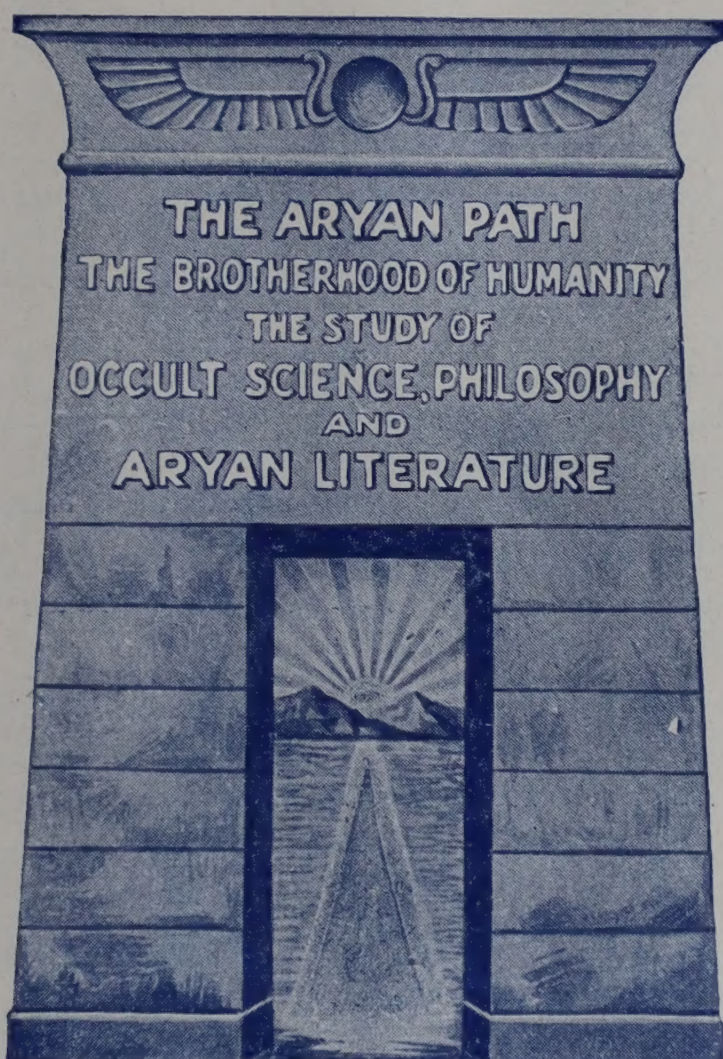




THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO



THE ARYAN PATH
THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY
THE STUDY OF
OCCULT SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY
AND
ARYAN LITERATURE

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January 17, 1946

When ignorant of the true meaning of the esoteric divine symbols of nature, man is apt to miscalculate the powers of his soul, and instead of communing spiritually and mentally with the higher, celestial beings, the good spirits (the gods of the theurgists of the Platonic school), he will unconsciously call forth the evil, dark powers which lurk around humanity—the undying, grim creations of human crimes and vices—and thus fall from *theurgia* (white magic) into *goetia* (or black magic, sorcery). Yet, neither white nor black magic are what popular superstition understands by the terms.—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour ;
- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study ; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।



There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth

BOMBAY, 17th January 1946.

VOL. XVI. No. 3.

CONTENTS

Knowledge and the Power to Know	29
Studies in the Heart Doctrine—I.—The Psychology of the Heart ..	30
The Drink Evil :	
I.—Moral Considerations	32
II.—What Does Modern Science Say ?	34
III.—A Theosophical View—By W. Q. Judge	38
Goethe on Free-will	39
What Shall We Renounce ?	40
Guardians of Peace	42

AUM

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

BOMBAY, 17th January 1946.

VOL. XVI. No. 3

KNOWLEDGE AND THE POWER TO KNOW

Every reader will inevitably judge the statements made from the stand-point of his own knowledge, experience, and consciousness, based on what he has already learnt.—H. P. B.

These subjects (metaphysical) are only partly for understanding. A higher faculty belonging to the higher life must see,—and it is truly impossible to force it upon one's understanding—merely in words. One must see with his spiritual eye, hear with his Dharmakayic ear, feel with the sensations of his *Ashla-vijnyāna* (spiritual "I") before he can comprehend this doctrine fully; otherwise it may but increase one's "discomfort," and add to his knowledge very little.—MAHATMA K. H.

Numerous are the weaknesses of the eyes—myopia, astigmatism, strabismus, etc. Mental vision is similarly affected. The three dimensions of space, or the three divisions of time related to human consciousness produce limitations of our mental perception. Human consciousness using the sense of sight encounters the phenomenon of the horizon; so does it in using the thinking instrument called the mind. Each human mind has its horizon. Human consciousness using the bodily senses meets with the phenomenon of the rising and the setting of the sun, which mental perception reverses, declaring that the sun rises not, nor sets. Similarly, every intelligent theosophist knows that there is the intuitive organon, as superior to mind as the latter is superior to the sensorium.

The empyrean ocean of Wisdom is fathomed only by the Masters of Nature. Lesser minds, however great and profound, are horizoned—"thus far, no farther." The continent of knowledge of each such mind is mapped out by its capacity and has therefore a boundary. Great minds themselves have to be initiated into perceptive mysteries; they have to acquire the special knowledge by developing special faculties (latent in every human being) before they can become Masters of All Knowledge. In one aspect of his

being man is but the outcome and the natural product of his environment and period. Even his ideals are often the result of his temperament, and the outcome of that phase of intellectual progress to which a nation in its collectivity has attained.

Just as a pupil at school in learning any subject not only gathers information but also develops the power to learn more, to observe, to reason and to judge, so also the Theosophical student. In his individual study at home or in the corporate effort at Lodge meetings not only is he gathering data and information; he is also unfolding the latent power of intuitive discernment. New knowledge is an extension of what is already known and the power to know grows *pari passu* with that extension. We acquire more knowledge and evolve more faculties at one and the same time. Emphasis on one of these two aspects alone is the cause of numerous problems confronting the educational reformer, and also the Theosophical pupil who is earnest and enthusiastic about his study.

Two sets of obstacles confront us:—

First, our own personal make-up, founded upon Karma and reared by the skandhas. First, there is the inherent capacity to learn and under-

stand metaphysical and esoteric ideas. Add to this, personal desires, ambitions and the like. In our emotional make-up the presence of jealousy, anger, etc. seriously interferes with our using to the full the capacity we possess. Two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time; when our desires are active our aspirations remain inactive. When we have "made up our mind" on any subject we have given the thinking principle a rigidity and stopped its power to move and to extend in reference to that subject. The immense power of the unconscious and material basis of our nature limits us in ways often unsuspected by us.

Secondly, family, community, nation, race provide us our obstacles as well as our opportunities. We learn to lisp the language of the family and speak it well or ill as we grow. But that does not bar us from learning other languages. A little thought indicates that it is well to know another language and the capacity to learn it is there. Many of our personal prejudices are shallow inasmuch as they are not rooted in our own mind; a little quiet reflection and we are able to deal with that prejudice successfully.

These two sets of obstacles interfere in our acquiring greater Theosophical knowledge and also in our activating on a larger scale the faculty

of intuition. Our duty is not only to keep alive the Light of Intuition in our Soul-nature but to stream forth that Light through the mind and the brain. If our mind is fixed where the Light shines we shall know what is right to say and to do.

When the human mind-soul has acquired the knowledge made available to it in this cycle by the double effort of freeing the mind from the coarsening influence of passions and of making the soul seek the root-light of Spirit it will be ready for that initiation into the perceptive mysteries of which *The Secret Doctrine* speaks.

To come out from among them whose minds run in the narrow grooves of personal pride and prejudices and to become separate is not enough. One has to go among those who are Companions in a very real sense—Companions to the Great Masters of Life. Those Companions are busy learning the first lessons of the Science of practical occultism in the routine of life with its attractions to pleasures, its aversions to pains, its zephyrs and its gales, its halcyon days and its gloomy nights. And these early lessons are intimately related to the double set of psychic and psychological obstacles. Our Theosophical books and the U.L.T. provide the devout pilgrim with sure means to reach his goal.

STUDIES IN THE HEART DOCTRINE

I.—THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE HEART

With the advent of Theosophy in 1875 our Western world's religion, philosophy and science became re-styled. Fresh modes of strange, rare colours and line were assembled to re-dress these forms, dying forms too long awaiting resuscitation. This "new" philosophy came clothed in a different garb of language, trimmed with words, terms and expressions strange and unfamiliar to Western ears.

"The Heart Doctrine" is one of these expressions, the signature of a Teaching glowing and rare, representing a priceless jewel set in the corona of the Kingly Science, the Wisdom-Religion or Theosophy. In the East it was ever known. Wise Sages taught it to their disciples; cautious

Gurus chanted it to the faithful.

India has been called the cradle of the race. The Heart Doctrine is the Song which Mother India has sung from time immemorial to the young-eyed Immortals nursed in that spiritual cradle. Let us open our hearts to receive its melody, let us elevate our minds to comprehend its purity. Thus with sensitive perception we may detect the dominant motive sustaining that harmony. "Heart" possessing the power of Thought, adjusting word and act when used by Spiritual Man, is neither physical nor personal.

Further, "Heart" in its relation to the head is not used in an exclusive sense, as it includes the latter. We do know that within man's head is

the brain, an organ for thought and reason. Do we know that within man's Heart there is a "brain" where dwells the Real Man, the Thinker, whose greatest thoughts are from the Heart? Further, there is a definite distinction between a head thought and a heart thought.

This affords a key to the psychology of the Heart. This Teaching postulates that man is a Soul. As the word psychology means the science of the Soul, it appears logical to assume both a Heart doctrine and a science of the Head (both heart and head as instruments being necessary for man's existence on earth). In these Studies we are concerned with the latter only in its various aspects of relative importance.

Science has no answer to: "What is Life?" That explanation can be found in the Eastern psychology or Theosophy. Science does know that life is connected in some mysterious way with the heart, as when its beat stops life is supposedly finished. Theosophy presents an explanation partially revealed in the following statement: Life ever is, the Spiritual Heart being the Universal focal point through which Life advances and recedes.

There is a saying to the effect that "the human heart has not yet fully uttered itself." The truth of this lies in the fact that the human heart is a limited instrument, bound by perspectives personal and selfish. Only by certain cleansing methods, a few of which will be discussed in these Studies, will it ever be able to understand and to attain to the extent of its powers, can it be raised to the impersonal and divine.

The teaching of the Heart Doctrine forms the basis of every Truth. It can be realized only partially in the mystic Halls of Learning, the Halls of Thought, Will and Feeling, when guided merely by the head. The complete knowledge derived from any one of these Halls requires an illumination proceeding from the Heart.

Carrying the Heart's Light, torch of many lives, we can enter these Halls to study ourself; a self difficult to discern among the shadows limning those walls. Dark shadows of untrue thoughts

and selfish desire, of weak will or diseased imagination and its evil memories. The eyes of the Soul are as dependent upon light for seeing as are our physical eyes.

Pursuing our study with singleness of purpose and perseverance, undismayed by the scorch of passion, unrent by suffering, head may unite with Heart, and Self-knowledge be born from that union.

Many of our difficulties are due to the fact that we are more interested in the objects and conditions of material existence than in the light which renders them visible and real. Lacking this light, the senses afford limited testimony, somewhat analogous to that which represents the experiences of the blind. In addition to this, our mind faculties of thought, will and feeling are directed to the phenomenal world with little understanding of the Light or Life that gives them their temporary existence.

Every object has its own Heart, Soul or Reality. As human beings we desire to make permanent, to have and to hold, those objects which are dear, or to avoid those not so dear.

The Light of the Heart is the psychological X-ray which penetrates beneath the surface mould of light and shadow to the Soul of every object. That X-ray needs pure instruments, whether of thought, will or feeling. When these are used with unselfish motives to benefit all beings, to educate and heal, then comes Vision, sometimes called Spiritual Clairvoyance. Then we perceive that evil is the darkness of ignorance, that change is rooted in changelessness, impermanency in permanence.

We have now reached the stage so graphically described in *Light on the Path*, having approached the Unattainable, having entered the Light, even though we can never touch the Flame. Discerning the Real we no longer desire the unreal.

This is the Light from the Heart. In this vision we meet the "young-eyed Immortals"; we recapture Eternal Youth.

The Cradle Song has awakened our Hearts to the Soul's compassionate response to "every sigh and thought of all that lives and breathes."

THE DRINK EVIL

I.—MORAL CONSIDERATIONS

Free and long-continued sense-indulgence brings about many an undesirable reaction of mind and body. Over-indulgence in any direction is bad, both materially and spiritually. So it becomes necessary to see that the proportion of indulgence, moderation and abstinence is well maintained in the spheres in which each is desirable. There are certain things which are beneficial if rightly indulged in, there are others which may be harmlessly indulged in moderately and there are still others which must be totally abstained from. In the first category fall right thought, word and deed. In the second can be mentioned items of sense satisfaction such as hearing, seeing, smelling, eating and touching. In the third come certain items which form an exception to the second group and which should be completely abandoned. Drinking alcohol is one of these. Here we are mainly concerned with abstinence—total abstinence—from strong alcoholic drinks, as indulgence in them is a cause of much of the trouble in the world.

Alcohol has a bad effect on physical health and an exciting or deadening effect on the mind and nervous system. This disturbance of the controlling and disciplining force of the physical system ultimately demonstrates itself as psychic disturbance. Then the man is not himself and acts and speaks quite out of character. The effect of alcohol is that the mind gets out of control and, together with it, the body, which the mind then is unable to govern. The tongue speaks at random, the legs go their own way and so with the other organs.

This distressing effect is obvious in habitual drunkards, so often found lying in gutters and by-lanes near drinking houses. A habitual drinker feels that he cannot resist the temptation, so strong is the lure of drink, though in the beginning he may have abhorred drink for its nasty smell. An addict will seize any opportunity to satisfy his thirst for alcohol. He will think of nothing else. Alcohol makes a man forget all the good things of life and makes him a slave till he is utterly ruined and lost. Anybody who tries to

persuade a man who is drinking as to its ill effects invites nothing but hatred and abuse. There is no hope for a drunkard unless he can be persuaded in his sober moments and be brought on the right path.

A man strongly under the effects of alcohol loses his sense and acts in very pitiable ways. He loses knowledge of mother and sister, of himself and others. He rolls on the road, many times not even properly dressed. He tells all his secrets under the influence of alcohol. He trembles and shouts as if he were in the depths of woe. Alcohol affects his mind like a high fever. The poison of strong alcoholic drinks makes body and limbs weak, enervates the organs and lulls the victim at last into the stupor of oblivion, which is not restful and restorative like ordinary sleep.

As a heap of dry grass is destroyed by a spark, in the same way discrimination, restraint, knowledge, truth, courtesy and kindness are destroyed by the drink habit. An addict creates hell for himself and for his family. The drink habit is very easily acquired by persons who are not properly educated or who are off their guard. The invitation to this habit is open to all, and alcoholic beverages are easily accessible. The habit may seem pleasant in the beginning and therefore it ensnares the unwary. But afterwards it reduces its victim to utter misery and misfortune. Then, too late, he realises what a hold it has on him. He becomes an outcast and his position still deteriorates. He goes from bad to worse till he eventually succumbs to the ill effects of alcohol. Like a person who has lost his way in the darkness, he gets deeper and deeper into the bog, with no way out. Many go this way and lose themselves in absolute hopelessness.

So far, we have considered only the material or physical aspect of the subject, but there is the spiritual aspect too. The scriptures speak against the drink evil. According to Hindu and Muslim religious tenets, wine and other strong alcoholic drinks are forbidden. The Jain scriptures name drinking alcohol as one of the seven great vices which every religious man must renounce. Other religions also prohibit strong alcoholic drink. This the scriptures do because drink brings ruin spiritual as well as physical to its addicts.

The problem of drinking, moreover, is not an isolated social vice. It brings in its train gambling and prostitution. These three great social evils—involving tremendous loss of precious time, money and energy—have been curses upon society from times immemorial. The evil of drink is not the least antisocial of the three, for it has repercussions on both body and mind. A drink addict has no normal social existence. His world is the world of whims and dreams. Reformers must find a way to stop this vice to raise the level of society.

The drink evil has ruined kings and dynasties, families and individuals. It is a special curse to villagers and labourers, who often spend almost the whole of their small income upon drink and leave but little for their family. Their children malnourished, not educated, uncared for, their family is ruined. Interest in drink rules out interest in family duties and obligations. The labouring class, if properly instructed, can save the money that it spends on drink to utilise for family requirements—food, clothing, education and the like. If this ideology were but brought home to the labouring class, then one of the chief obstacles to the welfare and progress of society and nation would be removed.

Recently, with the advent of Westerners and their civilisation, it has become with many a point of etiquette to drink. Drinking is too readily accepted as a social obligation. Such a false notion of etiquette must be repudiated for the betterment of society.

It may be mentioned also that the preparation of alcoholic drinks involves violence to countless minute forms of life in the fermentation process, another argument against the drink evil for the conscientious man.

In short, the moral value of prohibition is so deep and abiding that it will ultimately assert itself as surely as day follows night. So, total abstinence for the individual becomes imperative from both the physical and the spiritual points of view. But we have an obligation to society as well as to ourselves. Abstaining personally from the use of such drinks is not enough. We have a duty to protect the weak and especially the younger generation. We must do what we can to discourage the preparation, sale and use of

alcoholic beverages.

Persons will no doubt come forward to claim that to drink is their right and to insist upon that right at any cost. Now, there are limits to a person's right to do a thing injurious not only to himself but also to society in the long run. In a country having compulsory education, for example, to claim the right to remain ignorant and illiterate would be regarded as preposterous and so harmful to the country in the end that the "right" could not be allowed. There are so many things against the drink evil and there is so undeniably not a single one in its favour, that the "right" to drink is open to grave question. The individual's "right" to poison himself with habit-forming drugs like heroin, cocaine and morphine products generally is no longer claimed. The menace of these and of alcohol differs in degree rather than in kind.

Another aspect of the alcohol problem is found in the attitude of vested interests and of the State. Dealers in alcoholic drinks are primarily interested in increasing their highly profitable, if soul-killing, trade, however detrimental to the individual and to society. They think in terms of money and not in terms of the welfare of the people and the nation. The State in its turn gets a big revenue from the alcohol trade and would not like to disturb its finances by raising delicate scruples. The result is that the burden of taxation falls heavily on the poor, among whom are so many drink addicts, and they and their dependents are ruined. Due, therefore, to the interests of the State and the trade as well as to the lure of drink, the evil continues in spite of objections that should be conclusive.

Thus, though drink is a proven evil to society, bad for health both mental and physical, a curse to family life and worse than useless from every point of view, the path of practical reform is not so easy as that of theory. Complete prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages and general total abstinence are good in theory but how can they be brought about? Society could be educated as to the bad effects of drink more easily than the liquor interests and the State could be brought to sacrifice their income. The social reformer will have to fight this callous

readiness to perpetuate the drink evil and turn it to financial advantage.

For, nation-wide prohibition could be brought about only by the State. Once sincerely convinced of the advisability of complete prohibition of the manufacture and sale of strong drink except for medicinal use, a State genuinely concerned for the public good could with a rigorous and honest policy enforce such prohibition. People would have to be educated and attractive alternatives offered. Healthy and wholesome beverages should be made available to the public in plenty, to reduce the temptation of alcoholic beverages. In the beginning there might be a certain amount of smuggling, and illicit distillation might go on for some time. But it would not be difficult to detect and punish such law-breakers, if prohibition had the support of public opinion and were put in the hands of able and honest executive officers. With whole-hearted State support and no corruption the scheme could be a great success.

Then, if the whole thing were rightly managed and sincerely followed, what a beautiful land it would be—a happy, prosperous, peaceful and progressive country. This may seem a far hope, a difficult and distant consummation. But every student can begin today to lay the foundations for it by his work upon himself, controlling and subduing his evil desires and unfolding and developing healthy and wholesome ones, after eliminating his weaknesses. So let us have right habits and right thoughts, and the correct inner attitude that will put our life on the true path and enable us to radiate its pure beneficence for the upliftment of humanity.

II.—WHAT DOES MODERN SCIENCE SAY ?

The alcohol problem is coming to receive the scientific attention it has long merited. Yale University in the U.S.A. is taking up the problem seriously. It offers a summer course on Alcoholic Studies and its Laboratory of Applied Physiology publishes a *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* and supplementary literature on the subject. Three departments of modern science are concerning themselves with the problem of alcohol

drinking: physiologists, psychologists and sociologists. Therefore, for the study of the alcohol problem from the scientific point of view it may be examined from these three stand-points. It is admitted by the researchers themselves that their findings and knowledge in the field are incomplete, and their solutions, therefore, only approximations which must be adjusted as scientific knowledge progresses. Certain facts, however, have been discovered, and these should be made more widely known as a warning to laymen and especially to young people everywhere.

To glance first at some of the physiological effects of alcohol drinking. When an alcoholic beverage is drunk the alcohol is absorbed from the stomach and intestines. Alcohol is not digested. It passes directly into the blood and is carried rapidly to all parts of the body. By far the greater portion of it must be destroyed in the body by the process of oxidation, by which the body protects itself against alcohol as against other poisons. But alcohol undermines physical health and life by interfering with and depressing this greatest protective power of the body, namely, normal oxidation, itself. Thus, alcohol cannot be considered as a food; since true food-stuffs stimulate oxidation while they themselves are being oxidised. When it is realized that oxidation lies at the root of all biological activity it may be clearly seen that any substance introduced into the body which interferes with this process must be health-destroying.

Further, every living organism, however simple or complex in structure, is composed of a cell or cells of protoplasm. The cell is termed by physiologists "the physical basis of life." From the aggregation of cells, tissues and organs are formed; and these in turn integrate into co-operative systems: muscular, nervous, circulatory, etc., and so form the body of the individual. What encloses the protoplasmic content of cells is still somewhat mysterious, but it is called by many physiologists the cell-membrane. The first and immediate impact of ethyl alcohol, directly it enters the lymph space from the blood vessels, is upon these delicate cell-membranes. The action of alcohol on any organ is fundamentally due to its action upon the cell and its mem-

brane. This membrane is essentially the cell's expression of its life under the conditions prevailing within and without it at any time. It is not a permanent structure but a vital dynamic one—the outcome of the protoplasmic response of the cell to its environment in relation to its own activity. Thus the cell membrane has the most direct relation to all functions, whether relating to digestion of food, excretion of waste products, manufacture of digestive juices, or any other; in a word, upon all the complex factors which constitute the processes of metabolism. This membrane is the principal controlling factor in all cell processes, and when it is changed the whole sequence of normal functional activity may be altered. It is because of the action of alcohol upon the sensitive cell membranes that its effects are so marked upon every tissue, organ and system of the human body. This membrane is the living barrier between health and disease, life and death, and alcohol is pre-eminently the barrier-breaker.

The nervous system consists of the brain, the spinal cord and the nerves. The pathologists' verdict is that alcohol is a protoplasmic poison with a special affinity for nerve and brain cells and fibres. Within a few minutes after it is drunk it passes the normal protective barriers of the brain directly into the cerebro-spinal fluid, and is thus brought into intimate contact with the whole central nervous system. The cerebro-spinal fluid cannot oxidise alcohol as rapidly as blood or liver does, so it remains longer in that fluid, causing consequently the greatest damage to that system. Common experience shows how alcohol drinking interferes with the functioning of the nervous system, hence the abstinence of sportsmen, airmen and surgeons when they wish to be at their best. Experiment shows with consistency and thoroughness that alcohol, even in the smallest doses, deadens or blunts the higher activity of the brain, weakening inhibition and control, and leading to neuro-muscular inco-ordination and diminished efficiency.

Today there is, generally speaking, a remarkable degree of unanimity amongst authorities on this point: that the direct effect of alcohol upon the nervous system is, in all stages and

upon all parts of the system, to depress and suspend its functions. That it is, in fact, from first to last, a narcotic drug. All the commonly known and observable effects of drinking may be ascribed to the paralyzing effect of alcohol on the higher centres of the brain, the typical first stage of its action as a narcotic. By some scientists it is even classed as an anæsthetic because it depresses and abolishes the functions of the brain in descending order. First, judgment is disturbed, reason and thought; then voluntary movements are interfered with. There may even be, at one stage of its effects, a state of excitement induced by loss of control—but not from stimulation.

Most of the commonly known and observable effects on health of habitual drinking are brought about by its general interference with metabolism and nutrition, and to its specific action on the small blood-vessels; this latter leading to vaso-motor weakness and on to paralysis. Skin diseases are aggravated by alcohol, and the skin of habitual drinkers often becomes sallow and coarse. A connection is suspected between alcohol drinking and skin cancer.

It has long been recognized that among the most marked effects of alcoholic indulgence are those on liver, kidneys and stomach. Leaving aside minor derangements of these vital organs, the well-known major ones are: cirrhosis, latent cirrhosis and hepatitis (inflammation) of the liver (especially in young people); and nephritis, inflammation of the kidneys. As to the stomach, alcohol even in strict moderation causes some retardation of gastric digestion, impaired movement and disturbance of normal secretion; there can be no doubt that alcoholic indulgence is responsible for a vast number of digestive diseases. In deep intoxication digestive action ceases. Spasms are often produced in the muscular valve leading from the stomach to the intestines, causing vomiting.

Some other less widely known effects of alcohol drinking are:

(a) It upsets so radically the vitamin-calorie ratio in the body that vitamin deficiency results, bringing on the diseases commonly known as beriberi or "alcoholic neuritis," and "wet brain,"

a central neuritis, representing a complete absence of vitamin B₁, which clouds consciousness and causes severe brain damage.

(b) It has been recently discovered that alcohol is actively harmful in many tropical diseases, *e.g.*, bowel diseases like dysentery; also sprue and cholera. As to the latter disease one investigator writes: "Cholera ever attacks the intemperate first, and cholera prefers drinkers."

(c) It has been found that excessive drinkers have a greater mortality and a shorter average life than moderate drinkers and abstainers.

(d) Alcoholic psychosis is a condition of mental disease in which alcohol is either the primary cause or a secondary contributing cause. Writes Dr. C. C. Weeks, quoting Sir F. Mott:—

The amount of alcohol which is daily consumed by the pillars of "Society" is quite sufficient to convert an epileptic or potential lunatic, or certain feeble-minded individuals, into criminal or certifiable lunatics.

Another interesting observation made by more than one investigator is that the thirst for alcoholic drinks is lessened in those on a vegetarian diet, and, conversely, is "more or less excited by animal food."

In his article: "Treatment of Alcohol Addiction" Dr. H. M. Tiebout, Physician-in-Charge of Blythewood Sanitarium in Connecticut, U. S. A., gives an interesting picture of the cyclic pattern which characterizes the alcoholic addict, appreciation of which he considers is an important factor in attempts to treat or to arrest the disease of alcoholism. The same authority makes significant observations on some of the psychological problems involved, to which aspect of the subject we will now turn.

Recently reviewed reports of numerous experiments were summed up by scientists as showing that "the essence of the psychological effect of alcohol is that of reduced efficiency." After drinking alcohol it was found, muscular strength, reflex responses, skill, memory, reason, judgment and other measurable psychological functions were all impaired. This is indisputable. Psychiatrists, however, equally truly observe that people do not drink in order to be more or less efficient, but to obtain relaxation, to feel different, to gain confidence, or to get relief from pain,

anxiety or fear. Both are right. By some psychologists the several reasons given for drinking are summed up as indicating a basic weakness of character in the drinker. To quote from the *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* (Lay Supplement No. 10):—

The degree to which one is ready to accept the fact that the world cannot be moulded to his wishes, the number of props he needs to support him against this inevitable fact, and the degree to which he avoids anxieties and frustrations, but particularly the degree to which his conduct is effected by these endeavours, make up the real difference between normal and neurotic and between neurotic and psychotic persons.

Based on the above is the psychologist's conclusion that alcoholism is a psychological disease. But now, what has the drinker to say? The average drinking person has many firm-fixed though false beliefs as to what "a drink" will do. Some of these are: it gives one a "lift"; it "restores energy"; it "peps one up"; it cures pain and fatigue. The experience of the drinker, which has a certain validity of its own, tells him that under certain circumstances he gains a comfortable, if careless, sense of well-being and cheer from his drinks. Is this then false? No. All these results of experiment and experience have a basis in fact. What then is the explanation?

The physical effects of alcohol drinking observed and recorded by scientists, the reasons for drinking ascertained by psychologists and psychiatrists, the results felt by the drinker, are all explained by the numbing effect that alcohol has on the brain. Attention, judgment and the higher intellectual processes are all retarded at once by amounts of alcohol insufficient to intoxicate. In human life every impression which may lead to sensation or feeling passes first to the optic thalamus and is then passed to the cerebral cortex for the discriminating judgment and reasonable control which raise man above the level of the brute. The reactions of the human optic thalamus, *freed from the restraining influence of the cortex*, are an expression of the non-discriminating aspects of sensation. The bearing of this, when once it is realized that alcohol depresses and paralyses cortical activity, is obvious.

Now man's great prerogative is to rise from more or less blind animal-like instinctive action

to reasonable and deliberate self-conscious control; to bring every sensation and desire to the bar of judgment before allowing it to issue in action. It is thus that man develops from animal-man into a really human being, from which stage he can aspire to still higher states of life and conduct in which he may enter into communion with the Good, the Beautiful and the True, in a word, with the Divine. In all this upward movement, and indeed in all that makes for civilization in the true sense of the word, the brain is man's supreme instrument. When the instrumentality of the cerebral cortex is reduced or impaired then man is dethroned.

By understanding that alcohol effects *first* the higher brain centres which control the voluntary behaviour, acting on these as a depressant or an anæsthetic, it is easy to grasp why relaxation and cessation of anxiety through suspension of judgment and the critical faculty, etc., result. Also how aggression and free expression of the lower sense propensities ensue; and how the time-sense and balance, both physical and mental, are upset.

Modern psychologists have come to the point of saying that: "If it were known *why* there is inebriety and alcohol addiction it could probably be prevented and cured." Further, they admit that alcoholism is probably most often caused by psychic sensitiveness or abnormality. They know that they have not solved the problem yet. They admittedly have no way of knowing who will become a habitual drinker and who will not. Therefore they warn against the so-called "tonics" which contain alcohol, for these have been found in many cases to be the physical-plane starting-point of the drink habit. And this brings us to consider a few facts of the third, the social aspect of the problem of alcohol,

If tonics containing alcohol are detrimental to all and may prove fatal to some, the same is even truer of the socially popular cocktail. The tragedy of the "cocktail party" lies not merely in the physical damage to liver, digestion and other bodily organs caused by alcohol *per se*, but to the peculiar combination in these drinks of alcohol and the essential oils, for if the former blunts the power to judge and to control, the latter excites the motor part of the brain. With the weakening

of control plus excitation of motor mechanisms, speech becomes freer and easier, possibly superficially brilliant, until the fuller action of the drugs upon judgment and discretion tells a different tale. This is now so well recognized that doctors in the U.S.A. are warning both legislative and diplomatic bodies that alcohol "is the psychological medium through which much legislative business is handled" and that liquor has been found to be "the most potent weapon in foreign policy when dealing with Americans." The Washington psychiatrist, Dr. M. M. Miller, insists that a man whose brain is bathed in alcohol can neither vote nor legislate wisely.

In many of his activities, man combines voluntary and automatic actions. As a result of education and practice, motor driving, for example, becomes almost automatic. The impairment by alcohol of neuro-muscular co-ordination in a motor driver, whose own life and the lives of others may depend on his rapid and accurate movements, is a widely recognized and serious social problem. Reactions to stimuli require guidance and control by discrimination and judgment. When driving a motor, we see—we think—we act, and this trinity must be integrated for appropriate response. Alcohol inhibits this integration. Motor and traffic accidents are known to be so closely related to even slight intoxication on the part of those involved, that a whole legal procedure has come into being relating to alcohol and accidents.

Industry also is interesting itself in the problem of alcohol. Not many facts in this field have so far been obtained, but investigation is going on from the economic point of view.

Social workers have long known and warned that alcohol is the enemy of morality. It is an aphrodisiac, and because of that and its power to blunt conscience, it is one of the chief supports of prostitution and its powerful ally. International experience and statistics indicate, moreover, a close association between alcoholism and suicide.

The relation of alcohol to home life and children, and especially to cruelty to children, are problems of the first magnitude. Sociologists state, and statistics bear them out, that the children of alcoholics are more apt to become alcohol-

ics themselves than are the children of temperate parents. The three reasons given for this are:—

1. Poor home environment of alcoholic families, with consequent neglect of children and lack of parental control.
2. The parents' example of excessive drinking.
3. Many alcoholics are from families in which mental disorders and abnormalities of personality are common. Members of such families are often much less able to resist intemperance and so become addicts.

Liquor drinking causes quarrelsomeness, carelessness, and callousness to the ordinary social duties and to the human obligations of life. The needs and cries of children make no impression on a brain dazed with alcohol; the finer parental feelings are blunted; normal affection and desire to protect are smothered. Statistical graphs show that convictions for cruelty to children fall with decreased consumption of alcohol. And one thing is clear and indisputable: mental and moral degeneracy of all kinds are found in the closest association with alcoholism.

The amazing story that physical science tells of what beverage alcohol does to the human brain should be made widely known. Physiological, chemical, psychological and sociological facts are there to be used for educational purposes. Scientists are, in fact, using them with increasing success to popularize the humane belief that alcoholism is a sort of illness, and that the alcoholic deserves, not moral degradation, not jail sentences, but the dignity and assistance of medical care. So far, so good. But if such education and belief were the solution of the problem, why the appalling number of educated drinkers? In Canada and the United States a late estimate is that 43 million people out of 145 million drink; that there are 45,000 new cases of chronic alcoholism each year; and that alcoholic deaths in North America number about 25,000 annually! The fact is that even higher education is no safeguard against alcoholism. A recent survey showed that among those with alcoholic psychoses in public hospitals only 6 per cent. were illiterate. Obviously, "trained brains succumb to alcohol as readily as untrained ones."

With their immense collection of facts in hand earnest researchers are now enquiring whether there is any positive solution and are beginning to add to their educational literature, designed primarily to appeal to reason, an additional appeal to the ambition and the humanitarian tendencies of the young whom they desire to save. It is deeply significant from the Theosophical view-point, that investigators are realizing that the problem is basically a psychological one. Unfortunately, the faulty assumptions and insufficient knowledge of the modern psychologists stand in the way of an adequate solution. The profound and detailed system of ancient Oriental psychology presented by H. P. Blavatsky in the synthetic system known today as Theosophy will contradict none of the facts which the modern scientists have discovered. But, making clear the *why* of man's desire to drink, it can equip him with the knowledge necessary to face his problems squarely and to rise above the temptation of alcohol.

III.—A THEOSOPHICAL VIEW

[The following extract is reprinted from a letter from W. Q. Judge which was published in the London Lodge's *U. L. T. Bulletin LIX*, p. 4, 15th September 1933.—EDS.]

Generally speaking, the habit of drinking intoxicants is due to a desire to get rid of what might be called the present personal consciousness. When people drink to try and drown sorrow, pain, worry, they clearly do it with that motive in view. But others drink without any such ostensible motive, though still with the same actual motive, for they long to get rid of what is to them an intolerable sense of identity, of monotony, of sameness. It is an effort to produce by extraneous aids what can only be done properly and lastingly by interior development. People read trashy novels, gamble and so forth with the same motive, that is to say with the intention of getting rid of their personal identity for the time being. Ultimately the race will come to realize that this can only be achieved by identification of the ego with the higher instead of the lower nature. Meanwhile and for the ordinary person healthy and interesting occupation is the best cure for such a habit. If possible he should be

made to understand that the desire for drink is now a habit in certain lives in his body whose very existence depends upon their being fed with alcohol. The desire is not in himself unless he is foolish enough to identify himself with the desire. Once he ceases to so identify himself the desire will lose more than half its power over him.

GOETHE ON FREE-WILL

In the October 1945 issue of *The Dublin Magazine*, Richard Flatter raises the issue of free-will and predestination, as it arises out of the colloquy between the Lord and Mephistopheles in the "Prologue in Heaven" in Goethe's *Faust*.

The writer contends that Goethe's intention was not to grant freedom of action or free-will to Mephistopheles. Therefore, whereas Swanwick, for instance, translates a line in the Lord's remarks to Mephistopheles as

"Here too thou'rt free to act, without control,"

the writer, thinking that "there can be no question of the Lord's giving Mephistopheles a free hand, granting him Freedom of the Will etc.," interprets the same line as meaning

"Here, too, thou shalt only appear to be free."

Yet there seems no warrant for arriving at this decision. Within the Prologue itself, one may, if one but searches, find the answer to the problem of free-will. No circumscribing limits, no divine fetters are put on the Mephistophelean will. To the challenge of the Devil that he will lead Faust down his own path, the Lord says:—

"The righteous man, groping in dark and dread,
Knows well the path, traced out for him to tread."

This knowledge that resides in the righteous man is the factor that all the Mephistophelean

guiles have to contend against. The free-will of man can be pitted successfully against the free-will of the devilish forces that surround him.

But if the man be not righteous? If he forget that priceless knowledge of the true path? Says the Lord:—

"While man strives on, man goes astray."

The deciding factor is therefore neither the Lord, nor even Mephistopheles, but man; and the battle between the contending forces of good and evil remains an indecisive thing. Man has always been free to act in the Mephistophelean way or in the way of the Lord and as he makes his choices—big and small—he swings his life between heaven and hell, till at last he gravitates by the very force of his nature to the one or the other. But, whatever the outcome, it is *he* who chooses.

Still, indecisive though the battle must be, the end can be visualised. It is because of this that the "bet" of the Devil is taken up, for to the eye of the Lord the end is perceptible as the culmination of life's varied panorama.

"The gardener, watching the young tree in bloom,
Knows well that fruit will grace the coming year."

In one of her articles, H. P. B. shows this fight in man between the forces of light and darkness. Says she:—

He is now in an atmosphere of illusions—*Maya*. Vice puts on its most alluring face, and the tempting passions try to lure the inexperienced aspirant to the depths of psychic debasement. This is not a case like that depicted by a great artist, where Satan is seen playing a game of chess with a man upon the stake of his soul, while the latter's good angel stands beside him to counsel and assist. For the strife is in this instance between the Chela's Will and his carnal nature, and Karma forbids that any angel or Guru should interfere until the result is known.

Alcohol in all its forms has a direct, marked, and very deleterious influence on man's psychic condition. Wine and spirit drinking is only less destructive to the development of the inner powers, than the habitual use of hashish, opium and similar drugs.—H. P. BLAVATSKY

WHAT SHALL WE RENOUNCE?

First let us answer the question, what have we to renounce? Have we a surplus of things, of time, of energy? If so they are easily "renounced," as we think, by using them in charitable or Theosophic causes. But have they really been renounced? Are they not still being used by us, albeit in different ways? Is it not still *our* possessions, *our* time, *our* energy that we are using in different ways, but all ways in which we want to use them? Do we not find that, to adapt a phrase, "renunciation of *things* is not enough?"

We are told to give up our life if we would live. In this paradoxical saying there is a great truth, for even our ordinary daily life shows us that we must give up to hold. But still this is not enough, for a man may give up the whole world and still not save his soul; he may give up his life and not save his soul, for souls are not saved by retiring from the world, by leaving home and duty, nor by one who does not go through his appointed task in life but allows that life to be cut short.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* tells us that we must renounce the fruits of action. But these often come in the future and so renunciation of them here and now does not mean we will renounce them when they come to us. Surely renunciation is too big a word to be used for the mere giving up of what we want to do or to hold, important as this aspect of life is.

The key to the understanding of true renunciation, as to the understanding of so much in life, is the dual nature of man, the realisation that the allegory of the master of the vineyard, the vine and the branches, while giving us a full picture of evolution and earth lives, concerns us fundamentally as branches. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 155) The branch cannot live without the tree; it gets its sustenance from the tree; it carries the life of the tree to its buds and fruit. Of itself it withers and dies.

Another allegory also helps: the story of the King sending out his ambassadors to the far parts of his kingdom. In this sense we, all we know of and as ourselves, are ambassadors in a far country,

and as ambassadors are nothing of ourselves. The outpost or the field in which we work is the field of our duty. A true account will be required of us at the close of our mission and we may be recalled with honour, under the benediction of the King, spending a period of retirement basking in the memories of the triumphs and good deeds done, or we may be recalled to degradation for mismanagement and spend our time in humiliation while the bad effects on our character are burnt out.

Can we get help by studying the life of an ambassador? The good ambassador does not try to get anything for himself out of his trusteeship for it is a deep-rooted feeling that to do so would be a betrayal of trust. So why should we try to get anything for ourselves out of life? An ambassador will willingly set aside his personal business, even separate himself from his family and undergo rigours of climate and personal discomfort for the sake of his country or his Leader. Why not we in life? The ambassador may have his own ideas of how things should be done, but he dare not, and would not, decide for himself against the code of his King. While in his post he is the King's representative, and not himself. He takes infinite pains to do his job well. But, in the all-important task of living, we fail to apply these good ideas for we do not look on living as a "job" and we fail to get the zest out of it which we would out of a job of work.

Who is the King? What is his Kingdom? What are its laws and rules? What are the fields that he must lift to the stature of his Kingdom, to which he sends his ambassadors? What kind of creatures live therein? What do they bring to him and what does he bring to them?

The King, from the point of view of this analogy, is the Ego, the Manasaputra, so far removed from us that he seems like a god to us, but, because he is not yet perfect, not a complete Ruler in his whole Kingdom, he needs ambassadors to bring all the Kingdom under his rulership. His Kingdom is the world; his immediate Kingdom is that part of the world bound to him

by threads of action in the past. These outlying parts of his Kingdom are peopled by beings of nature less than man, and also by man; some are inimical to him and others at one with him, but all are bound to him because of the past. These beings are constantly at war, openly or covertly, for those who live unto themselves do not obey his laws and neither will they allow others to obey them if they can prevent it.

The ambassador represents the King and therefore bears the weight of the wrong-doings of the past by other ambassadors, and in himself is not yet a perfect exemplar of the King's code of morals and laws of life. He is, however, in constant touch with the King, all the more so if he is a good ambassador. He tries to carry out the expressed or unexpressed wish of the King, and maintains a dignity of behaviour as the King's representative which lifts him above his fellow-men, though he remains at one with them. He speaks with the voice of the King, and his sentiments are those of his Master. The harder the task before him, the stronger the effort he puts forth to do his duty, and he does not grudge the effort but has the satisfaction of knowing that a difficult job is being well performed. He leaves a stamp on the country, good or bad, and gains qualities in himself which make him more like the King as whose representative he has acted so long. For many lives the King sends one ambassador after another, and at last the country is cleansed of enemies, and works as a harmonious whole, while through lives of effort the ambassador has been built who is part of the King himself. No more need he send out ambassadors; he himself keeps in touch with his kingdom, helping, guiding and teaching, and at times entering, as his own ambassador.

It can be seen from this analogy that each of us must renounce all claim to anything—time, money or energy. As ambassadors we have no time of our own, no energy for our own affairs, no time for them either. What we are working for is not for ourselves—we shall die and other ambassadors will carry on. True renunciation is therefore the working for others, the giving of all living for a Cause. We can have no feeling of hate, or even of love specially directed to this or

that person or thing; we must be impartially fair to all. We cannot hate even our enemy, not even lying, or stealing, or hypocrisy in others, for all must be won over to the King's side. All we can do is to hate these things as they express themselves in our own character until we never give way to them. As the King's servant we must be humble and courteous to all; we must not murmur at any rebuke, or retaliate, or impose our will on others.

We must be willing to step aside to let others take the credit, we must bring the best out of our associates so that we can get to the condition where we can do good by *being*, without apparently lifting a finger.

This complete negation of *personal* personality is a difficult achievement, for even as persons we must embody the virtues and it is so easy to think the virtues are ours! But the ambassador must not think of these things as his contribution; they are the reflection of the character of the King. Similarly with our vices, our clumsiness, our little stupidities, we must learn to think of these as not ours, to be regretted and worried over, but as inhibiting the work of the King and therefore not to be indulged in. We have to learn to feel that we are the ambassador of the King, who is gracious; we, the ambassador of the King, who is not clumsy or dishonourable or petty. It is the King in us that shines, not we ourselves.

The country to which we are ambassadors is both the environment by which we are surrounded outwardly and the interior one of the elemental lives making up the body, the feelings, the desires and the thoughts. Into *each* of these fields we enter as the King's ambassador, to deal out justice, right laws and beneficent help.

One of our difficulties is, of course, that we do not know the King, and we forget that absent friends become forgotten if we never think of them. We did know the King, but we have forgotten. We have had many a casual thought of Him as a glimpse came into the mind of something grander than our conscious mind could grasp. We have his letters and his laws with us; we have many a story of how he acts and lives. We of the West are not familiar enough with the Eastern stories which bring out this relationship

of the King and our thought. In some of the folk tales it is said that when any one is thinking of Brahma, Brahma's throne gets hot, and so Brahma turns His attention to the cause. And in the *Mahabharata* it is told how Krishna was plunged in meditation because he felt the dying thoughts of Bhishma centred on Him. So with us, thought about the King brings a response. Such is the Law. But even here there is no cessation of action and reaction, for the vitality of the original action must be kept by thought or it will be dissipated. If kept alive by our thought it is multiplied a hundredfold. Many of us get moments of illumination but if this is not poured forth in Work in the King's name it dies down.

Is true renunciation, then, the dedication of all to HIM? Is the taking of new names on entering a convent or a monastery but an echo of this great truth? Do we find it in the story of Saul who became Paul, in the new names of the Chelas of the Great Masters?

One further point. The King Himself is but an ambassador. He represents the ONE INDIVISIBLE SPIRIT, the Light of all Lights, the One SUN which illuminates the whole world. It is therefore not even the Will of the King we obey but the Will of the ONE. To lose ourselves as units and to find ourselves as the ALL—that surely is the Bliss which enables us to turn our heart's eye upon all and to say "Peace to All Beings!"

GUARDIANS OF PEACE

There was a little city, and few men with it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:

Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.

Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: Nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.

The words of the wise man are heard in quiet more than the cry of him who rules among fools.

Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroys much good.

Ecclesiastes IX, 14-16.

Is this wisdom the wisdom of the statesman, who holds conversations and negotiates with the enemy? Who shall say what the author wished to convey?

It is true that the cycles must run their course and that neither the blessings nor the curses of the most powerful beings in the universe can avert a nation's karma. Yet, on the other hand, we are taught that there are disciples whose mere presence in the world helps to keep things right side up, although they themselves do not move a finger but simply *are*; and *The Voice of the Silence* speaks of the great guardian wall built of living stones that holds back the heavy karma of the world and thus prevents life from being more agonising than it is already. May we then not interpret the wisdom of the man who saved the city as the capacity to act as a vehicle of that inner power which equilibrates, harmonises and therefore wards off evil and destruction?

And, considering that the pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric Philosophy recognises no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit, may we not conclude that each and every one of us may develop such wisdom if he will?

How shall we set about it? The following practical suggestion has been helpful to some aspirants. As soon as a man feels the premonitory symptoms of that inner fermentation which inevitably produces one of the "three poisons"—anger, greed, delusion—he should picture himself as establishing a powerful magnet within himself more firmly in position and recharging it from a source within his inmost being with that "divine magnetic spirit, which tries to harmonise everything in nature." (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 132)

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The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

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It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

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