

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. 49, No. 3

17th January 1979

THOUGHT, THE MAKER OF MAN

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, February 1939.—EDS.]

THE THEOSOPHICAL student is called upon to consider more his line of thought than his line of action. Paul had reference to the Thinker dwelling apart in his thought-created world when he urged his hearers, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate,” as a preliminary to the outer withdrawal which naturally results as a consequence. The student is not asked to renounce his duties, but to examine and to systematize them, for these increase both in number and in importance the moment he turns his attention to Occultism. His retirement is an *inner* process. It is not the activity of the body that is restricted but the responses of the mind that are controlled. The philosophy of Occultism deals primarily with mind-control. “If our aim is right our acts cannot be evil.”

Kama-Manasic people depend on their brains which reflect the images of the outer world and thus they have a distorted image of life's purpose; Buddhi-Manasic beings use their minds to impress their brains with the fact of the presence of the Spirit in the Body, which is the centre from which the plan of spiritual life radiates forth. The automatic brain reactions of the Kama-Manasic being should not replace the activities of the Inner Ego which, as part of the essence of the Universal Mind, as H.P.B. points out, is unconditionally omniscient on its own plane. The world today suffers from a Kamic overstimulation of the brain at the expense of pure mental activity. The task of the student of the Esoteric Science is to reverse the process, and by means of ideation to impress the brain from within.

Says the *Dhammapada*:

All our tendencies of character are the offspring of consciousness, dominated by consciousness and made up of consciousness.

What we know of the world and men about us is in terms of our own feeling-thought. Things are (to us) what we conceive them to be, good, bad, beautiful, ugly; pleasant or unpleasant. *Things in themselves*, however, remain unknown to the student who has not risen above the domination of personal likes and dislikes. Says H.P.B.:

The pure object apart from consciousness is unknown to us, while living on the plane of our three-dimensional World; as we know only the mental states it excites in the perceiving Ego. And, so long as the contrast of Subject and Object endures — to wit, as long as we enjoy our five senses and no more, and do not know how to divorce our all-perceiving *Ego* (the Higher Self) from the thralldom of these senses — so long will it be impossible for the *personal* Ego to break through the barrier which separates it from knowledge of *things in themselves* (or *Substance*).

The remedy is suggested by Mr. Crosbie:

The nature of Soul as unmodifiable must be grasped; then each sight is perceived as a relativity and there is no more identification than we assume when we see the many thousands of things that are about us every day, unaffected, unless we concentrate upon them.

To have renounced all selfish attachments and to work in brotherly accord with all that lives is a condition to be accepted by the student desirous of reaching the Master who lives in the world of Archetypal Ideas. Because it is in the mind that the seeds of action are planted and the germ for future thought developed, it is with the mind that the student is concerned. Arjuna threw down the bow which he held when Krishna started His teaching. His sufferings, doubts and perplexities were mental. Only as he turned his attention from the deceptive world of actions in which stood "enemies," and turned to an examination of his own mind, were his fears dissolved in the blazing light of Krishna's words, as dew before the rising sun. Kurukshetra is the world of actions; Dharmakshetra is the world of mind. When the former attacks the latter there is confusion; to contrive to find justification for desire-actions from the mind is wrong; mind must determine actions to be done.

Confucius said to his chelas:

I do not expound my teaching to any who are not eager to learn; I do not help out anyone who is not anxious to explain

himself; if, after being shown one corner of a subject a man cannot go on to discover the other three, I do not repeat the lesson.

Masters work *with* the mind of the race; They demand that Their Chelas use their discrimination. Priests and politicians on the other hand work *on* the mind of the masses; they think *for* them and lay down lines within which individual thought may be carried on.

The Theosophical student is asked to study well the plastic power of his imagination. For, as H.P.B. says:

No deed, not even a sinful thought, will go unpunished; the latter more severely even than the former, as a thought is far more potential in creating evil results than even a deed.

The Secret Doctrine recognizes sinful *intentions* as the "only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the *Presence*." Confusion comes to the student's mind, not because he thinks evil thoughts, but because his mind wanders and his idle thoughts waken elementals responding to their note as surely as conscious spiritual aspiration wakens spiritual forces. One of the tasks of the aspirant is to watch his state of consciousness at all times, to purify and universalize the mind by keeping before him correct themes for meditation. By noting the trend of his mind he may know what he is within, what is his real aspiration. By noting what kind of sensations attract his mind he may know what to guard against. Knowledge is the sword with which pollution can be cut asunder. Knowledge is the purifier of all that is base and unspiritual in the lower nature. Self-reproduction is an inherent attribute of thought which, unless it be "still-born," continues as a power for good or evil till it has manifested as action.

By pursuing this practice true meditation is begun and will soon become permanent. For, one who watches his thoughts and acts so as to perform those that ought to be done, will acquire a concentration in time which will increase the power of real meditation.

Thought precedes every act; it should continue through the act, but too often it dies on the threshold. Hence our trouble.

Dr. Carrel has likened thought to a gigantic octopus with arms that reach out to embrace whatever comes within its purview. The one-pointed mind Krishna likens to the tortoise which draws in all its senses from their wonted purposes. This earth, teaches H.P.B., is the only hell known in Theosophical Philosophy. It, too, is the only door to heaven. Both are within the reach of the student. Whether he be in one or the other depends

on the object reflected in the mirror of his mind. As a mirror reflecting the moon remains unaffected by the image and may be turned to reflect the stars, so must the mind of the student reflect only that which is in consonance with his chosen purpose, himself remaining unaffected. The thoughts provoked add force to those centres of energy with which he is in harmonious vibration. Self-examination alone will reveal whether he is free from even the seeds of prejudice and pride of class or community or race, which make him participant in the despotism he rightly condemns. "Think not lightly of sin, saying 'It will not come nigh unto me,'" said the Buddha.

Thought interlinks with thought both when the true is the aim and when evil is planned. Students sometimes wonder why the faults they see and criticize in others soon develop in themselves. If evil company corrupts good manners, how much more do evil thoughts corrupts good souls! Pure thought is prayer.

Prayer . . . is an occult process by which finite and conditioned thoughts and desires, unable to be assimilated by the absolute spirit which is unconditioned, are translated into spiritual wills and the will; such being called "spiritual transmutation."

THOUGH during its brief sojourn on earth our soul may be assimilated to a light hidden under a bushel, it still shines more or less bright and attracts to itself the influences of kindred spirits; and when a thought of good or evil import is begotten in our brain, it draws to it *impulses* of like nature as irresistibly as the magnet attracts iron filings. This attraction is also proportionate to the intensity with which the thought-impulse makes itself felt in the ether; and so it will be understood how one man may impress himself upon his own epoch so forcibly, that the influence may be carried — through the ever-changing currents of energy between the two worlds, the visible and the invisible — from one succeeding age to another, until it affects a large portion of mankind.

—*Isis Unveiled*, I. 181

LET THERE BE LIGHT

When you have found the beginning of the way the star of your soul will show its light; and by that light you will perceive how great is the darkness in which it burns. Mind, heart, brain, all are obscure and dark until the first great battle has been won. Be not appalled or terrified by this sight. . . .

—*Light on the Path*

THERE ARE people, not necessarily Theosophists, who live a full life of duty and service and loving sacrifice. They may be found among the poor, but they are among the rich also. They render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's but they do not fail to render unto God the things that are God's. Man has an outer life, a life that brings him in contact with the world around. It is a world of men and all other creatures of the earth, of the elements and the unseen denizens of the air, of the starry firmament and of gods and atoms — a world that he partly understands and partly does not. These numerous contacts, though they have the power to leave their indelible impress upon him, represent only one phase of his life and being. There can be no real doubt that these contacts are necessary to his evolution, else he would not have been required to go through that experience. But it is still a part and he who would consider it as the whole makes a mistake that in other lives will require corrective measures. Spirit and matter may be said to form the facets of a single coin, and each side is important to the other. To use another simile, without the bark of matter spirit cannot venture out on its journey across the waters. Without the spirit to guide and steer it, the bark drifts with the tide and may destroy itself among the rapids or stand immobilized and marooned on some sandbank of materiality.

The recognition of the spiritual side of himself and of the Cosmos is necessary to man. Without it, he remains an animal that has acquired the faculty of reasoning and with which he can carry out his depredations more successfully in the human jungle. He may remain a lone wolf or he may join a pack, but he follows the jungle law where hunting for food among the helpless is a must. The tiger shows no charity to the cow, nor the snake to the bird, nor again the human monster to the prey he stalks. The human animal not only kills. It captures and enslaves, and many a home lies devastated because of greed and lust and the craving for possessions. What does the spirit do to the animal man? How does it induce him out of the jungle and on to pastures where hunting becomes

unthinkable and killing becomes a crime?

Habit and the fear of stirring up anything that is unfamiliar pins the man down to his old modes of life and behaviour. Because of the rut in which he plods, he translates the things of spirit into his familiar language of matter, and finding his vocabulary unsuited, he distorts the meaning and the message. The rules of austerity, the rigours of discipline are restraints, the medicinal effects of which he cannot fathom. The prospect that his matter-infested eyes see is neither pleasing nor attractive. And so the large masses of men who religiously bend their knees and join their hands think that by these postures they have discharged their daily or weekly obligation to God and church; and that much done, they hurry back to the longed-for fetters and the heady indulgences that mammon offers and whom they propitiate in secret. But there does come a time in each man's life when he feels the deep stirrings of his inmost soul. The ordinary life is for a moment shaken and the memory of that vast pulsation remains as a grim reminder of the new force that has in it the power of mighty waters surging through. That memory is never wholly lost and springs up at awkward moments to dilute pleasure and make it pain. The rumblings of the higher, the exalted, but hidden and unaccustomed part of oneself are heard as though from far away, but are none the less distinct with the lurking suspicion of startling possibilities.

In all ages, materiality has dreaded the approach of Spirit, and flees away from it as does darkness on the dawning of light. But if it does fly away, does it leave the man blinded by the intensity of the illumination so that he sees no light after the first unbearable flash of brilliance? Or does the unaccustomed brightness unbalance him and shake him free of his familiar footholds so that his vision is for the moment bewildered, and he, standing terrified of the new, gropes towards his favourite niche in the darkness? On this earth, there have always abided Doctors of the Soul to minister to such fevered brains. But the question is: Will the patient be able to find his way to them, or will he be pounced upon by quacks and so perhaps lose his chance for an entire incarnation? It is to counter such calamities and make the genuine remedies available that the spirit side has its institution of itinerant doctors, its missionaries, who, burying themselves in places far removed from the congregation of the élite, are sacrificing their own progress in the hope that their renunciation may one day help them to steer a despondent soul to its haven of refuge. But this by the way.

Each person who desires to reach out from darkness to the light can

take heart by understanding that materialism untamed is not necessarily the same as materialism untameable. Once convinced that the hardest core of materiality can be dissolved, he has to bend his energies to the gathering of spiritual wealth, and this is of a different and unfamiliar coinage. The earning of this is neither quick nor is it easy. It has to be carried over into other lives with the prospect of haltings on the way for the discharge of long outstanding debts. No fixed rules of conduct save those of ethics can be prescribed in the beginning. Each aspirant has to gauge his own spiritual stamina and adjust the application to his strength. He has to be discreet lest in trying to rush he injure a system that is weak and that may buckle under the strain of that which it cannot bear or is not able to absorb.

For eyes that during long years have grown accustomed to darkness, the emergence into light has to be regulated. Nature helps in this because it is only in proportion as the pupil fights his lower nature that the light grows. Now, as the field of battle with one's lower nature is vast and the fight both fierce and severe, the student need not despair if for years he sees no ray piercing his gloom. The long wait, the unending battle with its ups and downs is the prelude through which each soul must pass. The steel has to be tempered in the furnace of probation. However, as the tempest rages and the battle lasts, the student may cast his vision beyond the turmoil and the clouds to seek the balm of his philosophy and the strength within his sacrificial service. He cannot pause; he dare not look back lest the fiends of doubt and disbelief catch him unawares and make him vulnerable through fear. Battles may be lost and won, but the war cannot but end in victory if the disciple follows the pin-point of light that springs up within him and grows with each surmounting of evil.

But the disciple is not safe till the very end. One selfish thought about himself, his own success and his own failure, may drag him down, and the laborious uphill task will have to be again undertaken from the point from which the journey upward had commenced. In the struggle towards the "light" which for the student must represent the supreme wisdom, he will always be at the losing end unless he seeks the guidance of his very own Guru-General who all these aeons has awaited the moment that sees the commencement of the Great War. As the bugles sound and hostilities commence, he is ready to perform his great duty. But, he will remain a mute spectator of the struggle till the disciple recognizes his leadership, and turning to him in his despair utters the memorable words: "I am thy disciple; wherefore instruct in my duty me who am under thy tuition."

When a disciple thus addresses his Guru, he is no longer the worldly changeling who asks for advice and then rejects it for one reason or another. By giving expression to these words, he has worked a self-transformation, and strange as it may seem it is his despondency that breaks his obstinate refusal to abandon materialistic thought. It is now that for the first time he makes the declaration of his obeisance and submission to Him whose voice and advice must to him remain paramount so long as the Guru-chela relationship lasts.

The discipline that will fashion the disciple's armour is that code of conduct which will exile all selfish thought from out his self. Says Sri Krishna: "Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee..." One aspect of this Brotherhood of the Wise is the Inner Ruler, the Higher Self of each human soul. The disciple has to seek sanctuary with him alone. He speaks where there is none to speak. He is the Voice of the Most High.

The following *shlokas* from the *Bhagavad-Gita* have given inspiration to many a yearning heart and have unlocked gates which had appeared impregnable:

... laying aside all desire for any benefit to thyself from action,
make the event equal to thee, whether it be success or failure.

... arise with determination fixed for the battle.

Throwing every deed on me, and with thy meditation fixed upon
the Higher Self, resolve to fight, without expectation, devoid of
egotism and free from anguish.

There dwelleth in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, the
Master — *Ishwara*... Take sanctuary with him alone, O son of
Bharata, with all thy soul; by his grace thou shalt obtain supreme
happiness, the eternal place.

ONLY the still pool reflects the stars.

—CHINESE PROVERB

MAGICON, OR THE SECRET SYSTEM OF A SOCIETY OF UNKNOWN PHILOSOPHERS

[The following, compiled and translated from the German, appeared originally in *The Theosophist* for June 1884, and is continued from our last issue.—EDS.]

IV. — RELIGION

THE ANIMAL never rises above the sphere of its sensuous desires; but man only finds true happiness and contentment in the contemplation of that which is *above* that sphere. He feels an inward necessity to satisfy his desires for the Divine, and to give this satisfaction is the object of religion. Man rises up to God by means of his religious aspirations, and man's nature becomes elevated in the same proportion as his religious ideas become elevated, expanded and pure. An investigation into the relationship existing between man and religion leads to the adoption of the following points:

1. Religion is *natural* and *necessary* for man, and an examination of ancient and modern history will prove the truth of this assertion.
2. Religion is *as old as mankind*. The principles of religious systems cannot be a result of invention or arbitrary presumption; their germ must be necessarily regarded as of divine origin. It has withstood all the revolutions of nature, and only its aspect has changed according to the various necessities or capacities of the people and the condition of their civilization; but true religion is more than simply a code of morals.
3. *True religion can be only one*, and there can be only *one* true religion, because there is only *one* principle of perfection. *Unity* — the law of true religion — requires a perfect harmony between sensuous and intellectual man.

The divine light, which illuminates man, is for every man one and the same, and the differences between the various religious systems are caused by the *different aspects* in which this light is seen by different people.

The truth is one, but the *forms* in which it appears *differ*. Every individual man, no matter where he lives or what he believes, can be a temple in which the divine spirit will reside. Wisdom is attainable to all and *the attainment of wisdom by all re-establishes unity*.

4. Man *rises up* to the divine light of love and wisdom by means of his religious ideas, and becomes thereby more and more susceptible to

beneficent influences. Man, like every other thing in nature, is subject to natural laws, and according to these he partakes to a certain extent of the nature of the influences with which he associates. There have been at all times men who rose higher than others to the divine source, and to whom we may look as upon our guides and teachers. The revelations and traditions which we have received from such men are laid down in the history and religions of all nations, and in all of them can a certain similarity and unity be traced. We may therefore look upon such men as *divine agents*.

5. Divinity can become accessible to man by means of these divine agents, or, in other words, the *divine ray* by passing through those media or agents becomes tinged with the colour which is appropriate to each of them, else it would for ever remain incomprehensible to man. Some of the angels and prophets may have existed as human beings, but they all are representations or symbols of forces or perfections which primordial man originally possessed.

6. By means of these divine agents a *communication of thought* has been established from the highest to the lowest. A mode of *instruction* was thereby made possible, by which those who did not possess sufficient power to rise could be lifted up by their guides, and by which they could receive information in regard to the nature of things and the history of mankind.¹

7. *The Divine agents* or messengers selected in all times certain men to whom they communicated their knowledge, and through those men the various-coloured light was shed over the different parts of the globe; partly by *oral instruction*, partly by *tradition* by means of *symbols*, *arts* or *usages*. These traditions have in the course of time become so perverted as to be often almost unrecognizable, and giving rise to innumerable *sectarian* differences.

8. The science and history of man comprise therefore the origin and object of *Mythology* and *Symbolism*. Much is fanciful in these systems, but in those of the oldest nations an *identity* can be traced.

A large part of these mythologies have their origin in superstition, and in others the true original meaning has been lost; but sufficient truth remains to show that the oldest inhabitants of our globe conceived the

¹ These agents are the Dhyān Chohans. The first teacher who taught the principles of the ancient Wisdom-Religion on this planet, says the occult doctrine, was a Dhyān Chohan. A Dhyān Chohan will appear again on this planet as a teacher and guru at the end of the seventh root-race. — T.S.

destiny of man to be a higher one than simply to pass through certain chemical and physical processes. They are all relating to the *origin* of man, the *laws* of his existence and his *destiny*, and give us a more or less correct history of the visible and the invisible universe.

9. The celebrated ancient mysteries with their doctrines and initiations took their origin from these old traditions, handed down from antiquity by the *sages* and their disciples. The perpetuation of these mysteries was necessary, and the secrecy by which they were surrounded was due to the desire of guarding them against profanation and to keep them intact in their original purity.

10. One of the oldest and most reliable of the histories of antiquity is that of the Hebrews.² The *Cabala* gives a very clear conception of cosmogony, and the esoteric meaning of their symbolism is extremely beautiful. Unfortunately its *esoteric* sense is at present very little understood even by the Hebrews themselves or their Rabbis, and has been still more perverted and obscured by the imperfect translations made from the original text.

V. — SCIENCE

The retrocession of Man, from the true source of light, has rendered it more difficult for him to obtain *true* knowledge, because to obtain that knowledge he must have the light of *truth* as a guide. Nevertheless a certain, degree of true knowledge must be attainable to man, because every being is subject to a certain and unchangeable law.

The possibility of this attainment finds its basis not only in *the intellectual germ*³ in man, which is as unchangeable in its intrinsic nature as the principle from which it originated, but also in the fact that man, in consequence of his twofold nature, resembles a mirror, in which all the laws of the sensual and intellectual realms are centred. Therefore the *knowledge of man* is the *basis* of every other knowledge; he who perfectly understands *man*, understands the laws of the Intellectual and Sensual and can explain everything. In the study of man, however, we must be careful not to confound the Sensual with the Intellectual, and to ascribe to the one that which belongs to the other.

There is in fact only *one* science; it includes the Intellectual and the

² At the time this book was written, the mythology and traditions of the Hindus and Egyptians were little known. — *Trans.*

³ The germ is in fact the sixth principle in man, in which his higher individuality resides. — T.S.

Sensual, and both realms have to be studied together. The arbitrary separation of the two parts of that *one* science has given rise to the birth and growth of so many false systems and doctrines and contradictory conclusions. Whenever man desires to arrive at the truth in regard to the Intellectual without using the means given to him by nature for that purpose, he invariably falls into error; and it is no less dangerous to attempt to study the Sensual without the light of the intellect. If we desire to use our reason properly, we must "*divinise*" *our own heart* and thereby enable it to approach the source of all light, which is higher than human reasoning.

The *false* study of the Sensual gives rise to materialism and the *false* study of the Intellectual leads to *superstition*; but true science must deal more with principles than merely with the phenomenal aspect of things. Both extremes are dangerous; because in one case we crawl like a worm over our path without seeing to where it leads; in the other case we soar above it and become lost in the clouds. True knowledge can only be obtained by right *discrimination* and by taking into consideration the laws of the Sensuous, the Intellectual and the Divine, by which alone man can become free and return to the universal source of Light and Truth.

The Science of Numbers

The entire system of the universe rests upon certain primordial and basic *principles*, from which result the *substance, shape* and *action* of everything that exists. These basic principles are called the *numbers* of nature. Whoever comprehends them, understands the *laws* by which nature exists, the *proportions* of her component parts, the *manner* and the *measure* of her activity, the connecting link of all *causes* and the *mechanism* of the Cosmos.

Those numbers are not arithmetical symbols, but true *principles*; they are the basis of all true science and of all intellectual understanding.

The subject under our consideration is of *infinite extent* and can only be understood by the infinite *Mind*, who encompasses within himself the chain of all causes, proportions and effects, and human language is too imperfect to fully express the same. Every effect is the result of an energy, and that energy the expression of a power. The quantity of power expended corresponds to the *essential*, and the quantity of energy to the *potential* number. *Principle* and *Form* are two poles, which are united by the link of *Number*. By our senses we receive certain impressions from the *sensuous* action of things, and by our reason we receive ideas of their

invisible positions and terminations, if we are able to grasp them. The Intellectual as well as the Sensuous has number, measure and weight, but they can only be comprehended by our reason or intuition.

The numbers of the universe are infinite, but their movement is simple and *straight*, because everything rests upon the primal numbers: 1-10. These numbers are contained in the *four basic numbers* ($1+2+3+4=10$) which fact indicates the sanctity of the *square*, the symbol of divinity in man.

A few remarks about the meaning of the numbers

I. The number 1 represents: 1. Absolute *unity*, the essence and the universal centre of all Being. 2. The centres or principles of all individual unities, which are not absolute and necessary; but only direct or indirect *radiations* of the absolute unity.

II. Signifies: 1. The absolute unity in a state of *motion* or progression, as on radiation or reflection of 1. 2. *Light* or an emanating ray. 3. The *origin* of all things, the projection of the Divine into the Intellectual. 4. The double law of *action* and *reaction*, male and female, positive and negative, etc.

III. Is the number of *results*. 1. Without Three there can be no result, either in the Intellectual or Physical. From the I, the real *possibility* of existence, and the II, the *energy* and *reaction*, results III, the *product* or *form*. 2. The *constitution* of bodies, formed (a) of the bases of the three elements: *Earth, Water* and *Fire*; (b) the three actions. *Action, Reaction* and *Cause*. 3. The immaterial, but *not thinking* universal principle (Will?). The number of unthinking, but immaterial beings (Elementals?) is represented by $3 \times 3 = 9$.

IV. Is the number of *perfection*. 1. It is the symbol of the *divine square*, the *thinking universe*. 2. The symbol of the square of *time*. 3. The representation of the intellectual man in his *primordial condition*; and 4. the symbol of the *universe, North, South, East and West*.

V. This number may be regarded either as $1+4$, or as $2+3$, or as $4+1$, and its aspect differs accordingly. Five is necessary for the harmony of a perfect accord; but in another aspect it is terrible and represents the *principle of evil* in its battle with good. It is the symbol of *idolatry, superstition*, and fear, which can only become moderated by the combination with 6. It is the number of suffering and death, and whoever *remains* with it becomes a victim of the terrible power of 65.

VI. Is not a *perfect* number, but good for *sensuous* results. By 6 as the symbol of 2×3 visible nature came into existence. It is the symbol of temporal and changeable existence.

VII. Consists out of $3+4$; $4+3$; or $6+1$. It represents the *seven principles* in their different combinations, the *seven planets* and many other things. Like 16 (4×4) and 9 (3×3) so is 49 (7×7) of great importance.

VIII. (2×4) Is the number of the *double square* of time and eternity, of the Intellectual and the Sensuous, and contains the connection and antiphony of the same.

IX. (3×3) is the number of the *Sensuous*, of *Sensuality* and *Degradation*; of everything circular and material. $4+9$ is the full number of nature. The relations of $1-3-6-9$ and of $1-4-8-16$ are very important.

X. Is the *completion* of everything that exists. In it are combined all the double, ternary and quaternary relations, and it is the result of $1+2+3+4$.

*Occult Mathematics, or the application of basic numbers
to the spiritual and physical world*⁴

True mathematics is the basis of all *true* sciences. *Ordinary* mathematics is its shadow, and is only infallible as long as it occupies itself with *material* conceptions. All forms and images of sensuousness are the result of simple principles, and the origin of mathematics is therefore to be found in something on which the laws of the Sensuous, of Matter and Form depend; but which in itself is not material but intellectual. A man may be a very good mathematician on the ordinary plane, and yet incapable of solving an intellectual or physical problem as to its *genetic cause*. The true axioms of Mathematics are intellectual, and only by such can the regularity of all sensuous products be explained. In *true* Geometry we need a scale which can be applied to *all* kinds of dimensions; but such a scale can have no extension in itself. It can therefore not be found in *ordinary* Geometry, but must be searched for in the intellectual principle of extension; and consequently it will be impossible for *ordinary* Geometry to solve such problems, as for instance the *squaring of the circle*.

⁴ We refer the student to the footnotes on page 82 of the "Theosophical Miscellanies" (unpublished writings of Eliphas Levi), which speaks especially about the sacred number seven.—Ed.

If we wish to measure a *curve*, it is above all necessary to have a correct idea about a *straight* and a *curved* line. The attempt to explain a *curved* line by forming a combination of infinitely small *straight* lines is inadmissible and irrational and conflicting with the true laws of nature; for besides the moral proofs of infinite unity and perfection, there are other reasons why two such opposites as a straight line and a curved one never can be united and why such an attempt should never be made. Everything in nature has a number of differentiation, and this is also the case with both of these lines. *Emanation* into infinity is the object of one and *detractio*n from infinite progression the aim of the other. Both are opposing each other; their numbers and actions must be different; their numbers are in the proportion of 4—9 and in all their gradations and potencies this proportion remains the same. This law explains the *generic* and *individual difference* between *intellectual* and *sensuous* natures, which although differing from each other, yet are nevertheless derived from the *same source*, possess the *same original number*, and are governed by the *same law*.

The arbitrary scale used in *common* Geometry is extremely useful for the purposes of *common* life, because it deals with proportions of matter; but if we attempt to apply the same for the measurements of *essential truths*, we are likely to be led into errors, the least of which may grow into extensive dimensions, while the numbers 4 and 9, as representations of the straight and curved lines will in their proportions remain unchanged, and they constitute the proper scale for such truths.

It would be impracticable to apply *occult* mathematics and geometry to the measurement of *sensuous* perceptions and ordinary combinations of matter, neither can *common* Mathematics be applied to *spiritual* things. Matter exists only by and through *motion*, but matter is not the *source* of motion.

This source must necessarily exist in an *immaterial* principle, and the phenomena of extension and sensuousness are only *results* caused by the action of that principle. If the principles of matter are dependent on a higher action or reaction, how much more must this be the case with the evolution of such principles!

Although in the realm of the Sensuous there is no motion without extension, still even the Sensuous *indicates* a motion without extension; that is, an attraction of the bodies towards a common centre. The Sensuous is always guided by the Intellectual, and it follows that in the latter the cause of motion must exist. Both motions, taking an *inverse* direc-

tion, are guided by the number 4, which is the number of all motion. Therefore *no arithmetical* progression exists in the realm of the living nature, and the *geometrical* progression of the square is the only guiding one, because it is the principle of life and the activity of living beings.

The number of extension and also of the curved line is 9, because everywhere in nature where we find extension, we also find curved lines and both are therefore *equivalent*. Every form in its last analysis approaches the form of an oval or a *sphere*. The number of the *straight* lines belongs to *causes* and principles; that of *curves* to products and *results*.

The numbers 4 and 9, the straight and curved line, represent therefore the *two principal laws* of nature, and the two should never be mistaken for each other. Man, ever since he ceased to be perfect, has vainly tried to unite the same and thereby unsuccessfully attempted to square the circle; or to understand a fourth dimension of space, problems which can be *intellectually* grasped, but cannot be demonstrated on the *physical plane*.

There must be a distinction made between the *natural* circle and the *artificial* one. The first one does not consist of a periphery of connecting points, but is formed by an expansion of energy from the centre.

The *square* is not to be regarded as a *geometrical extension*, but as a *symbol* of a universal creative principle. This principle only reveals itself by the *triangle* formed by the three immaterial principles which cause forms and bodies, and this triangle in combination with the unity of the first principle forms the basis of all possible phenomena in the realm of the Sensuous. The *action* of the principle, however, is a *straight* line.

The four allegorical sides of the square represent:

The *first* one, the basis and *root* of the others, is the symbol of the first and only cause, whose number is absolute *unity*.

The *second*, emanating from the first, is the first ray, the Adam Kadmon or primordial man, who in his double capacity is symbolized by two numbers, also called the "Son of God."

The *third* completes the *trinity* of all existing forms in the visible and invisible universe; and the *fourth* represents the *essences* of all classes and kinds, whether they are possessed of intellectual powers or restricted to the realm of the sensuous, and it finally stands in intimate relation with the mysterious nature of *man*.

(To be concluded)

CONQUERING MAYA

THE SPIRIT in the body is often called the imprisoned soul. This earth is often called the only veritable hell that there is. Both these statements are true of the ordinary man. The Perfected Man is not imprisoned by the body; voluntary exile from Nirvana, the Soul of Space, He retains a freedom even though He uses a body for His own purposes. The hell aspect of Earth does not touch Him, though He lives and labours here for the sake of all the souls held in bondage on earth. The damnation of these souls lies in their ignorance about their bondage. Thus they create for themselves their own hell. This ignorance or *avidya* is illusion or *maya*.

We might say that there are three kinds of human beings — (1) those who live on earth and know not that they are in hell; (2) those who recognize that life on earth is a state of imprisonment and bondage; and (3) those who living on earth are yet free, are untouched by the magic power — *maya-shakti* — which makes of earth a hell. This last class consists of the Masters who have mastered all the secrets of colour, sound, smell, taste and sensation, and subdued their own senses and minds.

Most men belong to the first class: the glamour of tints and shades, the enchantment of odours and scents, the haunting and obsessing quality of tones and sounds, the enslaving power of tastes, of sensations, of feelings, of thoughts — all overwhelm puny man. The more he heeds them, the more he goes away from himself. He loses his *own* power to know, in the thoughts and ideas of other people, and these so enchain his mind that it forgets to turn in the direction of his Self. He attunes his ears to fleshly sounds and the note of his soul is not heard. The riot of colours blinds him to the colour of his own being. Thus in many directions of sense life, till a divorcement takes place between the soul and its vehicle, the latter becoming a passive medium and automatic repository of outer influences. All mediums tend in a direction opposite to perfection. The spiritualistic medium is the flower and apotheosis of mediumism, generally speaking, in which our race is enveloped.

For all men there are three paths. First, the Path of Maya which keeps men wedded to it, tied to a life of senses and lusts, finally leading them through mediumism to utter forgetfulness of the soul or self. They hug the shell of Maya and are absorbed by it. This is why this path is sometimes called the Path of Annihilation.

The second path is the Path of Abandonment. This awakens man so

far as to desire to reject Maya and run away from its pain. Such abandonment results in the innocence and happiness of the sweet but ignorant child. He who runs away from the shadow of Maya is pursued by it. Men may try to feel that they have succeeded in abandoning Maya; it never abandons them.

The third path is the Path of Fulfilment, on which Maya's power is recognized, its secrets are learned, and it itself is mastered. This path is also called the Path of Woe because in all three stages — of recognizing, learning and mastering — there is pain and suffering. To recognize that we have been under foolish glamour, that we have been wasting time and polluting space, is a painful awakening. More painful still is the effort to wrest out of Maya-Devi her well-guarded secrets. She wraps herself in the many folds of her *sari* of matter; she hides herself in veils of varied textures and colours. Long are the years and hard is the labour which she claims, and frustrations innumerable cause anxiety and anguish and untold suffering. But at last, conquering the soul of Maya, man rises above pain and pleasure — Maya's lord and master.

Thus, for those who awaken from the glamorous sleep of illusion, the path bifurcates — abandon everything and everybody, and in solitary glory lose your soul in the Bliss of Ages; or fulfil your dharma in pain, in sorrow, in woe, controlling Maya, remaining beside her, her master, in order to help her victims to find and walk that same path of fulfilment.

On the first path, the Path of Maya, many are the teachers who impart the knowledge of how to die but not the knowledge of how to live; they impart knowledge of the body, the feelings, the mind, how these constantly change and change and change. Variety and difference of views is the keynote of these teachers, and inconsistency the great characteristic by which they may be known.

On the second path, the Path of Abandonment, there are no gurus. Those who are slaves of Maya cannot teach how to abandon her; those who have abandoned her are not here; they are running, running, running to find a spot where Maya's sway is not.

On the Path of Fulfilment, the third path, and on it alone, are the real Gurus to be found. Having mastered Maya-Devi, They alone are capable of showing us how *we* can also master her. They master her by making obeisance to her laws of infallible justice and by using those laws to serve humanity. Serving her, They alone can teach us how to serve. They are changeless and reposeful, for They know the secrets of

Life; They are immortal and eternal, in whom death has died again and again. All such are of one mind and are united in Will. They have a constant mission and a consistent message. They speak the language of colour and sound; They know the number underlying each form. They have fathomed the ultimate divisions of Time, or cycles, which make the days and nights of mortals, of Gods, but above all, of Maya-Devi, who is the cause of the coming and going of universes; and thus They are not disturbed at the time of the general dissolution. They are awake when all else sleeps.

They smile in compassion at men who chase the shade of Maya, and watch earnestly those who are pursued by the shadow of Maya, while They hold in trust for all the Soul of Maya — whom They have subdued through service.

To conquer Maya one must seek the Lords of Maya.

THE SUN is just rising on the morning of another day, the first day of a new year. What can I wish that this day, this year, may bring to me? Nothing that shall make the world or others poorer, nothing at the expense of other men; but just those few things which in their coming do not stop with me, but touch me rather, as they pass and gather strength:

A few friends who understand me, and yet remain my friends.

A work to do which has real value without which the world would feel the poorer.

A return for such work small enough not to tax unduly anyone who pays.

A mind unafraid to travel, even though the trail be not blazed.

An understanding heart.

A sight of the eternal hills and unresting sea, and of something beautiful the hand of man has made.

A sense of humour and the power to laugh.

A little leisure with nothing to do.

A few moments of quiet, silent meditation. The sense of the presence of God.

And the patience to wait for the coming of these things, with the wisdom to know them when they come.

—W. R. HUNT

RISE AND FALL OF CIVILIZATIONS

HOWEVER strange and unbelievable it may sound, the occult history of the origin, development and continuity to this day of the Wisdom-Religion holds the key to the cyclic rise and fall of civilizations. The grandeur of any civilization is made, sustained and renovated by its Men of true Genius. The flowering of a civilization manifests as a beautiful garden in which grow shrubs and plants of variegated fragrant blossoms, and rare fruit trees which nourish human beings. The masses of people who belong to that civilization are the beneficiaries of the labour of its Geniuses — not only wise rulers and sage instructors, but also helpful leaders, and travellers and traders, all of whom raise the standard of mental and moral life. There are grades of geniuses referred to by H.P.B. in her article "Genius" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13*), and the greater Geniuses mostly remain unknown and unrecognized.

When the majority of the people are unable to absorb more knowledge, the number of the creative leaders grows less, the Spiritual Instructors retire into silence and secrecy, and the populace left to itself is unable to check the oncoming of the *pralaya* of that civilization. The civilization yields, as a rare efflorescence, a handful of Adepts who join the ranks of the real Geniuses and become the Benefactors of future civilizations.

The aim of the Divine Instructors is ever to energize all human souls to perceive the Light of Discernment hidden in the heart of each. In different degrees human minds endeavour, some to succeed in embodying that Light, while most hear but do not heed the Voice of the Masters that is ever in the world. When that Voice is heard and heeded by the individual human mind, that mind becomes ready to kindle in the cave of the heart the Tathagata Light.

The real success of any civilization is related to the number of people who acknowledge the superiority of the Light of compassionate reason of their hearts, over the mechanical, materialistic, analytical and so-called logical reason on which mundane knowledge is founded and by which mundane life is lived.

The Head, the Heart, the Soul and the Seed of the Eternal and Deathless Wisdom-Religion or Theosophia are Beings of Light — Embodiments of Wisdom, of Compassion, of Service and of Sacrifice. Their luminous powers are blessings which cast no shadows. On the reverse side, in this sphere of shadows and sorrows we have conflicting branche

of knowledge; loves ranging from carnal lusts to personal attachments to kin and friends; the belief in a false "I" which separates man from man; the seeds of ignorance and especially of false philosophical views and formulae, which grow giant weeds of negation of everything and all except visible and tangible matter; sacerdotal superstitions, and uncontrolled passions which are allowed to become uncontrollable.

Why and how this phenomenon occurs in the process of evolution need not be considered here. Says *The Secret Doctrine*:

The philosophy of that law in Nature, which implants in man as well as in every beast a passionate, inherent, and instinctive desire for freedom and self-guidance, pertains to psychology and cannot be touched on now. To show the feeling in higher Intelligences, to analyse and give a natural reason for it, would necessitate, moreover, an endless philosophical explanation for which there is no room here. (II. 484)

But the basic principle directly indicates its *raison d'être*. Says *Isis Unveiled*:

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. Nothing is eternal and unchangeable, save the Concealed Deity. Nothing that is finite — whether because it had a beginning, or must have an end — can remain stationary. It must either progress or recede; and a soul which thirsts after a reunion with its spirit, which alone confers upon it immortality, must purify itself through cyclic transmigrations, onward toward the only Land of Bliss and Eternal Rest, called in the *Sohar*, "The Palace of Love"; in the Hindu religion, "Moksha"; among the Gnostics, the "Pleroma of eternal Light"; and by the Buddhists, Nirvana. The Christian calls it the "Kingdom of Heaven," and claims to have alone found the truth, whereas he has but invented a new name for a doctrine which is coeval with man. (II. 280)

The mind of man strives at snail's speed to come from darkness to light. Men and women stray away from Truth, Virtue and Harmony because of the darkness of ignorance, of passion, of selfishness. Under the sway of these material and deadening forces, they wander aimlessly through the corridors of time, creating, each for himself, aeons of suffering and sorrow. To help them to discern the right way, to perceive the Light within buried by the darkness of sense and flesh, efforts are made

by the true Guides and Teachers of the human race.

The Secret Doctrine explains the causes that have brought about the present spiritual bankruptcy of the race:

As the "coats of skin" of men thickened, and they fell more and more into physical sin, the intercourse between physical and ethereal *divine* man was stopped. The veil of matter between the two planes became too dense for even the inner man to penetrate. The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, revealed to the Third Race by their celestial teachers in the days of their purity, became a great focus of light, the rays from which became necessarily weakened as they were diffused and shed upon an uncongenial, because too material soil. With the masses they degenerated into Sorcery, taking later on the shape of exoteric religions, of idolatry full of superstitions, and man-, or hero-worship. Alone a handful of primitive men — in whom the spark of divine Wisdom burnt bright, and only strengthened in its intensity as it got dimmer and dimmer with every age in those who turned it to bad purposes — remained the elect custodians of the Mysteries revealed to mankind by the divine Teachers. (II. 281)

The self-chosen duty of these Embodiments of Light, referred to above, is to dispel the darkness prevalent amid struggling humanity by teaching the right philosophy to develop compassionate reason, and the right loving service of humanity and of nature. Cycles of time play an important part in this self-sacrificing task of the Lords of Light.

They have taken upon themselves the duty of showing the Hidden Way of Perfection that perhaps one in a thousand strives to tread (*Bhagavad-Gita*, VII. 3). For this purpose, They appropriately and adequately use the Body of Wisdom, which is infallible, and which has been subjected to checking and rechecking, to reiterated verifications by "countless generations of initiated seers and prophets." (*S.D.*, I. 272)

PLOUGH with the ploughshare of truth; plant the seed of the desire for knowledge; weed out untruth; irrigate the field with the water of patience; supervise your work by looking into yourself (by introspection); build the fence of the rules of dharma; if you do these, *Siva-gati* will soon grow there.

“MEN KARMIC AGENTS”

[Reprinted from *The Path*, March 1892.—Eds.]

THE ABOVE is the title of an essay in the T.P.S. series¹ by Alexander Fullerton, in which he treats the question solely in regard to whether we should take punitive or reformatory measures with those of our fellow-beings who transgress in those respects in which we so often see culpability. In that essay he has said a great deal that cannot be controverted from the general rules prevailing, but there are other considerations, and also other ways of understanding the term “Karmic Agent.”

For this H.P.B. had a particular and technical meaning under which the Karmic Agent is at once removed from the ordinary general mass to which the essay in the *Siftings* has reference. A statement of the law of Karma of course makes not only men karmic agents but also every other being in the Cosmos, inasmuch as they are all under the law of action and reaction, and, with the same law, go to make Cosmos what it is. Taken as a unit in the general mass of men, each man is a Karmic agent in the above sense, just as each horse and dog, or the rain and the sun are. So in our daily actions, even the smallest, whether we are conscious or not of the effect, we are such agents. A single word of ours may have an influence for a lifetime upon another. It may cause once more the fire of passion to blaze up, or bring about a great change for good. We may be the means of another's being late for an appointment and thus save him from calamity or the reverse, and so on infinitely. But all this is very different from the technical sense I have referred to, and which might be taken to be the sense of the title of the article thus specially removed from the general class.

The special sense is in this: a “Karmic Agent” is one who concentrates more rapidly than is usual the lines of influence that bring about events sometimes in a strange and subtle way. Of these there are two classes: The first, those among the mass who, from the lives they have led in the past, arrive in this one gifted — or cursed — with the power unknown to themselves. The second, those who by training have the power, or rather have become concentrators of the forces, and know it to be the case. Of these are the Adepts, both great and small. An instance of this may be found in the life of Zanoni as related by Bulwer Lytton. It was observed that those who met Zanoni soon showed in their affairs

¹ *Theosophical Siftings*, Vol. 4, Nos. 14-15.

very great changes, and although Lytton's son has said, out of his imagination, I think, that his father never intended what theosophists say he did by the book, there is no doubt that Bulwer meant to teach and illustrate the law.

In Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms* it is also spoken of in the 36th Aphorism, second book, thus (Amer. Ed.): "When veracity is complete, the Yogee becomes the focus for the Karma resulting from all works, good or bad"; and in the Bombay edition, "when veracity is complete, he is the receptacle of the fruit of works."

It is a well-known tradition in India, called by the civilized West a superstition, that if one should meet and talk with an Adept his Karma, good and bad, would come to a head more quickly than usual, and thus that the adept could confer a boon, letting the evil pass and increasing the good. I have conversed with those who asserted they had by chance met Yogis in the forest with whom they talked, telling them that some dear friend was sick unto death, and then on returning home found that the sickness had all gone at the very time of the conversation. And others met such men, who told them that the meeting would bring on the opposite by reason of quick concentration, but that even that would be a benefit, as it would, as it were, eat up much unpleasant Karma once for all. Of this class of traditions is the story of the centurion's daughter and Jesus of Nazareth.

And H.P.B. held that there are many people in the world, engaged in its affairs, who are, without knowing it, Karmic agents in this special sense, and continually bring to others good and bad sudden effects which otherwise would have come slowly to pass, spread over many more days or years, and showing in a number of small events instead of in one.

If this theory be true, we have here also the explanation of the superstition of the evil eye, which is only a corrupt form of the knowledge that there are such Karmic agents among us who by looking at others draw together very quickly effects that without the presence of the Karmic agent might never have been noticed because of their taking more time to transpire.

But if we follow too strictly the theory that men are Karmic agents for the punishment or reformation of others, many mistakes will be made and much bad feeling engendered in others, making it inevitable that we who cause these feelings must receive some day, in this life or another, the exact reaction. And on the other hand, we should not shrink from the duty to relieve pain and sorrow if we can, for it is both cow-

ardice and conceit to say that we will not help this or that man because it is his Karma to suffer. In the face of suffering it is our good Karma to relieve it if in our power. We are ignorant at best, and cannot tell what will be the next result of what we are about to do or to suggest; hence it is wiser not to assume too often and on too small occasions to be the reformers or punishers as agents for Karma of those who seem to offend.

—D.K.

EVERY human being is a ceaseless dynamo of continually produced energy which will finally affect the very earth on which we live. The brain is a dispenser; none of the energy we put in any kind of thought is lost, but becomes a part of the energy of the earth. If that energy is devoted more to disintegration than to good and constructive ideals, then destruction will be brought about not only of the civilization but of the very earth itself. There is no separateness between us and the other kingdoms. We are all bound to each other. We live upon the lower kingdoms; we gain our instruments from them, and we affect them either beneficently or maleficently. In the energy we put into self-interest we are generating maleficent influence, which finally, in cyclic course, will culminate in some disaster. The energy generated by high ideals will likewise culminate, but in some great benefit.

We have to learn Theosophy, but more, we have to make it a living power in our lives, in order to have it of beneficent effect and spread beyond our own narrow horizon of thought and feeling. We have to supply that dynamic power, not for any one channel, but for all. It is the power of Consciousness when freed from self-interest; it is Spirit, freed from self-interest.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

DREAM EXPERIENCE

No man, however gross and material he may be, can avoid leading a double existence; one in the visible universe, the other in the invisible. The life-principle which animates his physical frame is chiefly in the astral body; and while the more animal portions of him rest, the more spiritual ones know neither limits nor obstacles. . . .

According to our thoughts, pursuits, and daily occupations, all of which are fairly impressed upon the plastic capsule called the *human soul*, the latter attracts around itself spiritual beings congenial to itself. Hence some dreams and visions that are pure and beautiful, others fiendish and beastly. . . .

Let the student of occult sciences make his own nature as pure and his thoughts as elevated as those of the Indian seers, and he may sleep unmolested. . . . Around the insensible form of such a sleeper the immortal spirit sheds a power divine that protects it from evil approaches, as though it were a crystal wall.

—*Isis Unveiled*, I. 180, 460

THE phenomena pertaining to dreams point unmistakably to the existence of the *inner self*, the *dehi* or dweller in the body, the Soul as a distinct entity, distinct from the body. While the body is asleep, the senses are quiescent and inactive and man's consciousness is turned *within*. The dream state is a *subjective* condition in which the person is unaware of what is taking place in the external world, as no definite outer impressions are being received through the senses. The sleeping person does not see the objects around, cannot know if someone else has entered the room, unless a sudden noise awakes him. In waking consciousness or *jagrat* state, the inner man is constantly receiving messages or impressions from his outer environment through the senses (*jnana indriyas*) and in turn communicating with that outer environment through the organs of action (*karma indriyas*). It is this interchange and constant communication and contact with the external world or the objective universe that constitutes waking life. Hence we call the waking or *jagrat* state of consciousness an *objective* condition.

But man's consciousness exists independently of the body and its senses and organs of action, independently of its contact with the objects of sense, and hence when the body is asleep and passive, that inner consciousness continues to function. The very fact that dreams *do* take place is therefore a proof of the existence in us of something independent

of the mortal body. And a correct understanding of dream consciousness leads to a recognition of the Soul in us, that aspect of ourselves which survives death itself. The Soul is the permanent individuality which bridges the gap made by sleep and in like manner bridges the gap made by the sleep of death.

But dreams are of varied kinds, for the inner man is a complex being and presents many and varied aspects. There are as many different kinds of dreams as there are different aspects in human nature. To enumerate and analyse fully the phenomena of dreams would therefore necessitate a classification of the constituent factors of man's being, and space does not permit us to do this. We can only point out the two broad divisions in dreams corresponding to the two main natures in man, the personal and the impersonal, or the lower and the higher, the material and the spiritual. Apart from physiological dreams, or such dreams as are caused by purely physiological phenomena, dreams can be roughly subdivided into those that pertain to the lower or psychic nature, and those pertaining to the higher or spiritual.

The first would comprise such dreams as are caused by the personal feelings and thoughts we have generated during waking consciousness, by our psychic impulses, *i.e.*, likes and dislikes, and the images and pictures connected with our personal life and stored in our brain memory. Such personal dreams are illusionary and fanciful and conducive neither to real rest nor to psychic relaxation. Of this personal or psychic dream state, *swapna*, it has been said: "Stop not the fragrance of its stupefying blossoms to inhale." And again: "The WISE ONES heed not the sweet-tongued voices of illusion." Each one of us goes through this state immediately after the body falls asleep and ere we enter *sushupti* or the higher state of dreams. A vigilant watchfulness during the day, an adequate preparation for sleep, enables man to free himself from the mayavic fetters of his own personal feelings, and thus to shorten the *swapna* state.

Spiritual dreams are those pertaining to the higher pole of our nature, to that in us which *knows* for it is knowledge — "It is the Man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike." It is in this spiritual state of inner and deep meditation, *sushupti*, that the inner man receives true impresses from the Spiritual Ego. But unless the brain is made porous to the Soul's recollections, that is, unless it is pure enough to retain such impresses, the memory of these higher dreams will be lost upon awakening. And here we must draw attention to a most important fact in the study of dreams — our own memory of the dream state is

limited and faulty, and that which we call a dream is only that which our waking memory has been able to catch, and in nine cases out of ten that partial memory is mixed up with the impresses already in the brain.

The above will explain why some dreams are allegorical or symbolic. They are partial glimpses of realities which the brain and the personal consciousness interpret in terms of *their* memory and *their* life. The Spiritual Ego has *its* own life and *its* own language, but these are not known by the average person; and so when the true Ego conveys its message to the lower man, that message is interpreted by the latter in terms of his personal fancy and the contents of his brain memory.

This will also make clear that the only justifiable interpretation of dreams is that of each individual for himself. No one can interpret correctly the dreams of another, and such arbitrary interpretations as given, for example, in dream-books, are useless and worse — misleading, hence dangerous and harmful. Two men may dream the *same* dream, and yet the meaning of the dream may differ radically in the two cases. The dreams pertaining to the future which come true are prophetic dreams caused by an impress from the Higher Self, correctly caught and correctly retained. That aspect of the future which has already been determined by the past and the present is open to the Spiritual Self, and hence prophetic dreams are possible. They would be less rare if human beings were attuned to the Spirit within, and consistently endeavoured to live their daily lives in accordance with the dictates of the “still, small voice of our spiritual consciousness.” From a study of the three main states of consciousness, *jagrat* or waking, *swapna* or personal dream consciousness, and *sushupti* or spiritual dream consciousness, it will be clear that man can, by controlling *jagrat*, purify *swapna* and learn to bring back upon awakening the memory of *sushupti*. Speaking of the ordinary man, Mr. Judge states (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 11* p. 13):

So it appears, then, that what he should try to accomplish is such a clearing up and vivification of *Swapna* state as shall result in removing the confusion and distortion existing there, in order that upon emerging into waking life he may retain a wider and brighter memory of what occurred in *Sushupti*. This is done by an increase of concentration upon high thoughts, upon noble purposes, upon all that is best and most spiritual in him while awake. The best result cannot be accomplished in a week or a year, perhaps not in a life, but, once begun, it will lead to the perfection of spiritual cultivation in some incarnation hereafter.

THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE WHICH IS BLISS

Make hard thy Soul against the snares of *Self*; deserve for it the name of "Diamond-Soul."

—*The Voice of the Silence*

IN the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Sri Krishna advises his disciple to acquaint himself with that boundless bliss which does not arise through the contact of the senses with the objects of sense. He goes on to say that the man who has experienced it will not regard any other acquisition as superior to it; for once that he has established himself in it, his equanimity will be able to withstand the greatest grief (VI. 21-22). Does the student believe that there is a bliss which transcends joy and is distinct from it? If he does not, then his quest for happiness will keep him oscillating continually between pleasure and pain. That such a condition of instability would be destructive of his high purpose is clear, for in the immediately succeeding verse Sri Krishna defines Yoga as a state where there is disconnection from union with pain (VI. 23). This severance from pain is impossible of attainment so long as the desire for joy and pleasure persists. Steeped in such a condition, the individual will not be able to have even an approximate idea of what bliss can be.

The first step that the student is expected to take is that of making his mind impervious to either pleasure or pain. These two constitute a pair of which one constituent cannot be isolated from the other. This pair, like any of the other "pairs of opposites," attaches itself to him who wants to possess a particular one constituent of the pair to the exclusion of the other. As well wish that the pendulum that has swung to one extreme of its arc will not move on to the other extreme. If one desires to be dissociated from pain, one has to contrive to be dissociated from pleasure also. The dictates of necessity are the criteria for the performance of action. Once that it is decided that an act has to be performed, it has to be carried out without any expectation or anxiety as to its outcome. If success comes, it is good. If failure comes, it is good also, provided that the act was done as an offering to duty and to the silent Lord within. The more important and crucial stage may come much later, as when the action begins to yield its harvest of effects. Before the student becomes aware of the result, he must have prepared himself to neutralize its effect upon his desire nature. His equanimity has to be preserved under both favourable and unfavourable circumstances. The *Gita* describes this steady condition of consciousness by the simile "as a lamp

which is sheltered from the wind flickereth not." (VI. 19)

To attain this high indifference and to reach to bliss, it is necessary that no part or nature of the man be either neglected or subjected to disuse. The body, the mind, the understanding and the senses have all to be used according to their respective functions (*Ibid.*, V. 13). The truly devoted do not renounce actions. The renouncing that is to be undertaken is all done by the discriminating heart. Actions must inevitably continue to flow from the act of living, but the truly devoted take on the responsibility to see that whatever their outcome, it will leave the mind placid and the Soul an indifferent spectator of the results (*Ibid.*, IX. 9). The boundless bliss of which Sri Krishna speaks does not come by the mere act of waiting for its arrival. It has to be striven after and looked for even amidst the raging of the storm. It becomes desirable not as a reward for meritorious work done, but rather as an indication that a stage along the path has been reached.

This bliss is not so completely unknown to the seeker after truth that he can form no concept of its grandeur. In moments of calmness, when all else is still, he may have sensed an inner peace that comes as a dim recollection, now glimpsed, now lost, of those ancient days of humanity's innocence when gods walked the earth with men. There have been many who under the profound influence of that fleeting vision have expressed their resolve to sacrifice all that they hold dear to make that intimation a reality. But they face a real difficulty. Without knowledge they are not able to discriminate. They do not know where to look, or at which door to knock for guidance. It is these persons who fall an easy prey to the charlatan and the fraud.

Recognizing the potentiality of getting easy money from persons genuinely interested in the higher living, the exploiters of other people's gullibility have always succeeded in holding themselves forth as masters of the occult. The vendors of charms and talismans; the mercenaries who promise at so much consideration paid in advance to appease the malignant influences of the planets; the quacks who assure salvation at the price of a book; the self-styled Acharyas, Yogis, Bhagawans and Arahats who undertake — again at a price — to impart spiritual knowledge by methods that do not necessarily require a clean life or high morals — these are today weaning souls away from the paths of rectitude, making them derelicts who are liable to be swept away in the first great vortex. Besides these murderers of human souls, there are misguided enthusiasts who preach and practise systems of philosophy that

are the antithesis of Raja Yoga. are harmful and produce maladjustments in the inner man. Unfortunately for humanity, there never was a time when the blind had not aspired to be leaders of the blind. Such leadership may by chance lead to a better clime and a healthier atmosphere. It can never remove blindness.

The heights of spirituality have to be stormed. After each advance the arduous climb becomes the more dangerous, the life more beset than ever before with adversity. Yet, it is in this very adversity that the seeds of bliss can take root. There is an actively beneficent aspect to adversity that is not widely recognized, and both men and nations seek to run away from it without caring to learn the salutary lessons that it offers. In consequence, both are now learning through hard and bitter experience the truism that neither wealth nor economic prosperity has the power to make either man or country great. When the disciple runs into adverse circumstances, as does Arjuna during the early stages of the Mahabharata War, Sri Krishna uses the occasion to make him realize that the very force and fury of his adversity can be neutralized by the dawn of a new conviction. The adverse omens that Arjuna saw and feared did, each in its own field, take place; but the dread of these vanished before the light that Sri Krishna threw on them. The adversity that is bypassed leaves the disciple poorer in wisdom.

The modern Arjuna of a day can with some degree of justification complain that he knows of no Guru to whom he can apply for guidance and that moreover he is not equipped mentally to differentiate between the true Guru and the charlatan. This is true; and the danger of inquiring souls being led astray cannot be minimized. False teachings that promise short cuts cannot be ignored. Dangerous practices that seem easy and do not require any great self-abnegation are ignorantly welcomed. False knowledge is made to sound plausible by its votaries, and that too leads many an aspirant on to the path of error. The aspirant to godlike Wisdom is rarely fitted to know that though there are foods that nourish the soul, there are intoxicants that can madden it and systems of thought that can poison and kill it past reanimation.

To him who is hungry of knowledge, it may be said that the search for the real Guru and the true Teaching need not exercise his mind to any great extent. In fact, it is the Guru who will make the meeting possible, for have we not been assured that when the pupil is ready, the Master will appear? The real problem of the would-be disciple is not here to start his search. The problem is whether he, alone and unaided,

will have the tenacity of purpose to prepare himself to pass the scrutiny of the Guru. Such a preliminary preparation requires the aspirant to embrace without any reservation the ideal of Universal Brotherhood and embody it in his daily life. He is expected to maintain a ceaseless struggle against lust, anger and greed, which together make a hell of his life. This by itself is a stupendous task that may require a sustained effort spread over numerous incarnations. For, the vast ramifications of these minions of hell are seen permeating 20th-century thought to such an extent that these vices are considered as normal and permissible. Thus lust that begets sex perversions is now legalized. Birth-control that gives an indirect approval to licentiousness is not only approved but authorized by governments. Anger that produces hatred is encouraged on a large scale. Its manifestations are best seen in the frenzy that grips large masses of men during racial and communal upheavals. Greed that produces selfishness of the worst kind has its own votaries. Entire nations have been known to cast longing eyes on the more desirable territories of other nations that they seek to grab on such excuses as "living room" and "national security." Further still, the law-courts of all lands are today involved in litigations between members of the same family who, like vultures, try to grab the largest morsel out of a dead man's estate. The modern aspirant is heir to all this. Will he be strong enough to wade through it all in order to reach his haven of safety? He has the good wishes of all his brother-aspirants.

The Guru who does not insist on a clean life and a mastery over lust, anger and greed is no Guru. A Guru who expects wealth and privileges as his price for imparting his teachings degrades his own spirit and contaminates his pupil with a lethal virus. Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

Do not believe that lust can ever be killed out if gratified or satiated. . . . It is by feeding vice that it expands and waxes strong, like to the worm that fattens on the blossom's heart.

The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life — has lived in vain.

Kill thy desires, Lanoo, make thy vices impotent, ere the first step is taken on the solemn journey.

Strangle thy sins, and make them dumb for ever, before thou dost lift one foot to mount the ladder.

To live to benefit mankind is the first step.

Even a little practice of this will deliver a man from great risk.

RANDOM NOTES FROM "THE THEOSOPHIST"

ELEMENTALS OR NATURE-SPIRITS

[In an article entitled "Nature-Worship," the author, who signed himself "H.H.D. — B.A.," traced "the birth and growth of the idea among the Aryans of India, as viewed from Rig-Vedic poetry, etc., and a further transition to science, as observed historically." H.P.B. commented on the article as follows.]

We have not been willing to interrupt the rhythmic flow of our correspondent's language with any commentaries of our own, but must add a word of supplement. The outward phase of the idea of nature-worship he has succinctly and eloquently traced. But he, in common with most modern scholars, completely ignores one chief factor. We allude to the experience, once so common among men, now so comparatively rare, of a world of real beings, whose abode is in the four elements, beings with probable though as yet ill-defined powers, and a perceptible existence. We are sorry for those who will pity us for making this admission; but fact is fact, science or no science. The realization of this inner world of the *Elementals* dates back to the beginning of our race, and has been embalmed in the verse of poets and preserved in the religious and historical records of the world. Granted that the perception of phenomena developed nature-worship, yet, unless our materialistic friends admit that the range of these phenomena included experiences with the spirits of the elements and the higher and noble realities of Psychology, it would trouble them to account for the universality of belief in the various races of the Unseen Universe.

Why should but one of the elements, namely, earth, be so densely populated, and fire, water, air, etc., be deemed empty voids, uninhabited by their own beings — the "viewless races," as the great Bulwer-Lytton called them? Is this partiality of nature a logical hypothesis of science? Who that observes the marvellous adaptations of the organs of sense and the natures of beings to their environment, dares say that these elementals do not exist, until he is well assured that the perceptive faculties of our bodies are capable of apprehending all the secret things of this and other worlds? Why may not the spirits of the kingdoms of earth, air, fire and water be non-existent to us — and we to them — only because neither has the organs to see or feel the other?

(January 1880)

[A letter from a correspondent, A. J. Riko, describing the phenomena of stone-showers drew from H.P.B. a longish editorial note from which the following is extracted.]

We do not regard the Elementals of the Kabalists as properly "beings." They are the active Forces and correlations of Fire, Water, Earth and Air, and their shape is like the hues of the chameleon which has no permanent colour of its own. Through the interplanetary and interstellar spaces, the vision of almost every *clairvoyant* can reach. But it is only the trained eye of the proficient in Eastern Occultism, that can fix the flitting shadows and give them a shape and a name.

(August 1881)

[C. C. Massey, in his article "Ancient Opinions Upon Psychic Bodies," referred to the aerial and terrestrial regions as teeming with "an appropriate population which never passes, like the human soul, from one to the other — 'gods,' 'demons,' and animals." H.P.B. remarked in a footnote:]

The allusion here is to those beings of the several kingdoms of the elements which we, Theosophists, following after the Kabalists, have called the "Elementals." They never become men.

(December 1879)

[In a paper read by W. F. Kirby, F.T.S., at a meeting of the British Theosophical Society, April 2, 1882, the author said, among other things, "The beings which play the most important part in Arab romances are the Jinn, or Genii, which appear to correspond very closely to the beings known to us as the Elementals..." To this H.P.B. remarked:]

They are the *Preta*, *Yaksha*, *Dakini* — the lowest of the Hindu elementals, while the *Gandharvas*, *Vidyadharas* and even the *Apsaras* belong to the highest. Some of them — the former, are dangerously mischievous, while the latter are benevolent, and, if properly approached, willing to impart to men useful knowledge of arts and sciences.

(*Journal of the Theosophical Society*, February 1884)

[Commenting on the stories of various phenomena produced by Hassan Khan (nicknamed "Djinni" from his alleged power over some of the Elemental Spirits), such as the falling of bricks and sand-showers, H.P.B. said in an editorial footnote:]

This highly interesting particular should recall to the reader the article on "Stone-Showers" which appeared in *The Theosophist* for August 1881.¹ In that connection we protested against the theory of the Spiritualists that this class of phenomena is due to the agency of disembodied human spirits, and suggested that they went to prove the existence of prankish nature-elementals. The *Djinnat* or *Djinn* of the Oriental demonology are of this class, as the reader of the *Arabian Nights* will remember. They can be made subservient to one who has learnt the secret of their subjugation by occult means. Only those who would believe that we consider them as beings of any sort — least of all *intelligent* beings — will be very much mistaken.

(May 1882)

[The following editorial remarks appeared under the title "Nature-Spirits and Elementals."]

A correspondent of *Light* having asked Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten, the famous Spiritualist speaker and author, to state her beliefs as regards the existence of sub-human orders of "spirits," our excellent friend has, in the number of that journal for 3rd December, given them without reserve. Before quoting them, we must inform our readers that Spiritualists have always opposed the allegations of Theosophists that such races of beings exist, and we have had to put up with no little hard scolding from them. Mrs. Britten, incautiously, as we think, uses the word "Elementary" to signify nature-spirits, or the forces of Nature. A clear distinction should be drawn between these nature-spirits, and the psychic shells of once living human beings, known in India as *bhutas*. To mark this difference and, if possible, avoid confusion, we applied, in *Isis*, the name "Elementals" to the nature-spirits, and used the word "Elementary" to designate the *bhutas*....

In the same number of *Light* we learn from a correspondent signing himself "Ma" — that the "earliest Gods of Egypt, following the mother of the Gods, were the Eight who ruled in Am-Smen before the firmament of Ra was uplifted"; and that "they are known to all Egyptologists as the eight *elementaries*."

A new proof of the correctness of cyclic necessity: gods worshipped ninety centuries B.C., becoming candidates for the same in the nineteenth A.D.!

(February 1882)

¹ THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, January 1939.

[The following is extracted from the Editor's Note appended to a correspondent's letter.]

Among modern Western mediums, equally with Hindus of the same class, are many who can handle burning coals, red-hot iron, and molten metal with perfect impunity, and walk through beds of blazing fire unscathed. In America there is a female medium named Mrs. Swydam, who has this gift, and in Europe a late, and the most noted of male mediums has not only exhibited the feat of handling hot coals without receiving harm, but even laid them upon the heads of non-mediums in the company present or upon newspapers or books, without injury to person or property. The explanation in both classes of cases is that the fireproof individual is a medium for these fire elementals, and contains in himself an unusual proportion of Salamandrine properties, the result of an abnormal combination of elemental forces in his foetal development. Normally, a human being contains the elementals of all the four kingdoms in almost equal proportions, any slight preponderance of one over the other determining the so-called "temperament."

(August 1883)

O MIND! listen to the nature and conduct of a devotee of Rama, who without attachment to sense-pleasures, seeks Him, becomes a liberated soul here itself, and enjoys supreme bliss. He should not boast of having done meditation with *mantras* and penance; he should not speak with a hypocrite's mentality; he should not wander about with the ambition that there should be no equal to him; he should not be fickle-minded and be deluded by his attachment to wife and children; he should not regard worldly prosperity as real; he should not entertain any differential attitude between one form of God and another; he should not earn a living by posing that he is the only honest and qualified man in the world; he should not allow himself to be unmindful of the blessed feet of Sri Rama; he should not allow himself to be swayed by *rajasic* and *tamasic* qualities. He should not expect the Lord's grace without earning it and deserving it; he should not give up his attempt to prepare his mind for the path of concentrated contemplation; he should never forget Sri Rama, the friend of Tyagaraja.

—TYAGARAJA

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (October 1, 1978), the former Editor of the prestigious *Saturday Review*, Norman Cousins, writes of a lacuna in the education of modern man. Our education instructs us in the differences between the lands and peoples of the Earth, the fabulous variations of human culture and behaviour. But it is not the type of knowledge one can live by and build on in the present context when far-flung areas which had once been secure in their remoteness have suddenly become jammed together in a single arena. A new type of education has now become necessary, the author argues, an education in liberation from tribalism, though the latter often takes refined forms.

Mr. Cousins, who calls himself a "miseducated man," writes:

What my education failed to do was to teach me that the principal significance of such differences was that they were largely without significance. The differences were all but obliterated by the similarities. My education had bypassed the similarities. It had failed to grasp and define the fact that beyond the differences are realities scarcely comprehended because of their shattering simplicity. And the simplest reality of all was that the human community was one — greater than any of its parts, greater than the separateness imposed by the nations, greater than the divergent faith and allegiances or the depth and colour of varying cultures. This larger unity was the most important central fact of our time — something on which people could build at a time when hope seemed misty, almost unreal. . . .

The new education had to teach man the most difficult lesson of all: to look at someone anywhere in the world and be able to recognize the image of himself. It had to be an education in self-recognition. The old emphasis upon superficial differences had to give way to education for mutuality and for citizenship in the human community.

Viewed in planetary perspective, what counts is not that the thoughts of men lead them in different directions but that all men possess the capacity to think; not that they pursue different faiths but that they are capable of spiritual belief; not that they write and read different books but that they are capable of creating print and communicating in it across time and space; not that they enjoy different art and music but that something in them enables them to respond deeply to forms and colours and ordered vibrations of sounds.

These basic lessons, then, would seek to provide a proper respect for man in the universe. Next in order would be instruction in the unity of man's needs. However friendly the universe may be to man, it has left conditions of human existence precariously balanced. All men need oxygen, water, land, warmth, food. Remove any one of these and the unity of human needs is attacked and man with it. The next lesson would concern the human situation itself — how to use self-understanding in the cause of human welfare; how to control the engines created by man that threaten to alter the precarious balance on which life depends; how to create a peaceful society of the whole.

Christmas Humphreys, writing on the Buddha's *Kalama Sutta* in *The Middle Way* for Summer 1978, calls it "a document unique in the history of religion." Here we have a spiritual Teacher advising his audience in clear words not to accept even *his* words as true, just because *he* uttered them. This famous Sutta, of which several versions exist in the Pali Canon, contains clear, specific advice on what doctrines not to accept and what doctrines to accept, and how the two should be distinguished. Christmas Humphreys writes:

This is more than the traditional Buddhist tolerance of other points of view. It is a breath-taking repudiation of all dogmas, bigotry, and personal claims to "save" the hearers from the consequences of their foolish thoughts and feelings and desires. The Sutta has its negative and positive aspects. . . . Let us look at it, as given in *Kalama Sutta, the Buddha's Charter of Free Enquiry*, by Soma Thera, published in Ceylon as Wheel Publication No. 8.

"Thus have I heard. Once the Blessed One, while wandering in the Kosala country with a large community of bhikkhus, entered a town of the Kalamas people called Kesaputta. . . . Then the Kalamas went to where the Blessed One was. On arriving there they paid homage to him and sat down on one side.

"The Kalamas who were inhabitants of Kesaputta sitting on one side said to the Blessed One: 'There are some monks and brahmins, venerable sir, who visit Kesaputta. They expound only their own doctrines, the doctrines of others they despise, revile, and pull to pieces. Some other monks and brahmins, too, venerable sir, come to Kesaputta. They also expound and explain only their own doctrines: the doctrines of others they despise, revile, and pull to pieces. Venerable sir, there is doubt, there is uncertainty in us concerning them. Which of these reverend monks and brah-

mins spoke the truth and which falsehood?

“The Buddha replied: ‘It is proper for you, Kalamas, to doubt, to be uncertain; uncertainty has arisen in you about what is doubtful. Come, Kalamas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumour; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another’s seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, ‘The monk is our teacher.’ Kalamas, when YOU YOURSELVES know: ‘These things are bad; these things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill,’ abandon them.”

Then the Blessed One analysed his negative advice in terms of the Three Fires of greed, hate and delusion, pointing out that he who burns with these fires will suffer harm and ill. He then once more summarizes what I have called the negative advice and then suddenly switches over to the firm, clear, positive.

“Kalamas, when YOU YOURSELVES know: These things are good; these things are not blamable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness; enter on and abide in them.”

The Blessed One then analyses the positive advice in terms of the benefit and happiness which results from the dying out of the Three Fires. . . .

Is it not indeed strange that this Sutta, an integral part of the oldest set of Buddhist Scriptures, is not more appreciated, quoted, and indeed, in a world where the followers of various religions fight each other to the death in the name of their religious beliefs, proclaimed as a basis and unique principle? For in the 2500 years of its history there is no record of any Buddhist so much as raising his fist against another in the course of disagreement of the other’s view on some alleged teaching of the Buddha. Each strives to apply what he has come to believe to be true, and the history of Nalanda, the famous Buddhist University which flourished for 1000 years, was a model of such reasonable discussion without rancour, much less a drop of blood being shed. Let us then study the *Kalama Sutta*, apply its principles to ourselves and proclaim them for the benefit of all mankind.

Medical sociologists at the University of Florida, U.S.A., have found as a result of their research that, more than a strong will and a cheerful disposition, people need close, supportive friends to ward off depression. They report that the availability of one's friends and kin has more to do with vulnerability to depression than the number and kind of stressful events one suffers. (*Psychology Today*, October 1978)

The sociologists' conclusions are one product of a gathering of mental-health data that spans 10 years and more than 7,000 adult subjects. Subjects were rated according to the number and kind of losses they had suffered. People under the most stress who had close human contact coped better with the stress than those under similar circumstances but without such supports.

The fact of solidarity and interdependence is brought home to us in more ways than one.

In *Science Digest* for November 1978, Mary Carpenter writes on the status of birth control today:

How much more effective is modern birth control than the crude and inexact — and sometimes superstitious — methods used by our ancestors? How much safer?

The experts disagree on the answers. . . . A Population Reference Bureau report says that although today's couples have access to a greater array of relatively safe and effective methods of fertility regulation than ever before, these methods are "neither safe nor effective enough."

The views of doctors, family planners, researchers, and consumer advocates run a gamut from criticism of safety limitations to praise for the range of methods and freedom of access to contraception.

Today, two of the most popular methods of birth control are oral contraceptives and the IUD. Both have their hazards and can cause complications — even death. The pill, for instance, is believed to cause deformities of the hands and feet in newborns. It has been associated with increased risk of blood clots; stroke; cancer of the breast, cervix, vagina and liver; and other medical problems. Users are also cautioned that the pill may cause cancer in female offspring and birth defects in offspring of both sexes.

If this be progress — at what price?
