in self-seeking, produced such men; determined to advance themselves over any obstacles, snatching away another's success and happiness without a qualm, tricking a man out of money, position or good name for the sport of doing it, and then stepping into his vacant place as justly won by shrewdness, suavity and lack of sentimentalism — selfism towering to the very heavens! Such is Iago. Such were Italianated persons.

Iago from the beginning of the play is full of hate, skilfully covered—revengeful hate toward Othello for unfairly (as he thinks) raising Cassio to a rank over his, and envious hate toward Cassio for having been so raised. To undo them both is his fierce purpose. To him, as the typical self-seeker, the injury is the worst possible; his revenge must match that inexpressible, unforgettable wrong.

Cassio, like many soldiers, is a victim of drink, and despite his better judgment, he is open to temptation. Another flaw in him is the ordinary soldier-type of sex-looseness. To the highly placed woman he is respectful; to the camp-follower, a tyrannical master. Also, when he is displaced for causing disorder through his drunkenness (all of which Iago has skilfully planned), he depends on chance and on intercession by another for his restoration to position. Throughout he is flabby instead of manful.

Of these weaknesses Iago makes instruments—they are the traits and habits on which he centres his evil, deceptive influence. Thus, Cassio's function in the drama is that of a convenience, a middleman, at once a screen, a repository and an unconscious motor of the forces working between the two great protagonists, Othello and Iago.

Desdemona has a somewhat similar function. The supposed love affair in which these two are involved is wholly created by Iago as an aid to his revengeful purposes. Both have fineness of nature and good or harmless intentions. But Desdemona foolishly becomes Cassio's intercessor; and since neither is quite honest in the tangled net thrown around them, each unwittingly draws it tighter.

Iago is quite without kindly feeling, but he can beautifully sham fine sentiments; as when in apparently virtuous indignation and loyalty to his superior he kneels and pledges himself to "wronged Othello's service." Or again when he comforts Desdemona after Othello has openly blamed her for infidelity. Throughout the play he misleads his wife, and in fact makes her also his tool. He uses chance in a truly masterly way, as when he learns from Desdemona's playful reproach to Othello that Cassio had come a-wooing with him. This he carefully cements into his structure of lies. He has no hesitation about stabbing the foolish youth whose wealth he had wasted, because he "ever thus makes his fool his purse." He says:

For I mine own gained knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe
But for my sport and profit.

This sentence expresses Iago's conscience, his deepest purpose in life — everything is for his own sport and profit. As for women, there is nothing to respect in any of them. Love is nothing but lust, and reputation an idle bubble. Religion, if he ever thought of the subject, would be only a "thing of nothing." His mind is as limited and one-sided — though at the opposite pole in keenness — as an imbecile's mind is one-sided. He is what is sometimes called a moral idiot.

To Theosophists, Iago may bring a peculiarly impressive lesson, for he is an example of the soulless being. Said H. P. Blavatsky: "We elbow soulless men and women at every step in life." Such a being is one in whom the lower mind is so gorged with sin and selfishness that it can neither assimilate instruction from its Higher Manas nor produce any thought or action worthy to be assimilated by that Higher Mind. In this way, the lower portion of Manas which could have been uplifted is, instead, thoroughly animalized and lost by being separated from the Higher. True, the intellect, working in the lower fields and sharpened for its own self-interest, may play the part of Beneficence; but it is in fact bloody with its immolated victims. This is the Theosophical doctrine of soulless beings still embodied in earth-life, and becoming the dwelling-places of the worst Black Magicians. Only this doctrine can really explain Iago.

Othello in the last part of the play is a wounded giant, led into snare after snare, which Iago has purposefully created, yet always trusting that same "honest" Iago to guide him through the tangles. The word "honest" is applied many times to Iago, who certainly used his power of suggestion to create such faith in him. The word thus comes to be an index of the degree of hypnosis effected. Othello has become incapable of using his own judgment and good sense — they are silent and inert under the magnetic fire of Iago's thoughts and plans and eyes. Iago's eyes are vibrant with power; Othello's, though rolling with fury, are inwardly dulled and impotent, without thought. Iago's mind is all alert and sharp. The mind of Othello is by contrast almost asleep, obeying and acting out with hypnotic passiveness the hints and dictations of Iago. H. P. Blavatsky remarked:

The eye — the chief agent of the Will of the active operator [the subduing agent], but a slave and traitor when this Will is dormant . . . produces the required unison between [the two personal wills]. . . . Unless entirely free from any selfish motive, a suggestion *by thought* is an act of *black magic* still more pregnant

with evil consequences than a *spoken* suggestion.¹

Pitiable indeed is it to watch Othello's downfall, to compare him now with what he was as the high-minded chivalrous gentleman answering the Duke's questions and being acquitted concerning the honourableness of his marriage; as the confiding, grateful husband; as the one who gained even from Iago the praise of having "a constant, loving, noble nature."

Scrutiny into his past reveals him as trusted servitor of the city of Venice visiting among the aristocracy, yet as a Moor, however cultivated, remaining socially an alien. He has held his own in the intrigues of the "tented field," but says he is "little blest with the soft phrase of peace." As a warrior, he has been either superior, as officer in command; or inferior, as a lower officer. When in command, he could not be a comrade with anybody. Hence he has lacked social contact with his equals, and he is inexperienced in reading others' minds except as inferior or superior. In his relations with Desdemona, if comradeship with her occurred to him, his instincts would be against it. He is her ardent lover, and she is his. But when that love-relationship is disturbed, neither of them knows how to steady and save it. Thus social ignorance renders him helpless against the wiles of such a super-subtle intriguer as Iago.

Besides, military discipline sometimes leads a man to trust a brother officer who is bound to him and has been loyal (as Iago has in the past) almost as much as he trusts his own senses. Also, Othello is not a thinker; he analyses nothing; but he feels so intensely that his sufferings cause him to fall down in a faint. The cold poison that Iago pours into his mind acts like ice-water in a heated boiler — while the quick manipulator is interested only in catching the energy from the explosion to turn the engines of his own advancement. In the very extremes of his torture, Othello shows glimpses of his better self — he would forget about the handkerchief; Iago carefully and three times recalls it to him. He remembers Desdemona's gentleness, her fine needlework, her beautiful singing, "her high and plenteous wit and invention." Iago answers merely, "Nay, that's not your way. She's the worse for all this."

In the scene of the actual murder, when bending over his sleeping wife before "putting out the light" — at that last critical moment he is almost shaken out of his purpose by an inner perception, received from his Higher Self, of her childlike innocence. But he fears her deceptiveness, and decides against the inner monition — so purblind is he through the hypnotic influence, so fixed in his conviction of the wife's fault, of

¹ *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, pp. 129, 131.

Iago's being "honest." After she has wakened, he is angered by her protests of innocence, by her tears of helpless pity for herself, for him, for Cassio, and the whole situation; and at last he fears he may turn into murder the death he has been justifying to himself as a "sacrifice, lest she pollute other men." Yet even then an observer, facing in full the terrible moral vanquishment, and because of it, feels the profoundest pity for this man so sinning and so sinned against.

In the powerful closing scene, where Justice balances her scales, where the intrigues are uncovered, where the hypnotizer and his victim are forced to see what they have been and done, then Othello is finally roused out of his trance of blindness, then he is puzzled and indeed "wrought in the extreme" by the why of it all. Too great of soul to make excuses, he tries by the human codes to even things by wounding if not killing his opposer, and then to punish his own deeds by stabbing himself. Meanwhile, there in bonds, stands the arch-deceiver, the soulless man, facing the devastation he has caused. For this he cares little; but he is also facing in grim silence his own self-wrought inner destruction. He is recognizing those who have been "his companions by affinity of evil" — "companions, alas! no longer; *Masters* now, inhuman, pitiless. . . . The fiends that have all along incited him to laugh at the miseries of his fellow man, and trample under his feet every kindly impulse, every tender sympathy, now make the measureless hells within his own soul resound with their laughter at *him*, the poor deluded fool whose selfish pride and ambition have stifled and at last obliterated his humanity."²

Sex evils, war debasements and hypnotism were the chief causes of tragedy in Othello's and Iago's lives. Perhaps a few observers of the play, when new and since, have been roused by it to a better perception of the generous, true relations of men and women. Also, it may be that the domestic peculiarities of warrior types indicated in it have quickened resistance to the demoralizing effects of war. As for hypnotism, supposedly rather new, it is at present a popular subject of investigation and a sanctioned mode of practice. But far too little attention is paid to the motives behind it. For by the learned it is handled with their prevalent cool disregard of any moral quality, and by the money-seekers it is commercialized as an added source of income.

But the mills of the gods grind on, even if slowly. Perhaps this old play, with its still fresh pictures of life, may yet stir in a few thinkers

² W. Q. Judge, "Considerations on Magic," *The Path*, March 1887 [THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, May 1943].

more seriousness about the intentional selfish manipulation of men's minds and show the need of preventing indiscriminate use of hypnotic methods. Some may even realize the untold possibilities in themselves of wrongly influencing and being influenced; and will perceive that such selfish power as Iago exerted is now called "personality" and "applied psychology." Seeing this, they will reject it as the destructive, vicious thing it is, and will do their duty in making this knowledge more general. All men are susceptible to influence. Life is sustained in part by "influences." What men need is to distinguish, for themselves and others, between the life-giving and the death-bringing. If there is aroused some such understanding of the devastating havoc depicted in *Othello*, the Adepts' purpose has not failed.

Physical life is not necessarily a vale of sorrow. The time must come when we shall have made man's life on earth what it ought to be, when we shall have no fear of anything, when we shall not be afraid of our fellowmen. It was said of Daniel, when he entered the lions' den, the beasts of prey did not touch him at all. Why? Because his heart was pure. He had no harm in it for anyone. He trusted to the spiritual law of his own being, and all nature makes obeisance to that. We could go out calmly, courageously, happily, relying on the law of our own natures. If we did so, we would bring our daily lives in line with that nature; for there is nothing of our action which does not come from the mind, and back of the mind is the *motive* we have in acting. *Motive* is what makes our actions really "good" or "bad." If we are righteous in ourselves and desirous of doing right, then all that we do will flow rightly from us and every function will be a righteous function. All action springs from and is coloured by the motive held in performing it.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

WORSHIPPERS OF THE BODY

The fundamental teaching which underlies all religions of the world is that man is an immortal being inhabiting a mortal body. The Roman Catholic Church has perverted this truth by its dogma of the resurrection of the body of flesh, and is responsible for the materialistic outlook adopted by its votaries.

Man must know his true nature. Is man a God in incarnation or the final refined product of the evolutionary process of Nature? Can blind matter, which, if unaided, acts so haphazardly, alone be responsible for the evolution of the human frame? It has, in fact, taken the higher potencies and Nature æons to fashion and mould the body of man. The evolution of the manifold forms of Nature continues *pari passu* with the evolution of the form of man, which is a miniature copy of the body of the Cosmos. Yet the physical body is the lowest and the most transient of all human principles, and, without the animating inner principles, a useless mass of matter which will disintegrate as soon as death sets in. Yet it is in a body alone that final emancipation may be obtained. Therefore it is to be looked upon as a necessary instrument.

There is an infinite variety of human forms, not only in outward appearance but also in degrees of sensitivity. It is the Inner Man who decides the nature of the body. From this the inference must be drawn that the whole man is a perfectly integrated being. Man is the architect of the body, and the body has to be made a worthy temple of the Inner God. The lives of the body are derived from and akin to those of other kingdoms of Nature, and this points further to the inextricable unity and oneness between man and the Cosmos. These lives have their evolution speeded up or slowed down by the impact of the human Manasic principle. The right attitude towards the physical body is assumed through right knowledge of what it really is, in itself and as part and parcel of the entire human constitution.

Its significance and usefulness rest in the fact that it is the instrument of the Soul; that it has been evolved and perfected by the Self, for the Self. Let us not forget that the first qualification for Chelaship is perfect physical health. The God in us can only act and express himself through a perfected and highly sensitive instrument. The purpose of the evolutionary scheme in which man has a leading part is to rise to the status of conscious Godhood, and this can be achieved only in and through a body.

It is a great error to identify man with his body. By always feeling

and acting on the basis of the body, man draws himself downward, to the plane of the lower forces of nature. The body with all its various functions could be compared to an army whose chief and final co-ordinating force is the mind. If the mind surrenders its leading role, the senses and organs are no longer controlled and lead man to his doom. By indulging in sensual pleasures, such as gluttony, man debases the lives of the body, and they are no longer fit to perform their proper functions. Let us read in this context what Mr. Judge writes in *The Ocean of Theosophy*:

Man could not have his bodily temple to live in until all the matter in and about his world had been found by the Master, who is the inner man; when found, the plans for working it required to be detailed. . . . All of this requires many, many ages, since we know that nature never leaps. And when the rough work was completed, when the human temple was erected, many more ages would be required for all the servants, the priests, and the counselors to learn their parts properly so that man, the Master, might be able to use the temple for its best and highest purposes.

The main problem which faces the people of the world is how to keep themselves well fed! Is it not true to say that the chief cause of half of the population of the earth being on the verge of starvation is that the other half, those who have, are so anxious to preserve, nourish and secure riches for the bodily idol? The real root of the evil lies there. If the body was made to serve the needs of the soul, it would change the world in which we live. Practically all the ills of mankind would vanish into thin air.

Is not the despondency of the warrior Arjuna rooted in the same evil of identification with the body? The beautiful discourse of Krishna in Chapter II of the *Gita* gives us a right perspective of the place of the body in the scheme of things. What does the great Avatar say to his pupil? — “As the lord of this mortal frame experienceth therein infancy, youth, and old age, so in future incarnations will it meet the same. . . . These finite bodies, which envelope the souls inhabiting them, are said to belong to Him, the eternal, the indestructible, improvable Spirit, who is in the body: wherefore, O Arjuna, resolve to fight.” The climax of this teaching is reached in Chapter XIII, where the distinction is clearly drawn between this perishable body or the *Kshetra* and the Knower within, the *Kshetrajna*. “The spirit in the body is called *Maheswara*, the Great Lord, the spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, and also the *Paramatma*, the highest soul.” What *we* really are is not

the body, is not our feelings, or even our ideas, but the Eternal Pilgrim, the Perceiver, the Experiencer. It is by dwelling upon that which is to be realized that the Soul-Ego reaches the terrace of illumination and becomes initiated into the mysteries of Life and Death.

Man's debasement is due to the prostitution of his powers and faculties, starting with those of the physical body. As an illustration, think of what man has made of that most sacred of all powers, the power of creation. Sex life has become not only ugly and unhealthy but also cruel and destructive. The body has become a god and true education is lacking. Our worship of the harmony and sheer beauty of the physical form is misguided. Self-indulgence and self-gratification destroy the beauty and perfection of the form. From within without was the body evolved; from within without has the body to be regenerated, made whole again, so that the God within may shine forth. The body is a living, sentient, receptive instrument; it has connections with every part of the cosmos and can reach to and know the life and consciousness around it. It is on earth a replica of the divine form of Krishna, the Supreme, that has hands and feet in all directions; eyes, heads, mouths and ears in every direction. It has to be rendered worthy of the Inner God.

Though men have grown to worship the body, often they know it not. They cannot think of themselves apart from it. This is the great delusion and foreshadows the death of the soul. But true life and the treading of the path of immortality begin when little by little, day after day, man says to himself, "I am That," and in silence and secrecy repeats the words of the divine Krishna to Arjuna:

It is even a portion of myself which, having assumed life in this world of conditioned existence, draweth together the five senses and the mind in order that it may obtain a body and may leave it again. And those are carried by the Sovereign Lord to and from whatever body he enters or quits, even as the breeze bears the fragrance from the flower.

H.P.B.'S WRITINGS TODAY AND TOMORROW

How shall we view H.P.B.'s works in these days of change? Are they antiquated? Do they need re-editing to bring the thought and language up-to-date with present-day thought and language, just as the Christian Bible has been brought "up-to-date"? Have they lost their appeal?

It would seem that one point students should bear in mind is that H.P.B. gave out knowledge *per se*, not altering it to suit or appeal to her contemporaries or to the people of any particular period. Throughout *The Secret Doctrine* one finds references to other ancient works, showing that such works are still a source of knowledge and guidance to the people of today who wish to learn, just as *The Secret Doctrine* itself will be of value to people hundreds of years hence. The section "Before the Veil" in *Isis Unveiled* (I. ix-xlv), for example, with its emphasis on the Platonic and Neo-Platonic traditions, seems to indicate the continuing importance of this influence for our era. Perhaps we should remember what H.P.B. points out, namely, that *The Secret Doctrine* is to be judged by "humanity and the future generations" (I. viii). Therefore the book must be as suitable for study by future generations as it was by H.P.B.'s contemporaries.

We are taught that the intuition of Buddhi unfolds on the basis of the understanding that Manas builds up. Manas cannot reach further of itself, yet its efforts are a preliminary necessity, since Buddhi remains latent, un-self-conscious, without them. By analogy, the present phase of our Movement is Manasic. Will the new Messenger enkindle the intuition of Buddhi? This would be an unfolding of the heart, not a mere change in intellectual approach.

All presentations of the Truth must be "symbolic" in some sense, since it can never be fully expressed; but words themselves can be symbols through which intuition perceives in a larger, deeper measure.

Anyone in touch with the world of books or with other media of communication must be struck by the wide spread of general, as well as scholarly, interest in symbolism, allegory, myth, legend, folklore and fairy tales. One becomes almost satiated with the "symbols" in fiction, in drama, in literary and art criticism; and though quite often they may go no higher than a dubious kama-manasic level, yet the power of the symbol to "communicate" more completely and satisfyingly is increasingly recognized.

It is surprising how often modern books on these subjects bring up

points on which *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine* and H.P.B.'s other writings have something pertinent to say. There has also been interesting scholarly research into symbolism, especially into the twisted strands of Hermetic, Platonic, Gnostic and Kabbalistic traditions. Generally the attitude taken is that of outside observers and the interpretation is not always correct. But some writers, influenced by the tradition as a living power, have, for example, illumined Shakespeare's plays as moral allegories of the Higher and Lower Self.

But the present attitude towards symbolism may itself be a danger. In this period which revives the religious cosmopolitanism of the Alexandrian civilization, will the error made then repeat itself? Will the present attitude of tolerance and the tendency towards unification result in simply another amalgam of exoteric, ritualistic religions, instead of a recognition of the Wisdom-Religion as the source of all faiths? This would mean simply a new orthodoxy resulting from the remains of the older ones, and finally destroying its predecessors as Churchianity did. Whether the desire for union between faiths is good or bad depends on the basis for union.

A union, under the pressure of the cycle and of public opinion, between those with only a superficial knowledge of the inner meaning of Theosophy and those who are ignorant exotericists can only produce another dangerous "half-truth" faith. Theosophists who have the head-knowledge of the philosophy but not enough heart-awareness of the nature of the Theosophical Movement may in all good faith become involved in mixed outer groups, hoping thereby to forward the cause of Theosophy. Whatever the resulting synthetic mixture may call itself, it will not be in the true line of inheritance of the Theosophical Movement. The teaching H.P.B. brought will be needed as much in the future as now, to provide an acid test for the "gold" of Truth, that is, to separate the materialized interpretation of the symbols from the real inner meaning.

We are symbols, and inhabit symbols.

—EMERSON

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONTROL

Mr. Robert Crosbie wrote to a correspondent:

Control is the power of direction, and when exercised in one way, leads to its exercise in other ways until it covers the whole field of operation. . . . If in any one thing control is difficult, begin with the purpose of control in mind, and *stop* at the first indication that control is being lost. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 17)

Control demands awareness; and awareness, concentration on the duty or the task in hand, deliberateness in thought, speech and action. It is beneath the dignity of thinking man to drift from idle thought to fantasy, as the butterfly flits from flower to flower, to act on every passing impulse, supported by no guiding principle.

Control requires not only a controller but also the acceptance by the personal man of his authority. No submission to dictation from without is called for, but the subordination, willing and conscious, by the personality to the Inner Ruler, and obedience to Its behests. In how many, even among earnest students of our great philosophy, is there established the habit of subjecting the inclinations and impulses of the personal man to the judgment of the Soul, the verdict of conscience, before acting on them? Yet he who does not, makes himself too often but a slave to others' promptings and to outer things.

The uncontrolled heart, following the dictates of the moving passions, snatcheth away his spiritual knowledge, as the storm the bark upon the raging ocean. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, II. 67)

Uncontrolled speech, for example, may be mere babbling or it may cause pain to others. Surely the gibe that shows perhaps a superficial cleverness but cuts its victim and may rankle long would hardly pass the lips of the aspirant who had established "the attitude of purposive speech."

In the *Gospel According to St. Mark* (III. 27), appears the warning:

No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

How often, alas, is the "strong man," the lawful ruler of the personality, bound hand and foot by those traitors within the gates, his uncontrolled feelings and thoughts, and rendered by them almost impotent to repulse temptations from without!

In the letter from Mr. Crosbie quoted above he gave the valuable suggestion that a detailed piecemeal effort to control, for instance, our reactions to others' words and actions, or our impulses, or a habit of mind or body, may be less effective than beginning with "the idea, attitude, and purpose of control in all things that concern the vassals of our house. The advance would then be all along the line, and the habit of control established, the *balance preserved*. It sums itself up in my mind as the *establishment of control itself*, irrespective of the things controlled."

There is a mantramic quality to the verse in *The Voice of the Silence* that could be very helpful in the effort to raise the consciousness to a higher level and to subject the personal to the control of the higher nature:

Both action and inaction may find room in thee; thy body
agitated, thy mind tranquil, thy Soul as limpid as a mountain lake.

The close connection between control and calmness is well brought out in the Second Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, where Krishna tells Arjuna that one who, "free from attachment or repulsion for objects, experienceth them through the senses and organs, with his heart obedient to his will, attains to tranquillity of thought . . . and his mind being thus at ease, fixed upon one object, it embraceth wisdom from all sides."

On the other hand, Arjuna is told that "the man whose heart and mind are not at rest is without wisdom or the power of contemplation; who doth not practise reflection hath no calm; and how can a man without calm obtain happiness?"

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to the light I have.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONERS

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From L.T.

1. — Is there any reason why we should publicly denounce and add to the heavy karma of *anyone* in order to thus defend one who is supposed to be an Adept?

Answer. — A denunciation does not add to any karma but that of the denunciator. If others then take it up, it adds to their bad karma. It does not affect the karma of the one denounced. Karma is action. It is action which makes karma or reaction. The person denounced has not acted, even in thought, hence no karma is produced for him until he does so.

There might be reasons why we should denounce a hidden act of wrong, but these must be rare, because most of what we could do to right the wrong can better be done privately. The case differs greatly when the wrong done is public and published by the doers of it. If we assent to a wrong or to a falsehood by our silence, we practically help on the wrong, and this when we might lighten their karma by limiting the numbers of persons deceived by them, as we do when we speak the Truth. To stand by in silence when a public wrong is done is not true fraternity. In sparing the feelings (perhaps) of the wrong-doers, we injure, by our silence, all the great number of brothers who, if we speak for the Truth, have then an opportunity of choosing between the true and the false. The repositories of true knowledge are responsible for their silence in the presence of falsehood if they do not answer those who seek the truth; and this holds good whether the point be a great or a minor one, for Truth is one. Nor does it matter whether the person attacked is an adept or a criminal. If an adept, is he exempt from our fraternity which is universal? If a criminal towards human or divine law, still he is not exempt from that fraternity. By speaking Truth we do justice, not to persons, but to Truth. No consideration of persons, great or small, perfect or imperfect, enters into it. We defend Truth, not persons.

2. — In the name of brotherly love, would the adept wish such expensive defence?

Answer. — Do you call it “expensive defence” to speak the Truth when challenged by falsehood? By limiting the evil effects of my Brother’s deed I help him to that extent. If I do not, I share his bad karma, I injure numbers of others, and I injure him because I have not helped him

to palliate his deed. You limit the idea of fraternity to the one or two persons whose *acts* have demanded a reply and a name, and you ignore practically all those injured by the spread of falsehood. What the adept may or may not wish has nothing to do with the matter. It is a question of our duty, and we put it to our own conscience. We must look to it that we do our duty from our own inner conviction of it; fully that and not a jot more, if all the gods appeared and directed us otherwise.

3. — Why should we publicly denounce under any circumstances?

Answer. — “Denounce” hardly appears the correct word. In the sense of “to point out as worthy of reprehension or punishment,” we should never “denounce.” In the sense of “to make known publicly or officially,” it does not apply in this case, where the doers of a deed have published it in the papers and we have only replied to it.

We take it that our questioner means “condemn.” There is often grave reason why we should condemn an *act*. There is never any reason why we should condemn a *person*. The difference is radical. When a wrong act is characterized justly, we do not therefore imply that the doer, the person, is not, all the same, capable of manifesting, next moment, the hidden god within him, just as he may have manifested the potential *dugpa* at some other moment. When we condemn an act, we take no names in vain; we do when we condemn the whole personality *per se*. In this last case we thoroughly impugn the guiding motive of the soul, which is evolution, and not good or evil *per se*. We may justly keep silence with regard to wrongs done to ourself, for, by our silence, we arrest all other effects so far as we are able, and return a blessing for a curse, thus lightening the possible Karma of our enemy. While pointing out, in cases made public by the doers, the tendency of an *act*, we have the warrant of Truth, as we have not when we condemn persons.

It is not possible to draw hard and fast lines for all cases, nor is it easy to know our whole duty. If we did know it, we should not be where we are. Only he who attempts to keep the Law unbroken for a single hour while looking at the *universal* aspect of things, knows how difficult is this test. There are endless complexities, duties sadder than death. Not sad in final issue, but sad to our ignorance. One such comes before us when, in order to prevent the misleading of many, it is necessary to inflict upon ourselves and upon the few the pain they have themselves publicly provoked by misrepresentation or other departure from true principles. Yet we can do so fraternally, closing no door of love or of return.

—JASPER NIEMAND

REFLECTIONS ON "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"

IV

When Parasara, whose father was devoured by a Rakshasa, was preparing himself to destroy (magically) the whole race, his grandsire, Vasishta, says a few extremely suggestive words to him. He shows the irate Sage, on his own confession, that there is Evil and *Karma*, but no "evil spirits." "Let thy wrath be appeased," he says. "The Rakshasas are not culpable; thy father's death *was the work of Karma*. Anger is the passion of fools; it becometh not a wise man. *By whom, it may be asked, is any one killed? Every man reaps the consequences of his own acts...*"

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 415

Not only does the individual reap the consequences of his acts, but a Manvantara or a planet also emerges as a result of its predecessor. If this is so, could we not say that the "means" literally are, or at least *become*, the "end"?

In some ways it might be said that the best spirit in which to accomplish a task is to behave as if it were already accomplished. This attitude immediately reduces the element of striving and emphasizes "becoming." For instance, if a person wishes, say, to become a "chela," then maybe he would do well to think of himself as one and take up as best he can the life that fits his vision of a chela's life. Or, to take another example, a person believing non-violence to be a more powerful way of life than the way of anger or retaliation could begin to live as if this were a settled fact. This approach puts our philosophy to the acid test. Why? Because it puts our evidence within the realm of *first-hand experience* rather than that of hypothesis or received opinion. We quit believing things "because some old sage said them" and begin to test them within the compass of our own life.

This can be done in an ideational sort of way too, for mind-growth and transformation is a kind of action, or first-hand commitment. For instance, if one thought that study of *The Secret Doctrine* would elevate and transform the mind, this belief alone would not make this possible. There would need to be actual work in the way of gaining first-hand experience to test the idea. If we are to understand what happens to the mind, or even to persevere in our study, we need to set up some kind of experiment that has for its object something other than the commonly accepted reasons for undertaking any study.

Who knows but that *The Secret Doctrine* will not so much give us knowledge as it will act as a catalyst upon our mind-life; *i.e.*, it will change our definition of knowledge by subtly altering the nature of the Search. What one learns and understands of the information and instruction contained in the book becomes of secondary importance compared to the change that takes place in one's *attitude of mind* as a result of its continuing study pursued with an open mind. Disinterested perseverance will bring to us a revelation of the grand design and subtler meanings underlying what on the surface might appear to be complicated and tedious irrelevances.

Of course, one might ask: How will such work strengthen the Theosophical Movement as a nucleus of human brotherhood? How can it make the Movement a more powerful instrument of altruism?

By considering mind-reform a primary means of establishing the foundation for brotherhood, we may more clearly see the need for disinterested study, and the possibility of its making of each a neutral centre from which the work is continued — as if each, in his or her way, were a “miniature” of the Movement.

Is not such work in remaking that which we experience first-hand as the mind a charitable act? It would seem that each of us, in making himself a focus through which the light might pour, aids the Manasic environment of everyone and not just his own. Especially is this so if the idea that *The Secret Doctrine* will transform the mind from a “taker” into a “giver” has some validity. But this means that we have to become as if we were nothing. By remembering that the sun is more a giver of sustenance, a giver of light to all though taking from none, we may get some idea of the drastic change required in our view of what we are, the purpose of the personality, etc.

If by self-abnegation and relinquishment of the personal idea we could enable a universal quality to shine through — something whose use would be determined by the recipient rather than the giver, this would be a great boon, would it not? In fact, it might be something of this quality in a person's devotion that leads us to distinguish between the personal and the impersonal.

The more we become the Universal Principle, and are aware of It from day to day as a background Reason to all that we do, the less real our physical life and our personality become. This does not mean so much that they are denied, as that they take on the character of adjuncts to the *main task*. Of course, to a person identified with the body as if it

were himself, this view becomes impossible. Plotinus describes the difference between these two views when he says:

Everywhere, doing and making will be found to be either an attenuation or a complement of vision — attenuation if the doer was aiming only at the thing done; complement if he is to possess something nobler to gaze upon than the mere work produced.

We act . . . not for something to remain outside ourselves, not in order that we may possess nothing but that we may hold the good of the action. And hold it, where? Where but in the mind? . . .

This vision achieved, the acting instinct pauses; the mind is satisfied and seeks nothing further; the contemplation, in one so conditioned, remains absorbed within as having acquired certainty to rest upon. The brighter the certainty, the more tranquil is the contemplation as having acquired the more perfect unity; and — for now we come to the serious treatment of the subject—

In proportion to the truth with which the knowing faculty knows, it comes to identification with the object of its knowledge.

If a stranger were to catch some intent Soul reading *The Secret Doctrine* over and over again, he might be somewhat perplexed; in fact, he might be puzzled in the same way as a person who eats a different breakfast each morning and prides himself on never having the same thing twice would be amazed to see the gustatory delight of one who eats the same meal each morning.

But to approach our subject in a more serious vein, what conceivably could repetition accomplish? How does one continue? Is not the mind tempted to regurgitate at such a revolving door?

To glimpse how an outer, mundanely available text such as *The Secret Doctrine* might transform our psychological make-up and our very life; to see how so many printed pages might carry more real food than that we put in our stomach with such cyclic regularity, let us continue the Plotinus quotation, for he illumines this point of the Outer and the Inner complementing each other:

Hence the Idea must not be left to lie outside but must be made one identical thing with the Soul of the novice so that he finds it really his own.

The Soul, once domiciled within that Idea and brought to likeness with it, becomes productive, active; what it always held by its primary nature it now grasps with knowledge and applies in deed.

Thus, we might say that H.P.B. went through the anguish and travail of establishing on the outer plane a "valid echo" for us to use in awakening to our "primary nature."

Even in her polemical articles H.P.B. brings us back to the idea that *Search* belongs to each man and cannot be avoided by himself, nor taught by another — for both assumptions are a denial of his basic nature. In *The Theosophist* for February 1883 we read:

We are taken to task for confessing our firm belief in an infinite, all-pervading Principle, while refusing recognition of a personal God with human attributes. . . . Ours is a philosophical conception of that which a true Adwaittee would call "Narayana." It is that same Principle which may be understood and realized but in our innermost thought, in solemn silence and in reverential awe. It is but during such moments of illumination that man may have a glimpse of it, as from and in the Eternity.

And along with this assurance of H.P.B.'s that man, by the *Inner Search to know Himself*, could gain a compass of first-hand experience, she upheld as a corollary the idea that Truth, to be such, could fear no inspection; that man's inward light would prove its value in outer circumstance.

Even when she was not trying to make clear a deep and erudite subject, but only discussing some aspect of everyday life, H.P.B. was ever trying to wean people away from the blindness of fanaticism. She took every opportunity to illustrate that the problem of balance and symmetry in one's life is an individual one and not to be dealt with by any pat formula. She seemed to say that while altruism was indispensable, its roadway must be discovered by each through the higher promptings of his own experience:

[Theosophists] have to bring their *Divine Self* to guide their every thought and action, every day and at every moment of their lives. A true Theosophist ought "to deal justly and walk humbly." . . . the one self has to forget itself for the many selves. "What every man needs first is to find himself, and then take an honest inventory of his subjective possessions, and, bad or bankrupt as it may be, it is not beyond redemption if we set about it in earnest." But how many do? All are willing to work for their own development and progress; very few for those of others. (*The Key to Theosophy*, Section IV)

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

As to the position of the stars and real Astrology: Judge has said that it is not solitary stars or sidereal bodies that affects us but the whole dome — the complete conjunction of all the bodies in the firmament it is that affects us. I would not bother to get a horoscope prepared for any child that is born. Please see what Vol. I of the *S.D.* says — the section on Karma and Cycles.

In an early volume of THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT [Vol. XIII, January 1943] we have reprinted several articles on astrology. The basic principle of the whole process is well described by H.P.B. in *S.D.*, Vol. I, p. 646. All prognostications are founded upon cyclic computations. The chart of the heavens is a photograph, so to speak, which says, "Such-and-such an influence is now due" — like the clock or watch which we use. *We* determine that our breakfast is at eight, but the watch tells us, "Now it is eight; go for your breakfast." Do you get me?

Suppose instead of saying that heavenly bodies affect us we say that we make an impress on heavenly bodies in their respective motions, and we will be able to glimpse the truth. But not only humans so affect; all the visible and invisible kingdoms affect the bodies of the sky. But it is true, it is well-nigh impossible to calculate what any particular person will do at a given moment; the free will of man is in itself a motion and for most an erratic motion. Then, H.P.B. speaks in the *S.D.* (I. 572) about the star of the personality which changes at every incarnation and the Manvantaric star of the Individuality.

The question of free will arises only in the human kingdom. So astrology has its correspondence in natural impulse and then in self-induced ways and means. It is difficult to reconcile determinism and free will. But the force of will, in quality as in quantity, to be exerted by a person is *calculable* by an Adept, maybe a very high-grade Adept.

The passage you ask about in *The Voice of the Silence* [pp. 39-40] is puzzling, especially the Sun "falling" and becoming a planet. By analogy and example we can grasp at least one meaning. Think of a great scholar who, instead of going on with securing further knowledge, takes a teaching job in a college to help a certain grade of pupils who are stuck because there is no one to teach them. Venus points the way; it is by turns

the morning star Lucifer and then the evening star Hesper; the Goddess of Wisdom, patron, so to speak, of the Higher-Mind Hierarchy. She is responsible for the Birth of Man and also for his Passing. Our Higher Manas should and does point out to us the way; and when it is active in us, even for a while, it energizes and inspires us to serve other *souls* and *minds*. Mars is the God of War and Love; our higher aspirations fight our lower desires — or ought to; the lower desires conquering lower Manas is the material aspect and similarly love. There is the blind Cupid and the all-seeing Eros — the Love that sees and understands. The watchful single-eye of Mars sweeps over slumbering humanity. Read what the *Glossary* says about Kamadeva. Mercury is the God of Wisdom — Budha — the Patron-Saint of all who seek the Secret Wisdom, Gupta Vidya. The Power of Protection comes from It or Him. These Dhyanis symbolize forces and powers of significance in Occultism.

In more than one place it is stated that Planets stand for Regents or Dhyanis whose Homes these Planets are. Every Planet has a Dhyani-Buddha, and in each of the seven Hierarchies there are Intelligences, and so each Manas as Thinker belongs to a "House" as they say in astrology. The *S.D.* says that a Planet results in evolution after a long travelling.

The seven groups are evolving along seven lines. Let us compare them to seven professions — architect, engineer, lawyer, doctor, artist, etc. No one is superior or inferior to the others. They are different and equally useful to civic life. The difference in the seven Rays or Lodges is not of powers and knowledge and virtues as of technique. They all have the power to know and to serve, but each Ray has a technique of its own. Of course individualistic differences do seem to persist. Shelley and Keats are both poets with intuition; there is similarity of message but difference of technique.

The man who regards his own life and that of his fellow creatures as meaningless is not merely unfortunate but almost disqualified for life.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

It is now only a matter of time before Britain abolishes the death penalty for murder. Mr. Sydney Silverman's abolitionist Bill was carried in the House of Commons late in December by a majority of 185; and when the House of Lords follows the Commons' lead — which it is expected to do by early spring — a major victory will have been won by those who have been fighting against this barbaric practice for many years. Recently, many lawyers and authors too have joined the ranks of abolitionists.

Once Britain does away with capital punishment, only two countries in Western Europe — France and Spain — will still retain capital punishment. None of the other abolition countries have faced a sharp rise in the incidence of murder, which suggests that the death penalty never acted as a notable deterrent (*Time*, January 1). The theory of the deterrent is based on an inadequate understanding of the psychology of those who commit murder.

It has taken the reformers a long time to convince British public opinion of the futility, and indeed the perversity, of capital punishment. One wonders how long it will take the authorities in this country to see reason on this question. There are, however, some hopeful signs. *The Times of India* of January 14 reports that the question whether capital punishment should be abolished has been referred by the Government of India to the Law Commission, and the latter has issued a questionnaire seeking the views of the public — individuals and representative organizations — on whether the death sentence should be abolished or retained, for all or any of the offences which are now punishable with death under the Indian Penal Code; whether the existing law is sufficient to achieve the object of capital punishment; and, in particular, whether the sentence of death acts as a deterrent.

This is a time for changing consciences, and even those who do not know of the weightier Theosophical reasons for doing away with capital punishment yet do support the abolitionist cause. The death penalty is an irrevocable punishment, and its finality is truly terrifying when one realizes that a person who sends another to the gallows is after all not infallible. Moreover, even the best machinery for discovering the truth of a crime can go wrong. And, finally, there is very little to be said for retributive justice which demands a life for a life.

There are those who argue that the abolition of the death penalty should be coupled with the extension of the life sentence to periods ranging from 25 to 30 years. But there are arguments against this too. As the *Manchester Guardian* recently stated:

If hanging is the wrong penalty for murder, is imprisonment the right one, and for how long? There are good grounds for thinking that a sentence of more than nine years or so produces a permanent deterioration in a human being, and it is a grave thought that a man who went into prison with a warped mind may emerge with a crippled one as well. The right answer surely is — going far beyond the confines of Mr. Silverman's Bill — that we ought to pay far more attention to the reformatory aspects of prisons, even in (or perhaps especially in) the most serious cases, and not rely solely on the deterrent effect. There have been some marked improvements in recent years in the handling of ordinary prisoners. . . . But the whole conception of the prison as a therapeutic community (using sometimes drastic forms of therapy, but aiming always at a radical change in the prisoner) is something in which we have barely made a start. We shall make slow progress until much more effort (and money and skill) is put into it.

These days when we hear so much of the renewal in Christianity, it is pertinent to remind ourselves of H. P. Blavatsky's words that

what the world now wants is a Church that will . . . be at least on a level with the ideas and knowledge of the times. Dogmatic Christianity is not suited for a world that reasons and thinks, and only those who can throw themselves into a mediæval state of mind can appreciate a Church whose religious (as distinguished from its social and political) function is to keep God in good humour while the laity are doing what they believe he does not approve; to pray for changes of weather; and occasionally, to thank the Almighty for helping to slaughter the enemy. It is . . . spiritual guides that the world looks for today — a "clergy" that will give it ideals as suited to the intellect of this century as the Christian Heaven and Hell, God and the Devil, were to the ages of dark ignorance and superstition. (*Lucifer*, December 1887)

The story of the "new Reformation" that is taking shape in Christianity today is told in the weekly newsmagazine *Time* (Asia Edition) for December 25, 1964. Even in the most tradition-encrusted of churches,

the Roman Catholic Church, priests and laymen are calling for reforms of outdated rules and rituals. The passion for renewal which the Second Vatican Council has unleashed has had a striking impact on other Christian churches as well. The spirit of dissatisfaction with the churches of today and the recognition of the need for reform is perhaps an indication that "the people have come of age," as H.P.B. said, "and have taken their thinking and the direction of their social, private and even spiritual affairs into their own hands, for they have found out that their clergy know no more about 'things of Heaven' than they do themselves." Although the day might still be far away when organized churchianity will be seen to be utterly remote from the real Christianity of Jesus the Christ, yet for a comparative study of religions it is necessary for us to keep in touch with the changing climate of the times.

One major trend today is towards unity among the various Christian churches; to many, ancient divisions now seem irrelevant. As *Time* reports, "The big branches of Christianity more and more make common cause in facing the world."

Besides ecumenism, there are other important trends as well. The spirit of Christian renewal in 1964, as *Time* sums it up, "is searching, questioning, critical — willing to challenge every doctrine and institution of the church." A considerable body of Protestant and Catholic reformers, ranging from bishops to informed laymen and seminarians, are convinced that most of the structures of the church have outlived their usefulness. They foresee the day when today's institutional Christianity will have disappeared. These radicals argue that Christ himself was a revolutionary figure, unconcerned with institutions.

The reformers of today believe in total renewal because "the existing pattern of the church is no longer in touch with real life." The greatest challenge to the churches is secularization, which one theologian has defined as "the process of ever-growing independence from any transcendent control." Says *Time*:

What it amounts to, in the blunt phrase of Friedrich Nietzsche, is "God is dead." In a sense, God — the personal, omniscient deity of Christendom — has been dying for centuries. . . . Dietrich Bonhoeffer defined it [the 20th century] as "the world come of age," in which "man has learned to cope with all questions of importance without recourse to God as a working hypothesis."

Not only the understanding of God but also the understanding of the Christ is undergoing a change.

For many churchmen, the Christ that must be preached to this century was defined by Bonhoeffer: "The man existing for others." The Jesus for now is not so much the Son of God but the Son of Man, not so much the risen Lord of Easter as the suffering servant who agonized in near despair on the Cross, who died that the world might live. . . . One implication of this servant Christology is that the church will also be "for others" — ministering to the world, not standing aloofly in judgment against it. . . . One of the most unsettling convictions of modern church thinkers is that Christianity, in a secular society, is far from being the only instrument of divine action. In fact, God may well be more apparent in a purely non-religious organization or movement — such as the civil rights revolution or the fight against poverty and hunger in the world — than in the actions of the churches.

The existing method of worship, too, is now considered archaic and already some ministers and priests are experimenting with unorthodox liturgies. Preaching is on the way out; instead of sermons, the demand today is for study-group discussions between ministers and laymen.

Churchmen agree that theology must turn more to the questions of the significance of human life and the application of Christ's message to the existential circumstance. An influential body of Christian thinkers, though still in a minority, is willing even to go beyond that and to toss doctrine overboard. Many Christians, however, are not yet ready to proclaim the death of the church or to embrace the faith of the future that these modern-day reformers propose; yet all agree that Christianity will be its true self only when it exists for humanity, following the example of Jesus the Christ.

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Dr. Martin Luther King is significant in more than one respect. Ordinarily the prize is awarded to those whose activity has been in the international sphere. Though Dr. King's work for civil rights has been limited to the American scene, the fact that he was selected suggests that he is recognized not only as a leader in the struggle for racial justice but also as a proponent of non-violence, which the Nobel Committee must have felt is as appropriate to international as to internal affairs. This is certainly the position taken by Dr. King. Non-violence, he is confident, is the most potent weapon of oppressed people everywhere in their pursuit of freedom and justice.

In his Nobel Peace Prize lecture delivered at the University of Oslo

on December 11, Dr. King discussed "the poverty of the spirit which stands in glaring contrast to our scientific and technological abundance" (*Peace News*, December 18). This problem of spiritual and moral lag, which constitutes modern man's chief dilemma, he said, "expresses itself in three larger problems which grow out of man's ethical infantilism." These three interrelated problems are: racial injustice, poverty and war.

Dr. King referred to violence as both impractical and immoral for achieving racial justice. Non-violence, which is the only weapon compatible with the integration movement's goal of racial harmony,

seeks to secure moral ends through moral means. Non-violence is a powerful and just weapon. Indeed, it is a weapon unique in history, which cuts without wounding, and ennobles the man who wields it.

On poverty, Dr. King said:

Just as non-violence exposed the ugliness of racial injustice, so must the infection and sickness of poverty be exposed and healed—not only its symptoms but its basic causes. . . . In the final analysis, the rich must not ignore the poor because both rich and poor are tied in a single garment of destiny. All life is interrelated, and all men are interdependent. The agony of the poor diminishes the rich, and the salvation of the poor enlarges the rich. We are inevitably our brother's keeper because of the interrelated structure of reality.

On war, he declared:

Man's proneness to engage in war is still a fact. But wisdom born of experience should tell us that war is obsolete. . . . If we assume that life is worth living and that man has a right to survive, then we must find an alternative to war. . . . It is not enough to say we must not wage war: it is necessary to love peace and sacrifice for it. We must concentrate not merely on the negative expulsion of war, but on the positive affirmation of peace. . . .

This call for a world-wide fellowship that lifts neighbourly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class and nation is in reality a call for an all-embracing and unconditional love for all men.

Psychiatrists have now joined the ranks of those who are trying to prevent war. According to a study entitled "Psychiatric Aspects of the Prevention of Nuclear War," released by the American Group for

Advancement of Psychiatry (GAP), although conflict is an inevitable aspect of human existence, it is not synonymous with war or even with violence. The psychiatrists on the GAP Committee on Social Issues conducted their study of the psychological patterns that lead to war in the hope that their findings might challenge not only the decision-makers but also all those who, ostrich-like, refuse to see the urgency of a new way of thinking.

The study revealed that our fears and our hostility may be leading us into war. Clinical experience is said to have shown that panic is a potent trigger for hostile behaviour and that extreme fear of an adversary is likely to provoke an act of violence.

“War is a social institution,” the psychiatrists say, and all social institutions are capable of change and even eradication. They point to the disappearance of many phenomena which were considered at one time to be deeply rooted — *e.g.*, human sacrifice, slavery, duelling. Today these institutions seem almost ludicrous.

As the GAP committee puts it, “Inflammatory propaganda makes tensions rise to unbearable heights and under this stress almost any course seems better than none at all.” We must, therefore, avoid living in fear ourselves or of instilling fear in our adversaries, for fear of war spurs us into war.

Fear, the psychiatrists aver, also paralyses, dehumanizes. An emotional distance from other human beings develops. This is often accompanied by a diminished sense of personal responsibility for the consequences of one's actions and by an overconcern with the formal structure of society, with rules and regulations rather than people. As the process of dehumanization becomes more and more complete, we begin to feel that other persons do not merit being treated as human, that they are but inanimate items. Such dehumanization is a war signal.

The committee suggests that we must humanize the potential enemy, learn to control hostility, to break down the existing barriers. Above all, we should not try to humiliate our adversary. Experiments have shown that graduated steps can invite steps by the opponent, each step further relieving tension.

Such is the message of peace that the psychiatrists are sending to deliberators in high places. They are convinced, in the words of the Chairman of the Committee, that “Techniques other than war hold more hope for mankind.”
