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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE PERENNIAL SOURCE

Nothing of that which does not exist somewhere, whether in the visible or invisible kosmos, can be reproduced artificially, or even in human thought.

—An Occult Axiom

One of the characteristics of our age is a thirst for “something new,” “something fresh,” “something original.” New goods and achievements, fresh ideas, original books, are the demands of the day. More words are put in print than ever before, pretending to be giving out original thoughts, yet in truth but repeating old, old ideas. Most of us are loath to take the trouble to read and reread the thoughts of the ancients as given in the Scriptures of old. We are lazy of mind as well as superficial; therefore there must be constant restatement. The teachings of the ancients, if given out in the old form, are scouted, but if rewritten with a modern title, will be considered.

New schools of philosophy arise in the world; science progresses; religious creeds are elastic and suit the narrow-minded, evolving new beliefs and superstitions. Theosophy, the modern restatement of the Ancient Wisdom, ever remains and people who are always looking for “something new” are not attracted to it. Centred in the ever-shifting personality, they are affianced to ever-changing knowledge. It is the immortal soul of man which has the capacity to appreciate the immortal soul of knowledge which is Theosophy.

The dissemination of the ancient teachings suited to the modern man is the aim and object of the wider Theosophical Movement and of this monthly. We go on beckoning the many though finding only a few responding. We point to the source of Religion, but the many are wedded to their narrow creeds. We point to the fountainhead of knowledge, but men and women find it easier to secure information on the passing, changing and disintegrating aspects of mundane knowledge.

One of H. P. Blavatsky's main objects in founding the Theosophical Movement of the 19th-20th century was to show the absurdity of the vain and arrogant claim that modern man has reached the acme of civiliza-

tion, that our thought and achievements have vastly improved upon those of the ancients, and that ideas of which the philosophers and scientists of antiquity never dreamed have today been brought to light. In *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine* and numerous articles that she wrote, H.P.B. exposed the fallacies in contemporary theories that were offered in evidence of modern "superiority."

For her magazine *Lucifer* especially, H.P.B. wrote her most challenging commentaries on contemporary thought and civilization. Her contributions to *The Theosophist* had been largely concerned with the philosophy itself and the work of the Theosophical Movement. In *Lucifer* her editorial articles carried the struggle of the Movement a step further; they were direct challenges to the bigotry of established religions and modern physical sciences and were calculated to shock the complacency of the intelligentsia of the age into an awareness of the contradictions in their thought and in their lives.

"The Babel of Modern Thought," which follows, is one such article by H.P.B., the central idea of which is the important truth that there is nothing new under the sun. Failure to recognize that all that can be said was known centuries ago has resulted in the Babel-like confusion of modern thought. No religion, philosophy or science can ever stand alone or be complete in itself, for it is at best but a fragment of the ancient Wisdom-Religion, consistent, logical and harmonious, "the work of generations of adepts and seers, the sacred heirloom of prehistoric times." This Wisdom-Religion is the spiritual soul of all philosophies, all sciences, all religions, all arts. While schools of philosophy die, branches of science perish, creedal religions decay and disintegrate, and arts transform and transmute themselves, that Wisdom-Religion, which is the soul of knowledge, persists ever the same to enlighten the mind and to elevate the heart of humankind. It constitutes the changeless truth. Ageless wisdom has a voice which is always in the world. Its ideas expressed themselves at one time in Sanskrit, at another time in Avesta, then in Greek and now in English. The language differs, but the ideas are the same.

Mr. Judge wrote in his editorial opening the seventh volume of *The Path*:—

The editor...wearies of the eternal printing that goes on, for there is nothing new under the sun and we are like squirrels repeating the words spoken by bodies long since dead which were inhabited by ourselves whom now we fail to recognize. But since this is the age of black on white impressed by machinery, we are compelled to publish so that the opportunity of saying the same thing once more to a rebellious and stiff-necked generation shall not be neglected.

This noble example of Mr. Judge we endeavour to follow humbly.

THE BABEL OF MODERN THOUGHT

[The following article by H. P. Blavatsky first appeared in two parts in *Lucifer*, Vol. VII, pp. 353-360 and 441-450, for January and February 1891. It was reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for April and May 1937. The present printing combines both the parts for the convenience of readers.—EDS.]

O ye Lords of Truth who are cycling in eternity . . . save me from the annihilation in this Region of the *Two Truths*.

—Egyptian "Ritual of the Dead"

I

That the world moves in cycles, and events repeat themselves therein, is an old, yet ever new truism. It is new to most, firstly, because it belongs to a distinct group of occult aphorisms *in partibus infidelium*, and our present-day Rabbis and Pharisees will accept nothing coming from *that* Nazareth; secondly, because those who will swallow a camel of whatever size, provided it hails from orthodox or accepted authorities, will strain and kick at the smallest gnat, if only its buzz comes from theosophical regions. Yet this proposition about the world cycles and ever-recurring events is a very correct one. It is one, moreover, that people could easily verify for themselves. Of course, the people meant here are men who do their own thinking; not those others who are satisfied to remain, from birth till death, pinned, like a thistle fastened to the coat-tail of a country parson, to the beliefs and thoughts of the goody-goody majority.

We cannot agree with a writer (was it Gilpin?) who said that the grandest truths are often rejected, "not so much for want of direct evidence, as for want of inclination to search for it." This applies but to a few. Nine-tenths of the people will reject the most overwhelming evidence, even if it be brought to them without any trouble to themselves, only because it happens to clash with their personal interests or prejudices; especially if it comes from unpopular quarters. We are living in a highly moral atmosphere, high-sounding — in words. Put to the test of practice, however, the morality of this age in point of genuineness and reality is of the nature of the black skin of the "negro" minstrel: assumed for show and pay, and washed off at the close of every performance. In sober truth, our opponents — advocates of official science, defenders of orthodox religion, and the *tutti quanti* of the detractors of Theosophy — who claim to oppose our works on grounds of *scientific* "evidence," "public good and truth," strongly resemble advocates in our courts of law — miscalled of justice. These in their defence of robbers and murderers, forgers and adulterers, deem it to be their duty to browbeat, confuse and bespatter all who bear witness against their clients, and will ignore, or if possible, suppress, all evidence which goes to incrim-

inate them. Let ancient Wisdom step into the witness-box herself, and prove that the goods found in the possession of the prisoner at the bar were taken from her own strong-box; and she will find herself accused of all manner of crimes, fortunate if she escape being branded as a common fraud, and told that she is no better than she should be.

What member of our Society can wonder then, that in this our age, pre-eminently one of shams and shows, the "theosophists'" *teachings* so (mis-)called, seem to be the most unpopular of all the systems now to the fore; or that materialism and theology, science and modern philosophy, have arrayed themselves in holy alliance against theosophical studies — perhaps because all the former are based on chips and broken-up fragments of that primordial system. Cotton complains somewhere that the "metaphysicians have been learning their lesson for the last four (?) thousand years," and that "it is now high time that they should begin to teach something." But, no sooner is the possibility of such studies offered, with the complete evidence into the bargain that they belong to the oldest doctrine of the metaphysical philosophy of mankind, than, instead of giving them a fair hearing at least, the majority of the complainers turn away with a sneer and the cool remark: "Oh, you must have invented all you say yourself!"

Dear ladies and gentlemen, has it ever occurred to you how truly grand and almost *divine* would be that man or woman who at this time of the life of mankind could invent anything, or discover that which had not been invented and known ages before? The charge of being such an inventor would only entitle the accused to the choicest honours. For show us, if you can, that mortal who in the historical cycle of our human race has taught the world something entirely new. To the proud pretensions of this age, Occultism — the real Eastern Occultism, or the so-called Esoteric Doctrine — answers through its ablest students: Indeed all you boasted knowledge is but the reflex action of the bygone Past. At best you are but the modern popularizers of very ancient ideas. Consciously and unconsciously you have pilfered from old classics and philosophers, who were themselves but the superficial recorders — cautious and incomplete, owing to the terrible penalties for divulging the secret of initiation taught during the mysteries — of the primæval Wisdom. Avaunt! Your modern sciences and speculations are but the *réchauffés* dishes of antiquity; the dead bones (served with a *sauce piquante* of crass materialism, to disguise them) of the intellectual repasts of the gods. Ragon was right in saying in his *Maçonnerie Occulte* that "Humanity only *seems* to progress in achieving one discovery after the other, as in truth it only finds that which it had lost. Most of our modern inventions for which we claim such glory are, after all, things people were acquainted with three and four thousand years back.¹ Lost to us through wars, floods and fire, their very existence became obliterated from the

¹ The learned Belgian Mason would be nearer the mark by adding a few more ciphers to his four thousand years.

memory of man. And now modern thinkers begin to *rediscover* them once more."

Allow us to recapitulate a few of such things and thus refresh your memory.

Deny, if you can, that the most important of our present sciences were known to the ancients. It is not Eastern literature only, and the whole cycle of those esoteric teachings which an overzealous Christian Kabbalist, in France, has just dubbed "the *accursed* sciences" — that will give you a flat denial, but profane classical literature as well. The proof is easy.

Are not physics and natural sciences but an amplified reproduction of the works of Anaxagoras, of Empedocles, Democritus and others? All that is taught *now*, was taught by these philosophers *then*. For they maintained — even in the fragments of their works still extant — that the Universe is composed of eternal atoms which, moved by a subtle internal Fire, combine in millions of various ways. With them, this "Fire" was the divine Breath of the Universal Mind. but now, it has become with the modern philosophers no better than a blind and senseless Force. Furthermore they taught that there was neither Life nor Death, but only a constant *destruction of form*, produced by perpetual *physical* transformations. This has now become, by *intellectual* transformation, that which is known as the physical correlation of forces, conservation of energy, law of continuity and what not, in the vocabulary of modern Science. But "what's in a name," or in new-fangled words and compound terms, once that the identity of the essential ideas is established?

Was not Descartes indebted for his *original* theories to the old Masters, to Leucippus and Democritus, Lucretius, Anaxagoras and Epicurus? These taught that the celestial bodies were formed of a multitude of atoms, whose vortical motion existed from eternity; which met, and, rotating together, the heaviest were drawn to the centres, the lightest to the circumferences; each of these concretions was carried away in a fluidic matter, which, receiving from this rotation an impulse, the stronger communicated it to the weaker concretions. This seems a tolerably close description of the Cartesian theory of Elemental Vortices taken from Anaxagoras and some others; and it does look most suspiciously like the "vortical atoms" of Sir W. Thomson!

Even Sir Isaac Newton, the greatest among the great, is found constantly mirroring a dozen or so of old philosophers. In reading his works one sees floating in the air the pale images of the same Anaxagoras and Democritus, of Pythagoras, Aristotle, Timæus of Locris, Lucretius, Macrobius, and even our old friend Plutarch. All these have maintained one or the other of these propositions: (1) that the smallest of the particles of matter would be sufficient — owing to its infinite divisibility — to fill infinite space; (2) that there exist two Forces emanated from the Universal Soul, combined in numerical proportions (the centripetal and centrifugal "forces," of the latter-day scientific saints); (3) that

there was a mutual attraction of bodies, which *attraction* causes the latter to, what we now call, *gravitate* and keeps them within their respective spheres; (4) they hinted most unmistakably at the relation existing between the weight and the density, or the quantity of matter contained in a unit of mass; and (5) taught that the attraction (gravitation) of the planets toward the Sun is in reciprocal proportion to their distance from that luminary.

Finally, is it not a historical fact that the rotation of the Earth and the heliocentric system were taught by Pythagoras — not to speak of Hicetas, Heraclides, Ecphantus, etc. — over 2,000 years before the despairing and now famous cry of Galileo, “*E pur, se muove*”? Did not the priests of Etruria, and the Indian *Rishis* still earlier, know how to attract lightning, ages upon ages before even the *astral* Sir B. Franklin was formed in space? Euclid is honoured to this day — perhaps, because one cannot juggle as easily with mathematics and figures, as with symbols and words bearing on unprovable hypotheses. Archimedes had probably forgotten more in his day than our modern mathematicians, astronomers, geometricians, mechanicians, hydrostaticians and opticians ever knew. Without Archytas, the disciple of Pythagoras, the application of the theory of mathematics to practical purposes would, perchance, remain still unknown to our grand era of inventions and machinery. Needless to remind the reader of that which the Aryans knew as it is already recorded in *The Theosophist* and other works obtainable in India.

Wise was Solomon in saying that “there is *no new* thing under the Sun”; and that everything that *is* “hath been already of old time, which was before us” — save, perhaps, the theosophical doctrines which the humble writer of the present is charged by some with having “invented.” The prime origin of this (very complimentary) accusation is due to the kind efforts of the S.P.R. It is the more considerate and kind of this “world famous, and learned Society” of “Researches,” as its scribes seem utterly incapable of inventing anything original themselves — even in the way of manufacturing a commonplace illustration. . . .

In short, it may be said of the scientific theories that those which are true are not new; and those which are new — are not true, or are at least very dubious. It is easy to hide behind “merely *working* hypotheses,” but less easy to maintain their plausibility in the face of logic and philosophy. To make short work of a very big subject, we have but to institute a brief comparison between the old and the new teachings. That which modern Science would make us believe is this: the atoms possess *innate* and immutable properties. That which Esoteric, and also exoteric, Eastern philosophy calls *divine* Spirit Substance (*Purusha Prakriti*) or eternal Spirit-matter, one inseparable from the other, modern Science calls Force and Matter, adding as we do (for it is a Vedantic conception), that, the two being inseparable, matter is but an abstraction (an illusion rather). The properties of matter are, by the Eastern Occultists, summed up in, or brought down to, attraction and repulsion;

by the Scientists, to gravitation and affinities. According to this teaching, the properties of complex combinations are but the necessary results of the composition of elementary properties; the most complex existences being the physico-chemical automata, called men. Matter from being primarily scattered and inanimate, begets life, sensation, emotions and will, after a whole series of consecutive "gropings." The latter non-felicitous expression (belonging to Mr. Tyndall) forced the philosophical writer Delboeuf² to criticize the English Scientist in very disrespectful terms, and forces us in our turn to agree with the former. Matter, or anything equally conditioned, once that it is declared to be subject to immutable laws, *cannot* "grope." But this is a trifle when compared with dead or *inanimate* matter, producing *life*, and even psychic phenomena of the highest mentality! Finally, a rigid determinism reigns over all nature. All that which has once happened to our *automatical* Universe, had to happen, as the future of that Universe is traced in the smallest of its particles or "atoms." Return these atoms, they say, to the same position and order they were in at the first moment of the evolution of the physical Kosmos, and the same universal phenomena will be repeated in precisely the same order, and the Universe will once more return to its present conditions. To this, logic and philosophy answer that it cannot be so, as the properties of the particles vary and are changeable. If the atoms are eternal and matter indestructible, these atoms can never have been born; hence, they can have nothing *innate* in them. Theirs is the one homogeneous (and we add *divine*) substance, while compound molecules receive their properties, at the beginning of the life cycles or *manvantaras*, from *within without*. Organisms cannot have developed from dead or *inanimate* matter, as, firstly, such matter does not exist, and secondly, philosophy proving it conclusively, the Universe is not "subjected to fatality." As Occult Science teaches that the universal process of differentiation begins anew after every period of *Mahapralaya*, there is no reason to think that it would slavishly and blindly repeat itself. *Immutable* laws last only from the incipient to the last stage of the universal life, being simply the effects of primordial, intelligent and entirely free action. For Theosophists, as also for Dr. Pirogoff, Delboeuf and many a great independent modern thinker, it is the Universal (and to us *impersonal* because *infinite*) Mind, which is the true and primordial Demiurge.

What better illustrates the theory of cycles, than the following fact? Nearly 700 years B.C., in the schools of Thales and Pythagoras, was taught the doctrine of the true motion of the earth, its form and the whole heliocentric system. And in 317 A.D. Lactantius, the preceptor of Crispus Cæsar, the son of the Emperor Constantine, is found teaching his pupil that the earth was a plane surrounded by the sky, itself composed of fire and water! Moreover, the venerable Church Father warned his pupil

² In the *Revue Philosophique* of 1883, where he translates such "gropings" by *étonnements successifs*.

against the *heretical doctrine of the earth's globular form*, as the Cambridge and Oxford "Father Dons" warn their students now, against the pernicious and superstitious doctrines of Theosophy — such as Universal Mind, Reincarnation and so on. There is a resolution tacitly accepted by the members of the T.S. for the adoption of a proverb of King Solomon, paraphrased for our daily use: "A scientist is wiser in his own conceit than seven Theosophists that can render a reason." No time, therefore, should be lost in arguing with them; but no endeavour, on the other hand, should be neglected to show up their mistakes and blunders. The scientific conceit of the Orientalists — especially of the youngest branch of these — the Assyriologists and the Egyptologists — is indeed phenomenal. Hitherto, some credit was given to the ancients — to their philosophers and *Initiates*, at any rate — of knowing a few things that the moderns could not rediscover. But now even the greatest *Initiates* are represented to the public as fools. Here is an instance. On pages 15, 16 and 17 (*Introduction*) in the Hibbert Lectures of 1887 by Prof. Sayce, on *The Ancient Babylonians*, the reader is brought face to face with a conundrum that may well stagger the unsophisticated admirer of modern learning. Complaining of the difficulties and obstacles that meet the Assyriologist at every step of his studies, after giving "the dreary catalogue" of the formidable struggles of the interpreter to make sense of the inscriptions from broken fragments of clay tiles, the Professor goes on to confess that the scholar who has to read these cuneiform characters, is often likely "to put a false construction upon isolated passages, the context of which must be supplied from conjecture" (p. 14). Notwithstanding all this, the learned lecturer *places the modern Assyriologist higher than the ancient Babylonian Initiate*, in the knowledge of symbols and his own religion!

The passage deserves to be quoted *in toto*:—

It is true that many of the sacred texts were so written as to be intelligible only to the initiated; but the initiated were provided with keys and glosses, *many of which are in our hands(?)* . . . We can penetrate into the real meaning of documents which to him (the ordinary Babylonian) were a sealed book. Nay, more than this, the researches that have been made during the last half-century into the creed and beliefs of the nations of the world, both past and present, *have given us a clue to the interpretation of these documents which even the initiated priests did not possess.*

The above (the italics being our own) may be better appreciated when thrown into a syllogistic form.

Major premise: The ancient *Initiates* had keys and glosses to their esoteric texts, *of which they were the INVENTORS.*

Minor Premise: Our Orientalists have *many* of these keys.

Conclusion: Ergo, the Orientalists have a clue which the *Initiates themselves did not possess!!*

Into what were the Initiates, in such a case, initiated? — and who invented the blinds, we ask.

Few Orientalists could answer this query. We are more generous, however; and may show in our next that into which our modest Orientalists have never yet been initiated — all their alleged “clues” to the contrary.

Go to, let us go down and there confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech....

—*Genesis*, xi

II

Having done with modern physical Sciences we next turn to Western philosophies and religions. Every one of these is equally based upon and derives its theories and doctrines from heathen, and moreover, *exoteric* thought. This can easily be traced from Schopenhauer and Mr. Herbert Spencer, down to Hypnotism and so-called “Mental Science.” The German philosophers modernize Buddhism; the English are inspired by Vedantism; while the French, borrowing from both, add to them Plato, in a Phrygian cap, and occasionally, as with Auguste Comte, the weird sex-worship or Mariolatry of the old Roman Catholic ecstasies and visionaries. New systems, yclept philosophical, new sects and societies, spring up nowadays in every corner of our civilized lands. But even the highest among them agree on no one point, though each claims supremacy. This, because no science, no philosophy — being at best but a fragment broken from the WISDOM RELIGION — can stand alone, or be complete in itself. Truth, to be complete, must represent an unbroken continuity. It must have no gaps, no missing links. And which of our modern religions, sciences or philosophies is free from such defects? Truth is One. Even as the palest reflection of the Absolute, it can be no more dual than is absoluteness itself, nor can it have *two* aspects. But such truth is not for the majorities, in our world of illusion — especially for those minds which are devoid of the *noëtic* element. These have to substitute for the high spiritual and *quasi*-absolute truth the relative one, which having two sides or aspects, both conditioned by appearances, leads our “brain-minds” — one to intellectual scientific materialism, the other to materialistic or anthropomorphic religiosity. But even that kind of truth, in order to offer a coherent and complete system of something, has, while naturally clashing with its opposite, to offer no gaps and contradictions, no broken or missing links, in the special system or doctrine it undertakes to represent.

And here a slight digression must come in. We are sure to be told by some that this is precisely the objection taken to theosophical expositions, from *Isis Unveiled* down to *The Secret Doctrine*. Agreed. We

are quite prepared to confess that the latter work, especially, surpasses in these defects all the other theosophical works. We are quite ready to admit the faults charged against it by its critics — that it is badly arranged, discursive, over-burdened with digressions into byways of mythology, etc., etc. But then it is neither a philosophical system nor *the* Doctrine called secret or esoteric, but only a record of a few of its facts and a *witness* to it. It has never claimed to be the *full* exposition of the system (it advocates) in its totality: (a) because as the writer does not boast of being a great Initiate, she could, therefore, never have undertaken such a gigantic task; and (b) because had she been one, she would have divulged still less. It has never been contemplated to make of the sacred truths an integral system for the ribaldry and sneers of a profane and iconoclastic public. The work does not pretend to set up a series of explanations, complete in all their details, of the mysteries of Being; nor does it seek to win for itself the name of a distinct system of thought — like the works of Messrs. Herbert Spencer, Schopenhauer or Comte. On the contrary, *The Secret Doctrine* merely asserts that a system, known as the WISDOM RELIGION, the work of generations of adepts and seers, the sacred heirloom of prehistoric times — actually exists, though hitherto preserved in the greatest secrecy by the present Initiates; and it points to various corroborations of its existence to this very day, to be found in ancient and modern works. Giving a few fragments only, it there shows how these explain the religious dogmas of the present day, and how they might serve Western religions, philosophies and science as sign-posts along the untrodden paths of discovery. The work is essentially fragmentary, giving statements of sundry facts taught in the esoteric schools — kept, so far, secret — by which the ancient symbolism of various nations is interpreted. It does not even give the *keys* to it, but merely opens a few of the hitherto secret drawers. No *new* philosophy is set up in *The Secret Doctrine*, only the hidden meaning of some of the religious allegories of antiquity is given, light being thrown on these by the esoteric sciences, and the common source is pointed out, whence all the world-religions and philosophies have sprung. Its chief attempt is to show that, however divergent the respective doctrines and systems of old may *seem* on their external or objective side, the agreement between all becomes perfect, so soon as the esoteric or *inner* side of these beliefs and their symbology are examined and a careful comparison made. It is also maintained that its doctrines and sciences, which form an integral cycle of universal cosmic facts and metaphysical axioms and truths, represent a complete and unbroken system; and that he who is brave and persevering enough, ready to crush the *animal* in himself, and forgetting the human *self*, sacrifices it to his Higher Ego, can always find his way to become initiated into these mysteries. This is all *The Secret Doctrine* claims. Are not a few facts and self-evident truths, found in these volumes — all the literary defects of the exposition notwithstanding — truths *already proved practically to some*, better than the most

ingenious "working" hypotheses, liable to be upset any day, than the *unexplainable* mysteries of religious dogmas, or the most seemingly profound philosophical speculations? Can the grandest among these speculations be really profound, when from their *Alpha* to their *Omega* they are limited and conditioned by their author's *brain-mind*, hence dwarfed and crippled on that Procrustean bed, cut down to fit limited sensuous perceptions which will not allow the intellect to go beyond their enchanted circle? No "philosopher" who views the spiritual realm as a mere figment of superstition, and regards man's mental perceptions as simply the result of the organization of the brain, can ever be worthy of that name.

Nor has a materialist any right to the appellation, since it means a "lover of Wisdom," and Pythagoras, who was the first to coin the compound term, never limited Wisdom to this earth. One who affirms that the Universe and Man are objects of the senses only, and who fatally chains thought within the region of senseless matter, as do the Darwinian evolutionists, is at best a *sophiaphobe* when not a philosophaster — never a philosopher.

Therefore is it that in this age of Materialism, Agnosticism, Evolutionism, and false Idealism, there is not a system, however intellectually expounded, that can stand on its own legs, or fail to be criticized by an exponent from another school of thought as materialistic as itself; even Mr. Herbert Spencer, the greatest of all, is unable to answer some criticisms. Many are those who remember the fierce polemics that raged a few years ago in the English and American journals between the Evolutionists on the one hand and the Positivists on the other. The subject of the dispute was with regard to the attitude and relation that the theory of evolution would bear to religion. Mr. F. Harrison, the Apostle of Positivism, charged Mr. Herbert Spencer with restricting religion to the realm of reason, forgetting that feeling and not the cognizing faculty played the most important part in it. The "erroneousness and insufficiency" of the ideas on the "Unknowable" — as developed in Mr. Spencer's works — were also taken to task by Mr. Harrison. The idea was *erroneous*, he held, because it was based on the acceptance of the metaphysical absolute. It was insufficient, he argued, because it brought deity down to an empty abstraction, void of any meaning.³ To this the great English writer replied that he had never thought of offering his "Unknowable" and Incognizable, as a subject for religious worship. Then stepped into the arena the respective admirers and defenders of Messrs. Spencer and Harrison, some defending the *material metaphysics* of the former thinker (if we may be permitted to use this paradoxical yet correct definition of Mr. Herbert Spencer's philosophy), others, the arguments of the Godless and Christless Roman Catholicism of Auguste

³ As the above is repeated from memory, it does not claim to be quoted with verbal exactitude, but only to give the gist of the argument.

Comte,⁴ both sides giving and receiving very hard blows. Thus, Count d'Alviella of Brussels⁵ suddenly discovered in Mr. H. Spencer a kind of hidden, yet *reverential* Theist, and compared Mr. Harrison to a casuist of mediæval Scholasticism.

It is not to discuss the relative merits of materialistic Evolutionism, or of Positivism either, that the two English thinkers are brought forward; but simply to point, as an illustration, to the Babel-like confusion of modern thought. While the Evolutionists (of Herbert Spencer's school) maintain that the historical evolution of the religious feeling consists in the constant abstraction of the attributes of Deity, and their final separation from the primitive concrete conceptions — this process rejoicing in the easy-going triple compound of *deanthropomorphization*, or the disappearance of human attributes — the Comtists on their side hold to another version. They affirm that fetishism, or the direct worship of nature, was the primitive religion of man, a too protracted evolution alone having landed it in anthropomorphism. Their Deity is Humanity and the God they worship, Mankind, as far as we understand them. The only way, therefore, of settling the dispute, is to ascertain which of the two "philosophical" and "scientific" theories is the less pernicious and the more probable. Is it true to say, as d'Alviella assures us, that Mr. Spencer's "Unknowable" contains all the elements necessary to religion; and, as that remarkable writer is alleged to imply, that "religious feeling tends to free itself from every moral element"; or, shall we accept the other extremity and agree with the Comtists, that gradually, religion will blend itself with, merge into, and disappear in *altruism* and its service to Humanity?

Useless to say that Theosophy, while rejecting the one-sidedness and therefore the *limitation* in both ideas, is alone able to reconcile the two, *i.e.*, the Evolutionists and the Positivists — on both metaphysical and practical lines. How to do this it is not here the place to say, as every Theosophist acquainted with the main tenets of the Esoteric Philosophy can do it for himself. We believe in an impersonal "Unknowable" and know well that the ABSOLUTE, or Absoluteness, can have nought to do with worship on anthropomorphic lines; Theosophy rejects the Spencerian "He" and substitutes the impersonal It for the personal pronoun, whenever speaking of the Absolute and the "Unknowable." And it teaches, as foremost of all virtues, *altruism* and self-sacrifice, brotherhood and compassion for every living creature, without, for all that, worshipping Man or Humanity. In the Positivist, moreover, who admits of no immortal soul in men, believes in no future life or reincarnation, such a "worship"

⁴ The epithet is Mr. Huxley's. In his lecture in Edinburgh in 1868, *On the Physical Basis of Life*, this great opponent remarked that Auguste "Comte's philosophy in practice might be compendiously described as *Catholicism minus Christianity*, and antagonistic to the very essence of Science."

⁵ Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Brussels, in a philosophical *Essay on the religious meaning of the "Unknowable."*

becomes worse than fetishism: it is *Zoolatry*, the worship of the animals. For that alone which constitutes the *real* Man is, in the words of Carlyle, "the essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself 'I' — . . . a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals himself in man." This denied, man is but an animal — "the shame and scandal of this Universe," as Pascal puts it.

It is the old, old story, the struggle of matter and spirit, the "survival of the *unfittest*," because the strongest and most material. But the period when nascent Humanity, following the law of the natural and *dual* evolution, was descending along with spirit into matter — is closed. We (Humanity) are now helping matter to ascend towards spirit; and to do that we have to help substance to disenthral itself from the viscous grip of sense. We, of the fifth Root Race, are the direct descendants of the primeval Humanity of that Race; those who on this side of the Flood tried, by commemorating it, to save the antediluvian Truth and Wisdom, and were worsted in our efforts by the dark genius of the Earth — the spirit of matter, whom the Gnostics called Ildabaoth and the Jews Jehovah. Think ye, that even the Bible of Moses, the book you know so well and understand so badly, has left this claim of the Ancient Doctrine without witness? It has not. Allow us to close with a (to you) familiar passage, only interpreted in its true light.

In the beginning of time, or rather, in the childhood of the fifth Race, "the whole earth was of one *lip* and of one speech," saith chapter XI of *Genesis*. Read esoterically, this means that mankind had one universal doctrine, a philosophy, common to all; and that men were *bound* by one religion, whether this term be derived from the Latin word *re-legere*, "to gather, or be united" in speech or in thought, from *religens*, "revering the gods," or, from *religare*, "to be bound fast together." Take it one way or the other, it means most undeniably and plainly that our forefathers from beyond the "flood" accepted in common one *truth* — *i.e.*, they believed in that aggregate of subjective and objective *facts* which form the consistent, logical and harmonious whole called by us the *Wisdom Religion*.

Now, reading the first nine verses of chapter XI between the lines, we get the following information. Wise in their generation, our early fathers were evidently acquainted with the imperishable truism which teaches that *in union alone lies strength* — in union of thought as well as in that of nations, of course. Therefore, lest in disunion they should be "scattered upon the face of the earth," and their Wisdom Religion should, in consequence, be broken up into a thousand fragments; and lest they, themselves, instead of towering as hitherto, *through knowledge*, heavenward, should, through *blind faith*, begin gravitating earthward — the wise men, who "journeyed from the East," devised a plan. In those days temples were sites of learning, not of superstition; priests taught divine Wisdom, not man-invented dogmas, and the *ultima thule* of their religious activity did not centre in the contribution box, as at present.

Thus — “ ‘Go to,’ they said, ‘let us *build a city* and a *tower*, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make a name.’ And they made *burnt brick* and used it for *stone*, and built therewith a *city* and a *tower*.”

So far, this is a very old story, known as well to a Sunday school ragamuffin as to Mr. Gladstone. Both believe very sincerely that these descendants of the “accursed Ham” were proud sinners whose object was like that of the Titans, to insult and dethrone Zeus-Jehovah, by reaching “heaven,” the supposed abode of both. But since we find the story told in the *revealed*⁶ Scripts, it must, like all the rest in them, have its esoteric interpretation. In this, Occult symbolism will help us. All the expressions that we have italicized, when read in the original Hebrew and according to the canons of esoteric symbolism, will yield quite a different construction. Thus:—

1. “And the whole earth (mankind), was of *one lip* (*i.e.*, proclaimed the same teachings) and of the same *words*” — not of “speech” as in the authorized version.

Now the Kabalistic meaning of the term “words” and “word” may be found in the *Zohar* and also in the *Talmud*. “Words” (*Dabarim*) mean “powers,” and *word*, in the singular, is a synonym of Wisdom; *e.g.*, “By the uttering of *ten words* was the world created” — (*Talmud* “Pirkey Aboth” c. 5., *Mish.* 1). Here the “words” refer to the ten Sephiroth, Builders of the Universe. Again: “By the *Word* (Wisdom, Logos) of YHVH were the Heavens made” (*ibid.*).

2-4. “And the man⁷ (the chief leader) said to his neighbour, ‘Go to, let us make *bricks* (disciples) and *burn them to a burning* (initiate, fill them with sacred fire), let us build a *city* (establish mysteries and teach *the Doctrine*⁸) and a *tower* (*Ziggurrat*, a sacred temple tower) whose top may reach unto heaven’” (the highest limit reachable in space). The great tower of Nebo, of *Nabi* on the temple of Bel, was called “the house

⁶ A curious and rather unfortunate word to use, since, as a translation from the Latin *revelare*, it signifies diametrically the opposite of the now accepted meaning in English. For the word “to reveal” or “revealed” is derived from the Latin *revelare* “to unveil” and not to *reveal*, *i.e.*, from *re* “again” or “back” and *velare* “to veil,” or to hide something, from the word *velum* or “a veil” (or veil), a cover. Thus, instead of *unveiling*, or *revealing*, Moses has truly only “reveiled” once more the Egypto-Chaldean theological legends and allegories, into which, as one “learned in all the Wisdom of Egypt,” he had been initiated. Yet Moses was not the first revealer or *reveiler*, as Ragon well observes. Thousands of years before him Hermes was credited with veiling over the Indian mysteries to adapt them for the land of the Pharaohs. Of course, at present there is no longer classical authority to satisfy the orthodox philologist, but the occult authority which maintains that originally the word *revelare* meant to “veil once more,” and hence that revelation means the throwing of a veil over a subject, a *blind* — is positively overwhelming.

⁷ This is translated from the Hebrew original. “Chief-leader” (*Rab-Mag*) meaning literally Teacher-Magician, Master or *Guru*, as Daniel is shown to have been in Babylon.

⁸ Some Homeric heroes also when they are said, like Laomedon, Priam’s father, to have built cities, were in reality establishing the *Mysteries* and introducing the Wisdom-Religion in foreign lands.

of the seven spheres of *heaven and earth*," and "the house of the stronghold (or strength, *tagimut*) and the foundation stone of heaven and earth."

Occult symbology teaches that to *burn bricks for a city* means to train disciples for magic, a "hewn stone" signifying a *full Initiate*, *Petra* the Greek and *Kephas* the Aramaic word for stone, having the same meaning, *viz.*, "interpreter of the Mysteries," a *Hierophant*. The supreme initiation was referred to as "the burning with great burning." Thus, "the bricks are fallen, but we will *build* (anew) with hewn stones" of Isaiah becomes clear. For the true interpretation of the four last verses of the genetic allegory about the supposed "confusion of tongues" we may turn to the legendary version of the *Yezidis* and read verses 5, 6, 7 and 8 in *Genesis*, ch. xi, esoterically:—

"And *Adonai* (the Lord) came down and said: 'Behold, the people *is* one (the people are united in thought and deed) and they have *one lip* (doctrine).' And now they began to spread it and 'nothing will be restrained from them (they will have full magic powers and get all they want by such power, *Kriyasakti*) that they have imagined.'"

And now what are the *Yezidis* and their version and what is *Adonai*? *Ad* is "the Lord," their ancestral god; and the *Yezidis* are a heretical Mussulman sect, scattered over Armenia, Syria, and especially Mosul, the very site of Babel (see "Chaldean Account of Genesis"), who are known under the strange name of "Devil-worshippers." Their confession of faith is very original. They recognize two powers or gods—Allah and *Ad* (or *Ad-onai*), but identify the latter with *Sheitan* or *Satan*. This is but natural since *Satan* is also "a son of god"⁹ (see *Job*, I). As stated

⁹ It is commanded in *Ecclesiasticus*, XXI, 30, not to curse *Satan*, "lest one should forfeit his own life." Why? Because in their permutations "the Lord God," *Moses* and *Satan* are one. The name the Jews gave while in Babylon to their *exoteric* God, the substitute for the *true* Deity of which they never spoke or wrote, was the Assyrian *Mosheh* or *Adar*, the god of the scorching sun (the "Lord thy God is a consuming flame" verily!) and therefore, *Mosheh* or *Moses* shone also. In Egypt, *Typhon* (*Satan*) the red, was identified both with the red Ass or *Typhon* called *Set* or *Seth* (and worshipped by the Hittites) and the same as *El* (the Sun god of the Assyrians and the Semites, or *Jehovah*), and with *Moses*, the red, also. (See *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, 523-24.) For *Moses* was red-skinned. According to the *Zohar* (Vol. I, p. 28) *B' sar da Mosheh soomaq*, *i. e.*, "the flesh of *Moses* was deep red," and the words refer to the saying, "The face of *Moses* was like the face of Sun" (see *Qabbalah* by Isaac Myer, p. 93). These three were the three aspects of the manifested God (the substitute for *Ain Suph*, the infinite Deity) or Nature, in its three chief Kingdoms—the Fiery or Solar, the Human or watery, the Animal or Earthy. There never was a *Mosheh* or *Moses*, before the Captivity and *Ezra*, the deep Kabbalist; and what is now *Moses* had another name 2,000 years before. Where are the Hebrew scrolls before that time? Moreover, we find a corroboration of this in Dr. Sayce's *Hibbert Lectures* (1887). *Adar* is the Assyrian "War God" or the *Lord of Hosts* and the same as *Moloch*. The Assyrian equivalent of *Mosheh* (*Moses*) is *Masu*, the "double" or the "twin," and *Masu* is the title of *Adar*, meaning also a "hero." No one who reads carefully the said Lectures from page 40 to 58 can fail to see that *Jehovah*, *Masu* and *Adar*, with several others—are permutations.

in the *Hibbert Lectures* (pp. 346 and 347), Satan the "Adversary," was the minister and *angel of God*. Hence, when questioned on the cause of their curious worship of one who has become the embodiment of Evil and the dark spirit of the Earth, they explain the reason in a most logical, if irreverent, manner. They tell you that Allah, being *All-good*, would not harm the smallest of his creatures. *Ergo*, he has no need of prayers, or burnt-offerings of the "firstlings of the flock and the fat thereof." But that their Ad, or the Devil, being *All-bad*, cruel, jealous, revengeful and proud, they have, in self-preservation, to propitiate him with sacrifices and burnt-offerings smelling sweet in his nostrils, and to coax and flatter him. Ask any Sheik of the Yezidis of Mosul what they have to say as to the confusion of tongues, or speech, when *Allah* "came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men had builded"; and they will tell you it is not Allah but *Ad*, the god Sheitan, who did it. The jealous genius of the earth became envious of the powers and sanctity of men (as the God Vishnu becomes jealous of the great powers of the *Yogis*, even when they were *Daityas*); and therefore this deity of matter and concupiscence confused their brains, tempted and made the "Builders" fall into his nets; and thus, having lost their purity, they lost therewith their knowledge and magic powers, intermarried and became "scattered upon the face of the earth."

This is more logical than to attribute to one's "God," the *All-good*, such ungodly tricks as are fathered upon him in the Bible. Moreover, the legend about the tower of Babel and the confusion of *speech* is, like much else, not original, but comes from the Chaldeans and Babylonians. George Smith found the version on a mutilated fragment of the Assyrian tablets, though there is nothing said in it about the confusion of *speech*. "I have translated the word 'speech' with a prejudice," he says (*Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 163), "I have never seen the Assyrian word with this meaning." Anyone who reads for himself the fragmentary translation by G. Smith, on pages 160-63 in the volume cited, will find the version much nearer to that of the *Yezidis* than to the version of *Genesis*. It is he, whose "heart was evil" and who was "wicked," who confused "their counsel," not their "speech," and who broke "the Sanctuary . . . which carried Wisdom," and "bitterly they wept at Babel."

And so ought to "weep" all the philosophers and lovers of ancient Wisdom; for it is since then that the thousand and one exoteric substitutes for the one true Doctrine or *lip* had their beginning, obscuring more and more the intellects of men, and shedding innocent blood in fierce fanaticism. Had our modern philosophers studied, instead of sneering at, the old Books of Wisdom — say the *Kabala* — they would have found that which would have unveiled to them many a secret of ancient Church and State. As they have not, however, the result is evident. The dark cycle of *Kali Yug* has brought back a *Babel of modern thought*, compared with which the "confusion of tongues" itself appears a harmony. All is dark and uncertain; no agreement in any department, neither in

sciences, philosophy, law, nor even in religion. But, "woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness," saith Isaiah. The very elements seem confused and climates shift, as if the celestial "upper ten" themselves had lost their heads. All one can do is to sit still and look on, sad and resigned, while

The slack sail shifts from side to side;
The boat untrimm'd admits the tide;
Borne down adrift, at random toss'd
The oar breaks short . . . the rudder's lost.

The President, Dr. Radhakrishnan, is reported in *The Hindu* of May 29th to have stated in Madras, at the inauguration of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Andhra Mahila Sabha, that it was his hope and devout wish that educated people concentrate on the development of the essential human quality of compassion. "It alone can make us human," he said; "other things make us animals." It is through the exercise of universal love and compassion alone that the nuclear threat which the world faces can be overcome and it can be led to a better position.

There was a good deal of talk today about socialism, but real socialism, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, consisted in treating other beings with respect and dignity, in looking upon them as our own kith and kin. This would give rise to other forms of socialism in due course.

Referring to the type of education that should be given generally to boys and girls, Dr. Radhakrishnan said that the aim of education should not be only to produce people who were better informed or more skilled. The products of good education should be better human beings. Education should have both breadth and depth. He referred to what he called "spiritual illiteracy" found in many people who had immense wealth and vast learning, and attributed this to education "lacking in essentials." Many did not realize that there was "another dimension" to their nature apart from learning and wealth, and those who did not attend to this dimension suffered from "alienation in their own being," alienation which resulted in mental unrest and insecurity. This in turn led to increase in the sales of sedatives and stimulants.

For a man who had no peace of mind there could be no happiness; and how could one acquire this peace of mind unless he was able to turn to the shrine of "inward solitude" and develop certain "inward resources" which would help him to stand any shock? Many people today, Dr. Radhakrishnan said, were lacking in inward resources and fell back on external diversions when difficulties confronted them. It was essential, therefore, that the spiritual nature be attended to in order to reach "completeness."

REPENTANCE AND KARMA

There are two influential doctrines which could colour the attitude of the student of Theosophy towards the concept of true repentance. Both doctrines contain a germ of truth, but in their extreme formulations they are false and pernicious, dangerous distortions. One is the fatalistic doctrine of mechanical repentance, tied to a severely formal view of punishment. We have the notion that the only way in which we can expiate our sins of omission and commission is by receiving in the future the precise penalties attached to our acts, that there can be no repentance which mitigates our penalties. We may say to a sinner, "You have done wrong; you may regret your action and you may try to learn the lesson of your failure, but you cannot avoid the consequences of your act in the future; your Karma is bound to catch up with you sometime and you must be ready to receive your penalties." The other doctrine is that of sudden repentance, sometimes linked to the idea of vicarious atonement. We have here the notion that it is possible by profound regret and a dramatic act of confession and self-abasement to set aside the inexorable working of the law of Karma. We may say to a sinner, "You have sinned, yet you need not be oppressed by the thought of your future penalties; you can here and now cancel the consequences of your past sins; you can invoke the compassion of the Illustrious Beings who are the Great Guardians of the Law; you can implore the forgiveness and the blessing of the God within you." Which is worse — a too mechanical or a too lax interpretation of the Law of Karma? What is true repentance?

In order to answer these questions we could usefully turn to the story of Ajamila in Book VI of the *Bhagavatam*. By means of stories from the lives of prophets and kings, sages and devotees, this great scripture popularizes the truths contained in the Vedas. It would be easy to draw the wrong lessons from these stories or to read into them our own preconceptions. Every story must be seen as a corrective to a prevailing error or a half-truth concerning morality, salvation and the spiritual life. There are the well-known stories about Narada, Kapila, Dhruva and Prahlada and several stories about Sri Krishna. This fascinating work was composed by Vyasa, who handed it down to Suka, who in turn passed it on to King Parikshit, from whose court it was subsequently transmitted by saintly minstrels.

The story of Ajamila is briefly as follows. He was a man who married a woman of evil ways and became very dishonest, an easy prey to wicked and sinful habits. Of his ten sons, his favourite was the youngest named Narayana. One day, when Ajamila thought he was dying, he was terror-stricken by the sight of three ugly, demonlike attendants of the King of Death. He called his son Narayana, but as he uttered the name his mind became wholly concentrated on Narayana or Vishnu, the Lord of Love. While he was thus intently meditating upon God, there appeared before

him the attendants of Lord Vishnu who confronted the attendants of Death. The latter asked the former why they were preventing the Law from taking its course. As a man sows, so must he reap, they said. Man is subject to the three *Gunas* and his present life shows plainly his past as well as his future. His deeds leave their impressions on his subtle body and these impressions control his actions, and his future life is determined by all his present deeds. Ajamila was in his early youth, the attendants of Death reminded the attendants of Vishnu, a devout and truthful man, self-controlled, well versed in the scriptures, a friend to all beings and creatures. But one day, while in the woods gathering flowers for worship, he was aroused by the sight of a lustful couple, lost all control of himself, became greatly attached to the woman who was a wanton, forsook his lawful wife for her and gave up the pure life that he had been living. He wasted his entire fortune trying to please this woman and began to employ dishonest means to earn his living. He was now about to die in all his sins, to be taken to the King of Death who would punish him justly, and the suffering he would undergo could purify him.

The attendants of Vishnu replied that Ajamila had expiated all his sins by uttering the name of God and surrendering himself to the Lord. Wrongdoing is not eradicated or expiated, they said, if the mind continues to follow wicked desires, but when the name of God and the love of God have purified the heart all sins are completely destroyed. The mere name of God has power to save even the most depraved. On hearing all this, the attendants of Death went away and Ajamila regained his consciousness and gradually got back his health. He felt that he had received a great blessing perhaps owing to a few good deeds stored up from his past, and his whole life seemed to be transformed. He gave up his evil ways, renounced his home, practised Yoga for many years, attained self-control, and his mind became firmly fixed in the contemplation of the Divine Self. When death finally came to him, he gave up his body while chanting the sacred name of God and absorbed in meditation, thus freeing himself from the bondage of Karma.

In the preamble to this story we are told that if a man commits sinful acts which he does not expiate in this life, he must pay the penalty in the next life and his suffering will be great. Expiation and repentance are of no avail to a man who continues to commit sinful acts knowing them to be harmful. All sinful thoughts and evil deeds are caused by ignorance and true expiation comes from illumination. The fire of spiritual knowledge consumes all evil and ignorance, and complete transformation of the inner life is accomplished by following and living the Truth and through the development of the love of God. Even the most sinful man is purified if he surrenders himself to the God of Love and with whole-souled devotion serves his devotees. The path of love is the simplest way by which to free ourselves from sin. Death is conquered and the fear of death is overcome by meditation upon Krishna, the God of Love. This message and the illustrative story of Ajamila seem to imply that a man

can, by intense and sudden repentance, earn for himself the right to expiate his sins through prolonged meditation and devotion in this life, even freeing himself from the bonds of Karma. It would also seem that such a view is contradictory to the doctrine of exact and inexorable Karmic retribution. What is the teaching of Theosophy on the subject?

W. Q. Judge has explained that "Karma is a doctrine too vast and complicated to be disposed of by set rules applied like balance-sheets to commercial enterprises; but one thing is certain — Karma is action viewed from every side and on each occasion." In his article entitled "Is Karma Only Punishment?" he points out that one branch of the Law of Karma deals with the vicissitudes of life, with the differing states of men, with rewards and punishments. Each state is the exact result bound to come from acts that disturb or preserve the harmony of nature. Karmic rewards work both on the material plane and on the inner character, on the circumstances and on the tendencies of the person placed in a particular environment. We are continually fitting our arrows to the bow and shooting them forth, but it is not the arrow or the bow that counts. The important thing is the motive and the thought with which the missile is shot. Again, in his article on "Environment," Mr. Judge explains that the real environment to be understood and cared about is that in which Karma itself inheres in us. It is only because we see but an infinitesimal part of the long series of Karmic precipitations that any apparent confusion or difficulty arises.

The third aphorism on Karma points out that "Karma is an un-deviating and unerring tendency in the Universe to restore equilibrium, and it operates incessantly." Aphorism No. 6 states that "Karma is not subject to time, and therefore only those who know the ultimate division of time in this Universe know Karma." Aphorism No. 13 holds that the effects of Karmic causes already set in motion "may be counteracted or mitigated by the thoughts and acts of oneself or of another." Further, we know from Aphorism No. 19 that "changes may occur in the instrument [of the Ego] during one life so as to make it appropriate for a new class of Karma," and this may take place through intensity of thought and the power of a vow and through natural alterations due to complete exhaustion of old causes. Aphorism No. 20 tells us that the soul and mind and body "have each a power of independent action," so that "any one of these may exhaust, independently of others, some Karmic causes." Aphorism No. 25 makes it clear that "birth into any sort of body and to obtain the fruits of any sort of Karma is due to the preponderance of the line of Karmic tendency." Aphorism No. 27 asserts that "measures taken by the Ego to repress tendency, eliminate defects, and to counteract by setting up different causes, will alter the sway of Karmic tendency and shorten its influence in accordance with the strength or weakness of the efforts expended in carrying out the measures adopted." Finally, Aphorism No. 28 affirms that "no man but a sage or true seer can judge another's Karma."

The section on Karma in *Light on the Path* similarly presents an occult rather than a mechanistic conception of Karma. We learn that the future is not arbitrarily formed by any separate acts of the present but that the whole of the future is in unbroken continuity with the present as the present is with the past. Even a little attention to occultism produces great results. When a man gives up the indecision of ignorance, even one definite and knowing step on the good or evil path produces great Karmic results.

He who would escape from the bondage of Karma must raise his individuality out of the shadow into the shine; must so elevate his existence that these threads do not come in contact with soiling substances, do not become so attached as to be pulled awry. He simply lifts himself out of the region in which Karma operates.

This is precisely what Ajamila did. He learnt that there was no cure for desire, for the fear of death or the thought of reward and punishment save in the fixing of the sight and hearing upon that which is invisible and soundless. He freed himself from the bonds of Karma only by fixing his whole attention on that which is unaffected by Karma. If Ajamila was able to invoke the name and the love of God on the approach of death, this must have been because he did not allow his misdeeds to corrupt his inner consciousness or to destroy the line of his ideation in his early life and in previous lives. Ajamila's repentance may seem to us to be sudden or even easy, but this is precisely where we are mistaken. It is only a highly evolved soul who can refrain from rationalization even when he falls into a nightmare of wrongdoing, who can bring total intensity to his thought of his Higher Self and the God of Love. It is because we are not in a position to know the entire Karmic sequence in the lives of Ajamila, it is because we do not see that part of his Karma was working through his finer tendencies developed over a long period, that we look upon his dramatic conversion as an easy way of expiation and a setting aside of the Law of Karma.

Many people in India and elsewhere take a crudely materialistic view of Karma and cannot come closer to its profoundly mysterious workings on the subjective planes of consciousness. Every human being has within himself the Karma-less fount of being, the Guardian and the Divine Parent who is a spectator of Karma but is untouched by it. Mere personal repentance is of no avail and cannot expiate our sins or free us from the effects of our actions. True repentance must belong to our deepest natures, must clearly reveal our betrayal of the divine within us, the crucifixion of the God within. Spiritual conversion or resurrection is only possible if we cease to identify ourselves with our personal sheaths and if we activate our vesture of immortality. It is a mistake to isolate sinful acts or acts of repentance if we wish to grasp the working of the Law of Karma on the invisible as well as the objective planes of being.

THE NEW STYLE OF THINKING

II.—KNOWLEDGE AND METHOD OF LEARNING

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In adopting his profession in life a young man readily and naturally undertakes the course of study necessary to his future vocation. Strange it is that people who desire to improve their character and to begin to lead a better life often do not see the absolute necessity for determining where right knowledge for such a serious venture is to be found. Or, having come upon Theosophy, they do not pursue its study regularly and with assiduity and so their effort to eliminate weaknesses from the personal self produces no tangible results and they are unable to radiate the light of the higher soul-nature. This instalment is not written for either of these two classes; it is meant for the small group of those who have taken to study, have resolved to fight the faults, the frailties and the foibles of the personality, and have taken the solemn vow to follow the Light on the Path shed by the Wise Ones and which can be perceived only by the aid of the "great Master" within. The teachings awaken us to our responsibility to that Master and from these we come to the Great Gurus.

Esoteric Philosophy is *sui generis*; it is a consistent body of knowledge which is the source of all sciences, philosophies and religions; it is accurate and exact and has "no two beliefs or hypotheses on the same subject," and therefore has been described as the Mathematics of the Soul. Naturally, therefore, it has two aspects for the student, the first of which sometimes is given undue importance. The Esoteric Philosophy has information to supply on problems of ordinary knowledge, especially of modern scientific knowledge. This extension in information reveals that the Esoteric Philosophy knows more, much more, than ordinary science. If a serious-minded student picks out and compares the teachings of this philosophy about such phenomena of life as ordinary science is unable to explain, or explains partially and haltingly, he will soon conclude that this philosophy offers instruction which is not available in modern universities. This is apt to distract the student who, instead of proceeding straight to the study of the Esoteric Philosophy, goes to it in a roundabout way; thus he not only wastes time but also runs the risk of being caught up in the maze of scientific and other fallacies. Esoteric Philosophy cannot be truly known if it is studied in the light of modern knowledge. This very attempt by one who belongs to the group for which this is written makes him untrue to his own previous vision and undertaking. That which we call the second aspect of the Esoteric Philosophy should be made the basis of study, that which is implicit in the words — Esoteric Philosophy is *sui generis*.

Next, it will save heart-burning later if the student at the very start

reflects upon this proposition — True knowledge comes slowly and is not easily acquired. The acquisition of it depends not only upon present effort but also upon past Karma. What is involved in that acquisition? What is implied in the phrase of the *Gita*, “progress of time”? True knowledge comes slowly because the co-operation of the Inner Manasic Ego is necessary. “He who is perfected in devotion findeth spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously in himself in the progress of time.” We will lose some of our impatience with our slowness in increasing our store of knowledge if we clearly recognize that the Ego within is hampered by the weaknesses of our Personality; once the latter is cleansed, what we read and reflect upon is understood and assimilated.

The gathering of knowledge of the Esoteric Philosophy cannot be done by the ordinary methods of modern education. Modern knowledge shapes and polishes the man of flesh; it creates the Personal man. But — true knowledge is of Spirit and in Spirit alone. Theosophical textbooks tell us of Spirit, but it is not understood till what we read is responded to by the Spirit within. The plane of the Spirit is touched by ordinary knowledge exceedingly rarely; if real knowledge is to be acquired that plane of Spirit has to be touched often.

Because true knowledge is of Spirit and in Spirit alone, it comes slowly and is not easily acquired. What is the way to take? We have to note that: (1) Spiritual knowledge has to be acquired through the Higher Mind, not the lower; (2) there is no other way save that of the Higher Mind, because it is the only channel through which the Spirit can be known. When this is recognized the student encounters a subtle temptation, to run away from the outer world and to be wholly and solely engaged on the plane of the Higher Mind. False *vairagya*,¹ indifference to the world in the wrong sense, attacks him. The very cultivation of the Higher Mind is frustrated: it is not the outer world which is troublesome; it is from our world of lower mind that withdrawal must take place. Out of this attack — attraction to false *vairagya* — an important lesson has to be mastered. Let us clearly understand that performance of duties on the objective transient plane is necessary, should not be neglected and that such performance has an objective. First, we should learn to distinguish between the outer personal living, where duties and destiny — *dharma* and *karma* — have brought us, and the inner, spiritual and permanent living in the Monad. We thus see that the temporal and the spiritual are the two poles of our being. In the Chela-life these two poles have to work conjointly: the Inner Ego must guide the man of flesh to discharge duties and thus purify the man of flesh — which H.P.B. calls “unclean matter”!

We have to learn not merely to abandon the personality and to say, “What have I to do with the mighty magic of *Prakriti*?” We are here to discern the meaning of that magic, to sublimate the grossness of matter

¹ See “The Higher Indifference” in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for July 1939.

and to raise it nearer to the plane of Spirit. Our Esoteric Philosophy teaches that man's responsibility to his fellows and to the whole of Nature must be seriously assumed as a real religious obligation. The religion of responsibility has to be practised, and the holy temple of that religion is built of our duties — small and great, none of which are so trivial that they can be neglected.

View this particular line of teaching in the light of the grave recommendation to every would-be chela to learn so to live that it will become unnecessary for him to spend the long period of Devachanic existence between two incarnations. This is only preparatory to the great renunciation — “Nirvanas gained and lost from boundless pity and compassion for the world of deluded mortals.” But the point which we should note in reference to the subject under consideration is that the Esoteric Philosophy does not despise incarnated existence; it shows its importance and its purpose.

The task before each, then, is to destroy the selfishness in the Personality and to know oneself as one is behind the veil of physical maya. Through this achievement one establishes a perfect concord between the Inner Ego and his instrument — the Personality.

In this we find the real motive (which should be ours) for desiring to acquire the higher knowledge. If the motive is not clean and clear we will never succeed in obtaining it; wrong motives lead us away from right method. Both the understanding and the assimilating of teachings greatly depend on motive and motives.

If our motive for desiring knowledge is the Service of Nature through every conceivable form of sacrifice, the method of gaining it is through the assimilation of the teachings which push out non-spiritual qualities from the Personality and draw in the spiritual radiance of the Higher Self. If the teachings are not assimilated and woven into the fabric of our consciousness the two poles of our being will not healthily coalesce. How then shall we assimilate the teachings?

The first requisite is to free the mind which is full of ideas derived (1) by heredity, (2) from education at school and college, (3) from surroundings and (4) from other teachers. When the mind is freed from thoughts of worldly vocation our period of study proves fruitful. The study of Esoteric Philosophy is “deciphering a profound cipher” and this implies “reading not between the lines but within the words.” We have to impress our consciousness with inner ideas which are clothed in words — living words. We have to guard against colouring those ideas with our preconceived notions. We are the children of Kali Yuga; for us concentration on the True is very difficult and unless we learn the art of careful concentration of mind upon the duties of life in the discharge of which acts are to be performed we will not succeed in being concentrated in the period of study. Further, what is learnt in that period of study has to be used in the discharge of duties and in the acts of life. Our personal self must be given the habit of looking for the Wisdom

light; its tendency must be to lean towards spiritual knowledge.

The reader must have noted the two basic ideas presented above: the probationer's task is to cleanse the personality by the greatest of purifiers, spiritual knowledge, using the latter in the discharge of duties and the performance of deeds. The coalescing process between the two poles of our being is thus brought about. But self-study and self-examination quickly reveal that most of the time we are centred in the Personal Self and that we are not cultivating the Higher Mind as much as it is possible for us to do. What particular subjects of study should we prosecute to bring about the desired results? The gap between the Inner Individuality and the Outer Personality has to be bridged; the motive of service and the method of concentration are the necessary instruments for the constructing of the bridge, but the material of which it is to be made has to be considered. To that topic we must now turn.

The idea that the best scholars from top-ranked schools may not in later years outperform their scholastically lower-ranked contemporaries was advanced recently by *Business Week*. This idea is said to be supported by studies made independently over several years. All the studies show statistically that the class standing of a student has no correlation with his work performance in later life. The same studies also show that there is no correlation between which college a student attended and his subsequent job performance.

It is too much to expect that life will arrange itself in accordance with such outward or superficial scales of values as the ranks or grades obtained in one's school and college career. Why we all fare differently in life will never be understood on any other basis than that provided by the twin doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation.

As in the famous fable of the tortoise and the hare, it is not always the "hare" that wins the race.

WHAT IS PRAYER ?

From the early ages man has offered prayers, rightly or wrongly, according to his notions of God and religion. Those materialistically inclined, who do not believe in God or religion, in the immortality of their own souls, do not care to pray. Their be-all and end-all is simply material existence. Those who pray hardly ever ask where to pray, to whom to pray, why to pray, what to pray and how to pray. These are important questions needing reflection. The great Sages have left illuminating instructions on the subject, but these have not been heeded; and so man continues to live in a wrong fashion, whether he believes or disbelieves in prayer.

One prays to gain something for himself; another prays to bring about the downfall and destruction of another. Both are led by selfish motives. This is as true of nations as of individuals. During the two World Wars, most of the nations concerned were so-called Christian nations (not true followers of the teachings of Jesus), and prayed to the same Almighty God to protect their own country, to save them from dangers, to make them victorious, but to defeat and destroy the "enemy" country. Madame Blavatsky has stated in *Isis Unveiled*: "There has never been a religion in the annals of the world with such a bloody record as Christianity." Would this be so if individuals or nations had the correct concept of God and religion? Would people indulge in human slaughter if it was recognized that the spark of Light Divine which each human being is, emanated from one and the same Flame? Would people perform ceremonies through hired priests for their dear departed ones to absolve them from their sins? Then what about the Law of Cause and Effect? As a man soweth, so shall he reap, is the common adage. *The Voice of the Silence* states: "In the 'Great Journey,' causes sown each hour bear each its harvest of effects, for rigid Justice rules the World." Then how can hired priests help the dead in any way? Would people flock to churches, temples and mosques, and make all kinds of offerings to their respective priests or gods if they were aware of the dangers of such malpractices? There is a profound truth contained in this statement from *Isis Unveiled*:—

The world needs no sectarian church, whether of Buddha, Jesus Mahomet, Swedenborg, Calvin, or any other. There being but ONE Truth, Man requires but one church — the Temple of God within us walled in by matter but penetrable by anyone who can find the way.

the pure in heart see God. (II. 635)

This at once answers the question: Where should one pray? It points to the fact that there is only One Truth which can be realized in the Temple of God within; so there is no need for outside houses of prayer. Though the Inner Temple is covered over with the dust and dirt of material existence, these can be cleared through self-purification, and

that is the way to self-realization. Vast amounts of money are spent in building temples and churches, and still more in sustaining the priesthood, when all that is necessary is to turn within and pray to the Divine Father.

This leads us to an understanding of whom to pray to. Not to an outside god or any other being but to the Spirit within. Does not Sri Krishna, in the Tenth Discourse of the *Gita*, enumerating his Divine Excellences, mention at the outset: "I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings"? And in the Ninth Discourse he states: "Those who devote themselves to the gods go to the gods; the worshippers of the pitris go to the pitris; those who worship the evil spirits go to them, and my worshippers come to me." What greater assurance than these words of Sri Krishna for the final reunion! Jesus gave the same instruction in the Sermon on the Mount: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." People are turned outside all the time, are attracted to the things of the objective world, and therefore it becomes difficult for them to turn within for inner communion, which is true prayer.

True prayer is the song of the heart sung in utmost gratitude for all the blessings of Life. It is the communion of the human soul with the Divine Father, a means of union with the whole of Nature, a humble submission to the Law. For however brief a period the mind becomes liberated from the fetters of earthly existence and becomes one with the Infinite. Buddhi and Manas are united through true prayer and the strength and the power of the Divine radiates through the personality. In *The Key to Theosophy* it is stated:—

Meditation is silent and *unuttered* prayer, or, as Plato expressed it, "the ardent turning of the soul toward the divine; not to ask any particular good (as in the common meaning of prayer), but for good itself — for the universal Supreme Good" of which we are a part on earth, and out of the essence of which we have emerged.

How different this kind of prayer is from ordinary muttering done in a haphazard way, without understanding! Prayer has to become purposeful till it becomes will-prayer. The higher aspects of Will can thus be developed, bringing about a truer realization of the Self and a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood. Instead, how much time, money and energy are frittered away in useless prayer! It has been taught by Lord Buddha:—

Pray not! the Darkness will not brighten! Ask

Nought from the Silence, for it cannot speak!

Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains!

Ah! Brothers, Sisters! seek

Nought from the helpless gods by gift and hymn,

Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruits and cakes;

Within yourselves deliverance must be sought;
Each man his prison makes.

(*Light of Asia*, Book VIII)

People appeal to the gods, with offerings and sacrifices, for favours of one kind or another, but to no avail, because the gods also are bound by the Law of their own plane and are therefore helpless. Each one has constructed his own prison; by demolishing it he can breathe the free atmosphere of the higher altitude. It is wiser to seek for deliverance within oneself, through right prayer. Such prayer is essential for the soul of man as food is for the body. The body is fed at regular intervals; why not the Soul? Loving deeds are another form of prayer. As the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge says:—

He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

Kalpana, a nine-year-old girl of Moradabad, described as a child prodigy, gave recently a demonstration of her extraordinary memory. She recited a number of verses and some of the most intricate passages from the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavad-Gita* “with natural ease and perfection” (*The Deccan Herald*, June 8th). Her delivery in Sanskrit, Hindi, English, Persian, Arabic and Urdu is said to have been “immaculate.”

Juvenile prodigies, though on the increase, remain an unanswerable enigma to those who reject the explanation which reincarnation offers.

PROHIBITION AND COMPULSION

We today think of prohibition only in terms of the buying or drinking of alcoholic beverages, but it can apply to many things. Side by side with the idea of prohibition should be considered also its opposite, compulsion. Somehow or other we do not mind compulsion, but we do mind prohibition! We dislike to be prohibited from doing what we like, but we do not so much mind being made to do something, perhaps because we do not care about it or know anything about it. Those who hate both prohibition and compulsion fight both.

Man is free to *think* what he likes. But he is not free to *do* what he likes. In *The Key to Theosophy* we are told that restrictive measures may be taken in the case of those who cannot live with their fellow beings in peace, so that they do not harm others. One can be *prohibited* from doing harm. This principle is of course used when thieves and those guilty of fraudulent practices are put in prison. So humanity today accepts the principle that it is just to remove those who harm others from contact with others, at least for a time.

The justification for prohibition lies in whether what is prohibited is bad for man. Compulsion is supposed to be for the good of man. This problem of prohibition and compulsion can be faced only with knowledge and discrimination. We ought, naturally, to prohibit ourselves from doing what is bad for us and for others and to compel ourselves to do what is good for us and for others, but we are faced with the all-powerful idea of "self-expression" and the pull of desires. In the larger issue of conscription of soldiers we meet the same difficulty. Honour and value go out of even a war for a righteous cause when men join the army because they *have to*. So in countries where conscription is the rule each man must make his own decision voluntarily, whether to obey the rule or to become a conscientious objector.

So with all prohibitions and compulsions; each man must accept or reject both voluntarily. He must be a *willing* co-operator or not co-operate at all if he values his own birthright.

This makes it imperative that he should take time and trouble to find out whether the prohibition or the compulsion is good or bad and not rely on propaganda. Who is willing to do this?

Let us take the Theosophical view of alcoholic drinks. Says *The Key to Theosophy*:—

Wine and spirit drinking is only less destructive to the development of the inner powers, than the habitual use of hashish, opium, and similar drugs. (p. 260)

Let us inquire into the reason why countries make and sell alcoholic beverages. One argument is: Why should a State forgo the revenue on the sale of spirits? Think of these words of H.P.B. in this respect:—

Nations . . . which . . . out of revenue-greed, hesitate to abolish opium and whiskey trades, fattening on the untold misery and degradation of millions of human beings . . . have no right to call themselves civilized. (*She Being Dead Yet Speaketh*, pp. 42-43)

Look at the number of accidents caused by drinking, of quarrels caused by drinking, and see whether prohibition is worth while for the sake of the young especially. But will not prohibition encourage illicit stills? we shall be asked. Yes, of course; but, given time and correct treatment of the offenders, these illicit practices will die out; and in any case they do not touch as many people as are touched by the open and easy sale of liquor. How should this problem be dealt with? Theosophy says: Treat the cause and the effects will look after themselves. What is the cause of the illicit stills? The desire of man to drink. If every man curb his desire to drink and his dislike of prohibition, and refused to buy illicit liquor, who would be foolish enough to distil it? Therefore the buyers, rather than the distillers, should be corrected, or both.

It is the same with other evils, such as prostitution. This curse will never be removed until the men who cause it receive the punishment and not only the prostitutes. No prostitute or pander would continue her trade if there were no buyers. Yet it is strange that this simple legislative change has not yet been tried!

If we turn to compulsion with regard to vaccination, immunization etc., again we need knowledge, Theosophical and ordinary. First let us face the fact that in most countries of the world none of these things are necessary for travel. The most that can happen to one who refuses to comply with the requirement is that the particular air-line or ship may refuse to take him — and they would be within their rights to refuse — or the individual may be asked to visit a doctor at the time of arrival, at the worst be put in quarantine on arrival. The would-be traveller can sign a form indemnifying the company from any cost due to his getting the disease.

But, it may be asked, why take all this trouble instead of just doing what is demanded? It would take too long here to go into all the facts but they can be got. One main principle remains: To inject any dead or living foreign organism into the human body is to add something that is not its own, and danger can and often does result from such a practice. But more important Theosophically is the law of necessity. Is such an injection *necessary*? Prevention is better than cure, we are told; but do serums and vaccines prevent diseases? Are we sure we shall get or carry the disease if we refuse them? Full details can hardly be given in a short article such as this, but in these days of vaccination campaigns, sterilization and family-planning campaigns, etc., it is tragic that people, the very planners themselves, do not know what they are doing. People need knowledge, knowledge of Nature's laws, which cannot be ignored with impunity.

“Believe nothing though it comes from the lips of the Buddha if it is against common sense,” for common sense is the experience of humanity showing in behaviour through a kind of intuition.

Methods of prohibition and of compulsion are another side of the same question. Prohibition by law, without adequate education as to the dangers of the thing prohibited, is bound to end in failure. But if a change of environment will cause a plant to begin to grow, so a change of environment, *e.g.*, to non-alcoholism, will change health, moral and physical. Secondly, let us take the time element into consideration when asking whether prohibition has failed. America gave up its prohibition too soon; let not India follow that example. A reform once started must present difficulties in its implementation and at times the effort might seem worthless. But we should never give up hope!

It is not only true that most people misunderstand freedom, but I sometimes think I have not yet met one person who rightly understood it. The whole universe is absolute Law.

Freedom only opens entire activity and license *under the law*.

To the degraded and undeveloped and even to too many others — the thought of freedom is a thought of escape from law — which, of course, is impossible. More precious than all wordly riches is Freedom — freedom from the painful constipation and poor narrowness of ecclesiasticism — freedom in manners, habiliments, furniture, from the silliness and tyranny of local fashions — entire freedom from party rings and mere conventions in politics — and better than all, a general freedom of one's self from the tyrannic domination of vices, habits, appetites, under which nearly every man of us (often the greatest brawler for freedom) is enslaved.

Can we attain such enfranchisement — the true Democracy, and the height of it? While we are from birth to death the subjects of irresistible law, enclosing every movement and minute, we yet escape, by a paradox, into true free will. Strange as it may seem, we only attain to freedom by a knowledge of, and implicit obedience to, Law. Great — unspeakably great — is the Will; the free Soul of man; at its greatest, understanding and obeying the laws, it can then, and then only, maintain true liberty. For there is to the highest that law as absolute as any — more absolute than any — the Law of Liberty.

The shallow, as intimated, consider liberty a release from all law, from every constraint. The wise see in it, on the contrary, the potent Law of Laws, namely, the fusion and combination of the conscious will or partial individual with those universal, eternal, unconscious ones, which run through all Time, pervade history, prove immortality, give moral purpose to the entire objective world, and the last dignity to human life.

—WALT WHITMAN

THE YOGA APHORISMS OF PATANJALI

IX.—THE ISOLATION OF THE SOUL

Patanjali's Fourth Book bears the title, "The Essential Nature of Isolation." The word "Isolation" is used by him in a sense very different from its usual connotation. According to the dictionaries, "to isolate" means "to place in a detached situation" or "in a detached or insulated condition" or "to set apart from others." In Patanjali's sense, as explained by Mr. Judge in his Preface (pp. xvi-xvii), Isolation of the Soul means

only that the Soul is isolated or freed from the bondage of matter and desire, being thereby able to act for the accomplishing of the aim of Nature and Soul, including all souls of all men.

The charge of removing Themselves entirely from all concern with or participation in human affairs is a strange one indeed to bring against the great Elder Brothers, Renouncers of Their well-earned bliss to remain with and to serve those still struggling towards the light!

The Isolation of the Soul points rather to the possibility of detaching oneself from bodily sensations and from pain and pleasure by ceasing to identify the Self with the body or with either the good or the dark side of life. Light is thrown on the effect of such detachment even on one who has not reached yet the summit of Adeptship in answers to questions on *Light on the Path*, which were reprinted from *Lucifer*, Vol. I, in our pages for November 1936:—

Divine love and charity then find room, when personal desire is gone. . . . The entrance to the gates is marked by one immutable sign: the sense that personal joy or sorrow no longer exist. The disciple lives for humanity, not for himself; works for all creatures that suffer instead of knowing that he himself has pain. (Vol. VII, p. 5)

In the closing verses of Book III Patanjali makes it clear why such stress is laid by Krishna on the virtue of *Viraga*, unconcern with the fruits of action, indifference to pleasure and to pain. A prospect of heights of power and glory that might well dazzle the self-seeking has been opened up in the description of the fruits of concentration. But the consummation of Yoga cannot be reached without *Viraga*. For example, the gaining of "accurate discriminative knowledge of the truth and of the nature of the soul," which causes to arise "a knowledge of all existences in their essential natures and a mastery over them" (III. 50) is not the final goal.

The ascetic must acquire indifference even to this perfection before there comes about the state of the Soul that is called Isolation, and this indifference comes only from destroying the last germs of desire.

The "knowledge that saves from rebirth" springs from the perfection

of discriminative power which is the fruit of "concentration of the mind performed with regard to the relation between moments and their order." From the perception of the most minute periods of time, time's ultimate divisions, comes the power to discern subtle differences otherwise unknowable (III. 53-4). Seeing even beyond the ultimate divisions of time marks almost the peak of Yogic perception. The "knowledge that saves from rebirth"

has all things and the nature of all things for its objects, and perceives all that hath been and that is, without limitations of time, place, or circumstance, as if all were in the present and the presence of the contemplator. (III. 55)

Our Teachings stress the fact that "the fight is in the mind." In the ordinary man lower Manas is bound by desire, but dispassion may be attained by withdrawing the mind from the objects of desire. And "dispassion, carried to the utmost, is indifference regarding all else than soul" (I. 16), for the sake of whose experience and development the Universe exists (II. 18). This indifference "arises from a knowledge of soul as distinguished from all else" (I. 16). The fight is not won until the mind

no longer conceives itself to be the knower, or experiencer, and has become one with the soul — the real knower and experiencer. [Then] Isolation takes place and the soul is emancipated. (III. 56)

In other words, the *realization* dawns that

the soul is the Perceiver; is assuredly vision itself pure and simple; unmodified; and looks directly upon ideas. (II. 20)

Patanjali says in Book III, Verse 36:—

By concentrating his mind upon the true nature of the soul as being entirely distinct from any experiences, and disconnected from all material things, and dissociated from the understanding, a knowledge of the true nature of the soul itself arises in the ascetic.

But it is only when the understanding and the soul are united that the self-knowledge results which Mr. Judge describes as "not merely a knowledge of self in the ordinary sense," but "that interior illumination desired by all mystics." (IV. 21)

The last of the Aphorisms reads:—

The reabsorption of the qualities which have consummated the aim of the soul, or the abiding of the soul united with understanding in its own nature, is Isolation. (IV. 33)

Explaining in his note this general statement of the nature of Isolation, sometimes called Emancipation, Mr. Judge again warns us against misinterpreting the word Isolation as implying "a negation or a coldness."

The contrary is the case. Until this state is reached, the soul, continually affected and deflected by objects, senses, suffering, and pleasure, is unable to consciously partake universally of the great life of the universe. To do so, it must stand firmly "in its own nature"; and then it proceeds further — as is admitted by the philosophy — to bring about the aim of all other souls still struggling on the road.

We may repeat here a sentence from Mr. Judge's Preface which throws light upon his closing wish that Ishwara may "be near and help those who read this book." It may be remembered that he had written there:—

The system postulates that *Ishwara*, the spirit in man, is untouched by any troubles, works, fruit of works, or desires, and when a firm position is assumed with the end in view of reaching union with spirit through concentration, He comes to the aid of the lower self and raises it gradually to higher planes. (p. xv)

The soul cannot be defined in words, though it can be known. It can be known directly; but not all those who know it thus can preserve their priceless knowledge. It can be dimly sensed in moments of great silence, when its voiceless melodies surge through the inner chambers of the heart and break down all barriers between our own and other lives.

It can also be known by contrast, by discrimination, by comparison. For the soul is unwearied, is serene, sure and stable, and august in its compassionate power. The turmoil of the world, and the strife of contending forces reach it not: spectator of innumerable events, it sees them in relation to the eternal and gauges them at their true value.

There are those who turn to it for comfort when they are driven by suffering and despair. But the heart that would feel its tenderness and would gain its guidance must have done so often before — when neither guidance nor tenderness seemed necessary and when joy, not sorrow, prevailed. Man's senses require constant use if they are to be of service in an hour of need; and it is the same with that hidden sense which enables us to perceive the presence of the soul.

If we turn to it now, turn to it daily and hourly; turn to it both in gladness and in pain; we can never then lose touch with our one immortal friend.

—Free Translation from the Chinese

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

To “practise the *Paramita* Path,” says the *Voice*, “means to become a Yogi, with a view of becoming an ascetic.” To become a Yogi is to be united in and through love. Now how and where does this begin? It begins where we stand and are. We have love and charity — it is animal love and charity which have become *human* love and charity; but there are selfishness and crudities, lust and the passion to possess. Don't you think that vast numbers of men and women of today are at this stage? How can they begin to walk consciously and deliberately the *Paramita* Path? We have to take hold of our love and charity. So that Path begins with *Vairagya*-Detachment, Dispassion, Desirelessness. Herein is asceticism. It is triple — of mind, psyche and sensorium. False asceticism tries to be without affection instead of without attachment, which is true asceticism. To love those we like may prove a hindrance unless we enlarge as well as deepen our love on the plane of *Vairagya*-Detachment. *Not* to love those we dislike is not to forgive and again we do not practise *Vairagya*. Therefore this middle *Paramita* must be unfolded subjectively first, within one's own soul. This builds *Antahkarana*, for mind becomes detached from aversions and attractions, dislikes and also likes.

The Yogi is united; the ascetic indicates his mode of unity — *e.g.*, how to be united to vessels of dishonour? How not to shudder to touch evil? etc. So union, partial and will-full, with the good, the noble, etc., is the beginning. Then expansion begins; what can be excluded from the good and the noble? What is evil and what is ignoble? It is not only seeing “a world in a grain of sand,” *i.e.*, Wisdom; it is also seeing good in things evil. Equal-mindedness is *Dhyanic*, but is not the *Dhyana Paramita*. What terrifies Arjuna when he sees in the Universal Form details ugly, ignoble, wicked? The absence of the full perception of *Shila*. Therefore the immediately succeeding lesson is the 12th chapter — the pairs of opposites. Read the closing portion.

A real Yogi — a united one — is of course an altruist. One cannot, in verity, exercise Divine Virtues without a prior living to benefit mankind.

The seven Divine Virtues are the stuff of which Masters' Personalities are made. Their great Detachment, Their profound Seclusion, Their grand Compassion (the mother of the seven *Paramitas*) all point to *Vairagya*. Men say: “Why do not the Masters do something? Why do They permit inequalities? etc.” Well, They are Divine *Vairagis*.

The Ten Transcendental *Paramitas* include the three *corresponding* to the three planes beyond the seven principles; see the diagram on p. 200 of the *S.D.*, Vol. I, and read what is said about the three higher

planes beyond the Planetary Chain. Man in the Earth Chain is a seven-principled being, but in reality he has to become a perfect number 10. The Three Hypostases of the First Fundamental are the metaphysical aspects of the three higher or Transcendental *Paramitas*.

The *Paramitas* are human, universal and divine — personal morality, egoic morality and Monadic morality. Consider this; herein is practical occultism.

Crosbie's classification of the *Paramitas* [*The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 80-81] is a modified form of the fourfold discipline: (1) *Viveka*, (2) *Vairagya*, (3) the six qualities (*Dama, Sama; Uparati, Titiksha; Shraddha, Samadhan*) and (4) *Mumukshuta*. The six glorious virtues are the *Voice Paramitas*. The Six and the Ten *Paramitas* are exoteric, and if my memory serves me right you will find them in *Suddharma Pundarika*. The seven *Paramitas* of the *Voice* with their Mother, Compassion, spring from the Esoteric Philosophy.

Who, verily, is the Brahmana? He who, after directly perceiving, like the *amalaka* fruit in the palm of one's hand, the Self, without a second, devoid of distinctions of birth, attribute and action, devoid of all faults such as the six infirmities, and the six states, of the form of truth, wisdom, bliss and eternity, that is by itself, devoid of determinations, the basis of endless determinations, who functions as the indwelling spirit of all beings, who pervades the interior and the exterior of all like ether, of the nature of bliss, indivisible, immeasurable, realizable only through one's experience and who manifests himself directly (as one's self), and through the fulfilment of his nature, becomes rid of the faults of desire, attachment, etc., and endowed with qualities of tranquillity, etc., rid of the states of being, spite, greed, expectation, bewilderment, etc., with his mind unaffected by ostentation, self-sense and the like, he lives. He alone who is possessed of these qualities is the Brahmana. This is the view of the Vedic texts and tradition, ancient lore and history. The accomplishment of the state of the Brahmana is otherwise impossible. Meditate on *Brahman*, the Self who is being, consciousness and bliss, without a second; meditate on *Brahman*, the Self who is being, consciousness and bliss, without a second.

—*Vajrasuchika Upanishad*

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Each year more students graduate out of our colleges than the year before, but one is left wondering if this is an indication of educational progress. College graduates are in a way one of our biggest problems. For many of them it has become increasingly difficult to fit in anywhere, not only because of their inexperience but because they have no notion of what they want to do. They are all at sea. The modern system of education has been much criticized, but little has been done by way of introducing reforms.

It is the contention of Theosophy that real progress in or out of school or college cannot be "examined," "marked," "graded," save by the individual himself. Experience points to very little connection between academic record and achievement in later life. Concern about the stifling competitive atmosphere in colleges, where emphasis on marks or grades tends to destroy the broader educational values, has been expressed by many. Oscar Handlin, professor of history at Harvard, poses in the May *Atlantic* the question, "Are the Colleges Killing Education?" He writes especially of colleges in America, but what he says is also applicable, with slight modifications, to colleges here. He rightly regrets the crushing of minds in a process that frustrates the whole educational enterprise. All the external pressures of society encourage the belief that the aim and object of education is to get a high grade in the examinations; and the present generation of students "has been so thoroughly harnessed to the treadmill of the examination that it accepts its servitude as a normal if strenuous condition of life."

No matter how hard they work, or how able they are, one half of the class will fall below the average. Each student, therefore, finds himself involved in a struggle with his neighbour, whose success will drag him down. . . .

It is in vain to point out that success in tests is not necessarily the way to achievement, that the careers of great men do not always begin with a ranking in the upper tenth percentile, that places are available, and that there are other than competitive values to education. Their whole experience points in the other direction. . . .

We organize the boys and girls in classes and treat them as anonymous integers in an elaborate record system. Yet we know that each is an individual different from every other. Each has his own way of learning. To pretend that all can be classified and graded on the identical scale denies those differences and does violence to reality. Above all, it puts a premium on malleability, upon accommodation to existing expectations, upon the qualities of getting along. The good boy is he who matches up to his teachers' previously formed standards. But is he the one likely to grow into the man of achievement? . . .

Finally, the whole process thrusts an uncongenial role upon the instructor. His function as a teacher becomes subsidiary to that of the

grader; he is judge rather than counsellor, impartial arbiter rather than ally of the student. That, too, distorts the meaning of education. It destroys the intimacy of a relationship in which the older person conceives his role as that of helping the younger, in which the younger can turn to the older for aid and advice without fear of being evaluated in the process.

In the competitive atmosphere of the race for a place at the top, the development, growth and expansion of character and mind are passed over in favour of training the brain in what are termed by Mr. Judge in *The Ocean of Theosophy* the characteristics of lower Manas. Thus, scarce any attention is given to the student's moral and emotional qualities, to the culture of concentration, or to the awakening of the intuition. An education that develops memory at the expense of the imagination can hardly be expected to produce minds capable of creative thinking.

According to Dr. Herbert Ratner, Professor of Preventive Medicine and Public Health at the Loyola University Medical School, Chicago, the United States is "the most over-medicated, most over-operated, most over-inoculated country in the world." He gave this picture of the average American in an interview released by the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions:—

We are flabby, overweight, and have a lot of dental cavities. Our gastro-intestinal system operates like a spluttering gas engine; we can't sleep; we can't get going when we are awake.

We have neuroses, we have high blood pressure. Neither our hearts nor our heads last as long as they should. Coronary disease at the peak of life has hit epidemic proportions. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death. We suffer from a plethora of diseases of civilization. (Reuter)

This is one side of the picture; there is also another side, which ought not to be overlooked. In the U.S.A. a new civilization is arising; there is greater energy, activity, adaptability, and a keener spirit of inquiry working in a freer mental atmosphere—an atmosphere unfettered by the chains of caste, class prerogative or religious restraint—than in any other country. The swift onward rush of civilization in the United States Mr. Judge averred in his article "One of the Signs of the Cycle" to be the result of "the occult forces working in this land and really affecting all men, whether they know it or not." The sign of the Cycle, he said,

points to India as the conserver of the ancient wisdom-religion, and to America as its new and vigorous champion who will adopt those old truths without fear of caste or prejudice, and exemplify them through the new race to be brought forth in the old Fifth continent. The careful student of Theosophy will not fail to see that

America alone, of all lands, meets all the requirements respecting the problem, "Where is the new race to be born?" H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* calls it the Fifth continent, although for the time including Europe under that head. Here we see the fusion of all races going on before our eyes, and here too is the greatest push of energy, of inquiry, and of achievement.

Warning of the risks involved in mass vaccination against smallpox was given by the *British Medical Journal* of January 25th. Mass vaccination, it said, in improvised centres, by relatively inexperienced operators, and with inadequate after-care, can lead to dangerous consequences. One possibility is the occurrence of post-vaccinal encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).

The *March Animals' Defender and Anti-Vivisection News* quotes Majors Illingworth and Oliver, Medical Specialists of the Royal Army Medical Corps, as stating in their report on "Lessons from 100 Cases of Smallpox in the Middle East" that

even very recent vaccination is no guarantee of a modified attack [of smallpox], for one patient, vaccinated by one of us and observed to have a typical immune reaction after 48 hours, died with gross hæmorrhagic manifestations two months later. . . . Successful vaccination within two years is of still less value as a prognostic criterion, for 33 of the unmodified and hæmorrhagic cases had records of such successful vaccination.

Dr. Nigel D. Paton, Senior Clinical Medical Officer, Nottinghamshire, wrote in the *Medical Officer* of March 23rd, 1962, that

vaccination and encephalitis, with its 40 per cent mortality rate, are connected together in some way that may be expressed as an ever-varying probability, and thus encephalitis may be said to follow from vaccination with a statistical inevitability. . . .

And in the leading article in the March 2nd issue of the *Medical Officer* it was stated:—

Many people rely on vaccination to control an outbreak of smallpox. But it is not quite so simple as all that. Vaccination is not the complete answer to the problem of the spread of smallpox. It is generally accepted in medicine that if there are several different treatments for the one illness, it is unlikely that they are all completely successful. There are many opinions on what constitutes an adequate "take" and on the techniques of obtaining it. There are even different methods of preparing the vaccine. We are not even sure where most vaccine strains come from. Most come from cowpox, but some may come from modified smallpox. The virus used in vaccines is grown either in the skins of animals, in the chorioallantoic membranes of

chick embryos, or in tissue cultures. The last two methods, if the materials are properly prepared, are bacteriologically sterile. The different animals used for preparing the vaccine include the sheep, calf, and rabbit. To maintain the potency of the strains the virus is passed alternately through the animal used and another one such as the guinea-pig or rabbit. In some countries man is used to keep the virus potent; after several passages through the calf the virus is isolated from a lesion in man and then passed once more through a calf or a rabbit. It is fairly obvious that with so many different methods used for preparing the vaccine there cannot be one which is guaranteed to produce adequate protection with the minimum of reaction and risk of complications. If there were such a method it would be universally employed. . . .

There are also different opinions on which vaccination technique is least likely to produce complications particularly the serious one of post-vaccinal encephalitis.

Many experts on epidemiology agree that smallpox vaccination is a questionable method of prevention. The authorities, however, are more than reluctant to keep the public informed about the steady, alarmingly growing side-effects of vaccinations.

It is an acknowledged fact that the geography of the earth has undergone many changes, for violent cataclysms and colossal earthquakes are recorded in the annals of most nations. The Sahara, for instance, is the sand of an ancient sea, and the shells found upon its surface prove that during the Miocene period a sea rolled over what is now desert (*S.D.*, II. 781-82). It then became "a continent as fertile as the Delta"; and, after another temporary submersion, a desert. (*S.D.*, II. 405)

According to recent findings, Tassili n'Ajjer on the eastern borders of the Sahara (nearly 1,000 miles south of Tunis), now withered, fossilized and eroded by the burning desert winds, was the seat of an ancient civilization and a green and fertile place 5,500 years ago (*The Unesco Courier*, May 1962). This has been revealed by innumerable painted and engraved images on its rocks. Analyses made of fossilized pollen unearthed from deep in the ground have shown that in this now utterly arid region a Mediterranean-type vegetation once grew profusely. It included lime trees, alders, hollyoaks, cypresses, olive trees and cereals of various kinds. Of all this variety and wealth of flora there remain today but a hundred cypress trees.
