

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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## THE INTEGRAL VISION

The “Manifested Universe” . . . is pervaded by duality, which is, as it were, the very essence of its EX-istence as “manifestation.” But . . . the opposite poles of subject and object, spirit and matter, are but aspects of the One Unity in which they are synthesized. . . .

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 15-16

It is not difficult to accept vaguely the metaphysical conception of the duality of Spirit-Matter as the prototype, the essential polarity of Life, finding expression in every aspect, great and small, of that Life. We cannot fail to see something of the duality of positive and negative, centrifugal and centripetal, day and night, life and death, heat and cold, attraction and repulsion, pleasure and pain, good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, freedom and slavery, and so on *ad infinitum* through all the pairs of opposites. The trouble is that in expanding and applying the ideas we too often see them only in their opposing aspects, and forget that they are to be viewed, not as independent actualities, but as the two facets of the same underlying reality. Apart from it and apart from each other, they have no existence. Thus, concretized Spirit is Matter, and etherealized Matter is Spirit.

We could not recognize light as light if there were no shadow to act as a complementary foil.

According to the tenets of Eastern Occultism, DARKNESS is the one true actuality, the basis and the root of light, without which the latter could never manifest itself, nor even exist. Light is matter, and DARKNESS pure Spirit. Darkness, in its radical, metaphysical basis, is subjective and absolute light; while the latter in all its seeming effulgence and glory, is merely a mass of shadows, as it can never be eternal, and is simply an illusion, or Maya. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 70)

Just as Light and Darkness, Spirit and Matter, are not distinct and separate, so also good and evil. No one can point to the existence of good *per se* in Nature; nor can evil be shown to have a separate, independent existence. Reality is neither good nor evil, as Life is neither Spirit nor Matter.

Archaic philosophy, recognizing neither Good nor Evil as a fundamental or independent power, but starting from the Absolute ALL (Universal Perfection eternally), traced both through the course of natural evolution to pure Light condensing gradually into form, hence becoming Matter or Evil. (*S.D.*, I. 73)

In human nature, evil denotes only the polarity of matter and Spirit, a struggle for life between the two manifested Principles in Space and Time, which principles are one *per se*, inasmuch as they are rooted in the Absolute. In Kosmos, the equilibrium must be preserved. The operations of the two contraries produce harmony, like the centripetal and centrifugal forces, which are necessary to each other — mutually interdependent — “in order that both should live.” If one is arrested, the action of the other will become immediately self-destructive. (*S.D.*, I. 416)

Good and Evil are twins, the progeny of Space and Time, under the sway of Maya. Separate them, by cutting off one from the other, and they will both die. Neither exists *per se*, since each has to be generated and created out of the other, in order to come into being; both must be known and appreciated before becoming objects of perception, hence, in mortal mind, they must be divided. (*S.D.*, II. 96)

In the old Zoroastrian texts, the *Gathas*, the opposing forces are described as two Spirits, named Spenta-Mainyu and Angra-Mainyu. Ahura Mazda, the Supreme, refers to them as “my spirits.”

The spirits primeval are a pair and they together communed. These two differ in thought, in word, in deed, one the enhancer of betterment, the other the fashioner of evil. . . . The two spirits came together at the dawn — one the maker of life, the other to mar it, and thus they shall be unto the last. (*Yasna xxx. 3, 4*)

I announce to you life's first two spirits of whom the Good accosted the Evil: Never our thoughts, nor creeds, nor understandings, nor beliefs, nor words, nor deeds, nor consciences, nor souls can be the same. (*Yasna xlv. 2*)

The two primeval spirits are impersonal, universal and omnipotent forces — centripetal and centrifugal. They are the basis of the mani-

fested universe, are coeval and coeternal and complement each other. Spenta-Mainyu is the power of Spirit, Angra-Mainyu of Matter; they are like seed and soil, both equally necessary for the birth of the tree.

Because of man's dual nature, spiritual and material, which the philosophical have always traced to its true source in the two spirits, the doctrine of two minds in man naturally and logically arose. *Vohu Mano* and *Akem Mano* are the higher and lower minds of our Theosophical philosophy. Just as the primeval spirits emanate from Ahura Mazda, so also the two minds are expressions of the Spirit in Man, the *Fravashi*, the Atma-Buddhic Monad.

Their mutual interdependence can be seen from the fact that a virtue on which too much stress has been put is transformed into a vice, in the same manner as the eye that is tired from too long gazing on one colour will change over and reproduce its complementary. The man who is over-generous usually ends by being so at the expense of other people, his very craving for "generosity" leading him to acts of meanness. Even the intensive gratification of a vice can produce a temporary surfeit, but such satiety is only a *temporary* suspension; it is not a reformation and a cure, and there will be a swing back once more into vice, since good and evil *per se* have no real permanence.

The duality of the higher or spiritual aspirations and the lower or material desires which in embodied existence work in every human consciousness, produces the three pairs mentioned in the *Bhagavad-Gita* — heat and cold, pleasure and pain, fame and ignominy. Krishna reiterates the advice that Arjuna should rise above these pairs. Robert Crosbie wrote that "there are always the 'pairs of opposites' in separative considerations, as these are effects. The One Reality sees both as reflections, as light and dark; if not seen, they do not exist." In day-to-day living this is most difficult to accomplish, but the principle of application and practice is given by W. Q. Judge:

Before we can hope to prevent any particular state of mind or events reaching us in this or in another life, *we* must in fact be detached from these things. Now *we* are not our bodies or mere minds, but the *real* part of us in which Karma inheres.

If the conception of the "pairs of opposites" still keeps the mind in its old separative groove, the conception of the "pairs of complements" can profitably be superimposed thereon. But though the theoretical distinction is made here between "contrast" and "complement," in reality there is none. The finite mind is accustomed to attach one

or other idea to certain expressions, and it is therefore possible to circumvent the separative tendency of the mind by dwelling on those expressions that convey the idea of co-operation rather than of opposition.

It is in the realm of ethics and of self-development that these co-operative dualities are most easily seen. For example, we can link as complementary two qualities essential for self-control—practice and absence of desire, *Abhyasa* and *Vairagya*. The two are mutually interdependent, and only when they are practised together does progress result. Each of the Divine Paramitas, likewise, has its complementary counterpart.

Wherever we look we find duality piled on duality, contrast and complement, two in one. On the physical plane a man who has lost an eye finds that his vision loses thereby its stereoscopic sense of reality, its depth. It is the same thing with the inner sight, and there most people are unfortunately one-eyed or cross-eyed. Our task is to balance and unify our dual vision, to blend the mind and soul, for behind the illusion of the “pairs of opposites” lies the integral vision of the Third Eye, the Single Eye of Wisdom.

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You cannot speak of ocean to a well-frog—the creature of a narrower sphere. You cannot speak of ice to a summer insect—the creature of a season. You cannot speak of Tao to a pedagogue; his scope is too restricted.

But now that you have emerged from your narrow sphere and have seen the great ocean, you know your own significance, and I can speak to you of great principles. . . .

Dimensions are limitless, time is endless. Conditions are not invariable; terms are not final.

There is nothing which is not objective; there is nothing which is not subjective. But it is impossible to start from the objective. Only from subjective knowledge it is possible to proceed to objective knowledge. When subjective and objective are both without their correlates, that is the very axis of Tao.

Tao has its laws and its evidences. It is devoid both of action and form. It may be obtained but cannot be seen. Spiritual beings draw their spirituality from Tao. To Tao no point in time is long ago. Tao cannot be existent. If it were existent, it could not be non-existent.

—CHUANG-TZU

## REINCARNATION IN WESTERN THOUGHT

In the article "Reincarnation — A Christian Doctrine" published in this Magazine last month, the history of the reincarnation idea was traced from the first century B.C. to the Middle Ages in Europe. The Renaissance which began in Italy in the 14th century and gradually spread to other countries marked a transition point in the sphere of thought and letters as far as the Western world was concerned.

One of the first signs of the revival of learning that was taking place became evident in Florence when in 1438 Cosmo de Medici became acquainted with the Byzantine Platonic philosopher, George Gemistus, or Gemistus Pletho, another name by which he was known. According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Gemistus is "chiefly memorable for having been the first person who introduced Plato to the Western world." He inspired Cosmo de Medici with the idea of beginning a Platonic Academy in Florence, where once again the great ideas of Plato and the Neoplatonic writers could be studied. That George Gemistus believed in the doctrine of reincarnation can be seen from what he wrote:

As to ourselves, our soul, partaking of the divine nature, remains immortal and eternal in the precincts which are the limit of our world. Attached to a mortal envelope, it is sent by the gods now into one body, now into another, in view of the universal harmony, in order that the union of the mortal and immortal elements in human nature may contribute to the unity of the Whole....<sup>1</sup>

The Platonic Academy begun by Cosmo de Medici was raised to a high standard of excellence under the guidance of his grandson, Lorenzo de Medici. Connected with this Academy were such figures as Leonardo da Vinci, as also the great sculptor Michelangelo, who wrote the following on immortality:

Heaven-born, the soul a heavenward course must hold; beyond the world she soars; the wise man, I affirm, can find no rest in that which perishes, nor will he lend his heart to aught that doth on time depend.

Another one who joined forces with Lorenzo de Medici was Pico della Mirandola, who, while still a young boy, spoke 22 languages and

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<sup>1</sup> The quotations in this article are from *Reincarnation: An East-West Anthology* (The Julian Press, New York, 1961)

was learned in the Chaldean, Hebrew and Arabian Mysteries. He had published a series of 900 questions addressed to the Church, and as the Church decided that some of the questions contained heretical statements, he fled from Rome and came to Florence to escape persecution and to join the Platonic Academy.

After Lorenzo's death the Academy went out of existence and in its place arose in 1498 the mystical Fraternity, *Fratres Lucis*, or Brothers of Light. In spite of the persecution of the Inquisition, this Order was still alive in the 18th century, and was to include among its members such men as Cagliostro, Mesmer, Saint-Germain and Swedenborg.

While knowledge was gradually awakening in Italy and certain other parts of Europe, the Inquisition was continuing its work of persecution of "heretics," and late in the 15th century there took place in Spain the burning of all the Hebrew Bibles that could be found, as also of 6,000 volumes of Oriental literature.

In Germany, revolt of another kind was taking place. Martin Luther, fired by John Reuchlin, set in motion the Reformation. Reuchlin has been called the "Father of the Reformation," and in *Isis Unveiled* H.P.B. speaks of him as the friend of Pico della Mirandola and the teacher and instructor of Erasmus, Martin Luther and Melanchthon; he was a Kabalist and an Occultist. When he denounced the burning of the Hebrew Bibles, he was expelled from Germany, and his works burned. But later on Luther and others came to him for instruction, and it was then that he lit the torch which was to set in motion the Reformation.

The transition, therefore, from the 15th to the 16th century brought about one of the most remarkable changes in history. One of those who contributed to this was Paracelsus, who is famous both as a physician and a philosopher. Many of his works are valued by the Kabalists and Occultists. It is no wonder that he believed in reincarnation and wrote:

The body which we receive from our parents . . . has no spiritual powers, for wisdom and virtue, faith, hope and charity, do not grow from the earth. These powers are not the products of man's physical organization, but the attributes of another invisible and glorified body, whose germs are laid within man. The physical body changes and dies, the glorified body is eternal. This eternal man is the real man, and is not generated by his earthly parents. He does not draw nutriment from the earth, but from the eternal invisible source from which he originated. . . .

The temporal body is the house of the eternal, and we should therefore take care of it, because he who destroys the temporal body destroys the house of the eternal, and although the eternal man is invisible, he exists nevertheless, and will become visible in time. . . . (Quoted in *Paracelsus and the Substance of His Teachings* by Franz Hartmann)

Paracelsus died in 1541. Shortly after his death, Giordano Bruno was born. As a boy, Bruno was educated in Naples, and later at a Dominican monastery, but from the first he rebelled against those priests who followed a conventional religion. Later, he obtained his degree of Doctor of Theology, and taught in the University of Paris. He knew and taught the Three Fundamental Propositions of the Secret Doctrine, including of course the immortality of the soul and the doctrine of reincarnation.

I have held and hold souls to be immortal. . . . Speaking as a Catholic, they do not pass from body to body, but go to Paradise, Purgatory or Hell. But I have reasoned deeply, and, speaking as a philosopher, since the soul is not found without body and yet is not body, it may be in one body or in another, and pass from body to body. This, if it be not [proved] true, seems at least likely, according to the opinion of Pythagoras. . . .

From the spirit, then, which is called the life of the universe. I understand, in my philosophy, proceeds life and soul, which, moreover, I understand to be immortal, as also to bodies, which, as to their substance, are all immortal, there being no other death than division and congregation, which doctrine seems expressed in Ecclesiastes, where it is said that "there is nothing new under the sun; that which is, is that which was." (From Bruno's profession of faith before the Inquisition)

Because of such views, Bruno was arrested by the Inquisition, and as he would not retract them, he was sentenced to be burned at the stake. H.P.B., writing about Bruno in *Isis Unveiled*, says that he was "neither atheist, materialist, nor positivist, but simply a Pythagorean, who taught the philosophy of Upper Asia."

The 16th century also produced in Germany Jacob Boehme, the Christian philosopher and mystic. He received his knowledge, which must have been his in former lives, through "illuminations." In the *Glossary*, H.P.B. describes Boehme as "a natural clairvoyant of most wonderful powers. With no education or acquaintance with science he wrote works which are now proved to be full of scientific truths." In a work entitled *Six Theosophic Points*, he wrote of reincarnation:

Those who are often and much hindered by the contrarious life, and thus are involved in the mixed life, and travail in desire for the birth of the holy life: for them are these writings written. . . . Let them imagine a life which is the outcome and growth of all lives, and is mixed. But let them also imagine another life to grow in it from all the lives, which, though it had grown from all the lives, was free from all the other lives, and yet possessed of all the essential properties of those lives. This other new life (let them imagine) is illuminated with the light, and only in itself; so that it could behold all the other lives, and they (the other lives) could not see nor apprehend the new life. Thus is every one, who, out of the mixed life, evil and good, is born again.

Jacob Boehme's influence continued long after his death, and among those inspired by him were men like Louis Claude de Saint-Martin and Schopenhauer.

The 17th century produced more knowledge, and even those directly connected with the Church began thinking and writing on immortality and reincarnation. In England, in the court of King Charles II, his Chaplain, Joseph Glanvill, wrote as follows in his *Lux Orientalis*, which bears the subtitle "An Inquiry into the opinions of the Eastern sages concerning the Præexistence of Souls. Being a Key to unlock the Grand Mysteries of Providence in Relation to man's sin and misery":

Every soul brings a kind of sense with it into the world, whereby it tastes and relisheth what is suitable to its peculiar temper. . . . What can we conclude but that the soul itself is the immediate subject of all this variety and that it came prejudiced and prepossessed into this body with some implicit notions that it had learnt in another?

During this same century, in 1623, the Dutch philosopher, Benedict Spinoza, was born. He was educated in the orthodox Jewish manner, but because of his independence of thought was excommunicated from the Jewish community. H.P.B. says in *Isis Unveiled* that his doctrines were nearly identical with those of Bruno, in that both derived their knowledge from Pythagoras. She also describes him as a "great philosopher with intuitive perception." He spoke of reincarnation in his *Ethics*, Book V:

It is impossible for us to remember that we had existence prior to the body, since the body can have no vestige of it, and eternity cannot be defined in terms of time or have any relation

to time. But, nevertheless, we have in our experience a perception that we are eternal. For the mind is sensible no less of what it understands than of what it remembers. . . . Although, therefore, we do not remember that we existed before the body, yet we perceive that our mind is eternal, in so far as it involves the body's essence under the category of eternity, and that this its existence cannot be defined by time or interpreted by duration.

Around this time another philosopher arose in Germany — Baron Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1646-1716). During his life he came in contact with some of the foremost minds of Europe. H.P.B. says in *The Secret Doctrine* that were his and Spinoza's systems reconciled, "the essence and Spirit of esoteric philosophy would be made to appear." Leibnitz was not only a philosopher with intuitive perception; H.P.B. also says that "no psycho-physicist ever came nearer than he has to the esoteric general outline of evolution." That he believed in reincarnation can be seen from what he wrote in *Monadology*:

There is nothing waste, nothing sterile, nothing dead in the universe; no chaos, no confusions, save in appearance. . . . We must not imagine . . . that each soul has a mass or portion of matter appropriate or attached to itself forever. . . . For all bodies are in a perpetual flux like rivers, and parts are passing in and out of them continually. Thus the soul only changes its body bit by bit and by degrees, so that it is never despoiled of all its organs all together . . . neither are there any entirely *separate souls*, nor *superhuman spirits* without bodies.

Leibnitz' teachings were to have a decisive effect on Immanuel Kant and the whole German enlightenment. That this might be true, at least in part, is seen from what Frederick the Great of Prussia wrote shortly before his death:

Well, I feel that soon I shall have done with my earthly life. Now, since I am convinced that nothing existing in nature can be annihilated, so I know for a certainty, that for this reason, the more noble part of me will not cease to live. Though I may not be a king in my future life, so much the better: I shall nevertheless live an active life and, on top of it, earn less ingratitude.

The German metaphysician, Immanuel Kant, was born in 1724 and died in 1804. In *The Secret Doctrine* H.P.B. calls him "the greatest philosopher of European birth," "a man of learning . . . who believed in a Spiritual world," and the "founder of modern philosophy." She

further states that many Kantian theories "are as metaphysical and as transcendental as any occult doctrines; and more than one man of science would, if he *dared* speak his mind, accept them. . . ." He taught not only the perfect harmony of the stars and planets, but also that there must be intelligence behind all the movements of the heavenly bodies, and that the matter of which the inhabitants and the animals of other planets are formed "is of a *lighter and more subtle nature and of a more perfect conformation in proportion to their distance from the Sun.*" Believing this, it was only a step further for him to write:

In view of the endless duration of the immortal soul throughout the infinity of time, which even the grave itself does not interrupt . . . shall the soul remain forever attached to this one point of world-space, our earth? Will it never participate in a closer contemplation of the remaining wonders of creation? Who knows but that the intention is for it to become acquainted at close range, some day, with those far distant globes of the cosmic system and the excellence of their institutions, which from this distance already provoke our curiosity? Perhaps for just such a purpose some globes of the planetary system are in a state of preparation as a new dwelling place for us to occupy after we have completed the period of time allotted for our sojourn here. Who knows but that the satellites coursing around Jupiter will some day shine on us? (*General History of Nature*)

Coming nearer to the time of the launching of the Theosophical Movement by H.P.B. in 1875, there arose in the 18th century Louis Claude de Saint-Martin. H.P.B. has described him as "a true Theosophist." This "unknown philosopher" of the 18th century learned German so that he could read Jacob Boehme. He began his life as a brilliant officer in the army, but left it to devote himself to study, and ended up by becoming an ardent Theosophist. One of the many proofs of this can be seen from what he wrote on reincarnation:

Death ought to be looked upon only as one stage in our journey. We reach this stage with tired, worn-out horses, and we start again with horses that are fresh, and able to take us farther on our road. All the same, we must pay what we owe for the portion of the journey that has been traversed, and until the account is settled, we are not allowed to continue on our way. (*Oeuvres Postumes*, Vol. I)

The 18th century produced many more who were truly great. Anton Mesmer, who was sent "to enlighten a small portion of the Western

nations in occult lore," was born in 1734. Cagliostro also appeared during that century. Napoleon Bonaparte was born in 1769, and it was he who was to give the deathblow to the Inquisition. The Revolution in France had "swept away in its course those best allies of the Church, the Roman Catholic aristocracy. A sure foundation was now laid for the right of individual opinion. The world was freed from ecclesiastical tyranny by opening an unobstructed path to Napoleon the Great. . . ." (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 22). Napoleon declared that he was Charlemagne. Prince Talleyrand in his *Memoirs* writes thus of a stormy meeting between Napoleon and several dignitaries of the Church:

. . . the phrase which follows, and which he repeated every three or four minutes . . . revealed the depth of his thought. "Messieurs," he exclaimed to them, "you wish to treat me as if I were Louis de Débonnaire. Do not confound the son with the father. You see in me Charlemagne. . . . I am Charlemagne, I . . . yes, I am Charlemagne."

It is clear that the doctrine of reincarnation has always been known in the West to those who believed in freedom of thought, that it had its rise, its fall, and its rise again. Those mentioned are only a few among those who appeared in Europe in the period dealt with. There have been many who were connected in some way or other with the wider Theosophical Movement, for wherever thought has struggled to be free, there the great Movement is to be discerned. H.P.B. and the present Theosophical Movement have been largely responsible for keeping the reincarnation idea alive during the past century, and we find today a large number of people inquiring into this age-old doctrine. Many, if not all of them, have in some way been influenced by Christianity and Western thought, yet seem to sense the truth of Krishna's statement: "I myself never was not, nor thou, nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be." (*Bhagavad-Gita*, II. 12)

We find writers such as Somerset Maugham stating that there seemed to be no other explanation of the problem of evil save that it was the outcome of one's errors in the past, and that "the effort to do better would be less difficult too when there was the hope that in another existence a greater happiness would reward one." (*The Summing Up*)

Boris Pasternak in his book *Doctor Zhivago* gives some of his ideas on survival when he makes his hero say:

Resurrection in the crude form in which it is preached to . . .

console the weak, is alien to me. I have always understood Christ's words about the living and the dead in a different sense. Where could you find room for all these hordes of people accumulated over thousands of years? The universe isn't big enough for them. . . . There is nothing to fear. There is no such thing as death. Death has nothing to do with us. . . . What we need is something new, and that new thing is life eternal. . . .

Apart from writers, we find some of the foremost clergymen of our time speaking of reincarnation. One of them is Rev. Leslie D. Weatherhead, who in his lecture "The Case for Reincarnation" delivered at the opening session of the 1957-58 season of the City Temple Literary Society of London said:

If every birth in the world is the birth of a new soul, I don't see how progress can ever be consummated. Each has to begin at scratch. . . . How then can there be progress in the innermost things of the heart? . . . How can a world progress in inner things — which are the most important — if the birth of every new generation fills the world with unregenerate souls full of original sin? There can never be a perfect world unless gradually those born into it can take advantage of lessons learned in earlier lives instead of starting at scratch.

Dr. Paul Tillich is considered by many to be the foremost Protestant theologian of our time. In his lecture "Symbols of Eternal Life" delivered at the University of California, he spoke of "the life of Nirvana," but in order to attain to it

many reincarnations are necessary. They are continuations of temporal existence, and therefore they are considered as punishment and suffering. Only the end of temporal existence brings the full participation in eternal life. In it individualization is conquered by participation. . . .

In addition to writers and clergymen, scientists and others have also written on reincarnation and immortality. Albert Einstein is thus quoted by Robert A. Millikan in his autobiography:

It is enough for me to contemplate the mystery of conscious life, perpetuating itself through all eternity — to reflect upon the marvellous structure of the universe, which we can dimly perceive — and to try humbly to comprehend even an infinitesimal part of the *intelligence* manifested in nature. . . .

Carl G. Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist and psychologist, in a lecture "Concerning Rebirth" delivered in 1939 said:

Rebirth is not a process that we can in any way observe. We can neither measure nor weigh nor photograph it. It is entirely beyond sense perception. . . . One speaks of rebirth; one professes rebirth; one is filled with rebirth. This we accept as sufficiently real. . . . I am of the opinion that the psyche is the most tremendous fact of human life. . . . The mere fact that people talk about rebirth, and that there is such a concept at all, means that a store of psychic experiences designated by that term must actually exist.

Rebirth is an affirmation that must be counted among the primordial affirmations of mankind. These primordial affirmations are based on what I call archetypes. . . . (*Collected Works*, Vol. IX, Part I)

Dr. Ian Stevenson, a psychiatrist, who is Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia School of Medicine, has been interested in reincarnation and the question of the memory of past lives, and has investigated hundreds of cases where children or adults seemed to remember a past life. In his essay, "The Evidence for Survival from Claimed Memories of Former Incarnations" (1960), he writes:

The evidence I have assembled . . . does not warrant any firm conclusion about reincarnation. But it does justify, I believe, a much more extensive and more sympathetic study of this hypothesis than it has hitherto received in the West. Further investigation of apparent memories of former incarnations may well establish reincarnation as the most probable explanation of these experiences. . . .

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, well known to so many the world over, wrote on reincarnation in *Indian Thought and Its Development*:

If we assume that we have but one existence, there arises the insoluble problem of what becomes of the spiritual *ego* which has lost all contact with the Eternal. Those who hold the doctrine of reincarnation are faced by no such problem: For them that non-spiritual attitude only means that those men and women have not yet attained to the purified form of existence in which they are capable of knowing the truth and translating it into action.

So the idea of reincarnation contains a most comforting explanation of reality by means of which Indian thought surmounts difficulties which baffle the thinkers of Europe.

Professor W. Macneile Dixon delivered a series of lectures at the

University of Glasgow in 1935-37, which were later published in book form and entitled *The Human Situation*. That he believed in the doctrine of reincarnation is clear from the following quotation:

“The soul is eternal and migratory, say the Egyptians,” reports Laertius. In its existence birth and death are events. And though this doctrine [of palingenesis or rebirth] has for European thought a strangeness, it is in fact the most natural and easily imagined, since what has been can be again. This belief, taught by Pythagoras, to which Plato and Plotinus were attached . . . “has made the tour of the world,” and seems, indeed, to be in accordance with nature’s own favourite way of thought, of which she so insistently reminds us, in her rhythms and recurrences, her cycles and revolving seasons. “It presents itself,” wrote Schopenhauer, “as the natural conviction of man whenever he reflects at all in an unprejudiced manner.” . . .

Our interest in the future, how strange it is if we can never hope to see the future. That interest rarely seems to desert us, and in itself appears inexplicable were we not possessed of an intuition which tells us that we shall have a part in it, that in some sense it already belongs to us, that we should bear it continually in mind, since it will be ours. . . .

It can thus be seen that reincarnation, while perhaps not believed in universally today, either in the East, where it is more often misunderstood than understood, or in the West, is being considered, discussed, and written about by people from all walks of life — thoughtful people who find in it the only logical solution to the many problems that beset them in the world in which they live.

Let us hope that all in time will come to see that “for logic, consistency, profound philosophy, divine mercy and equity, this doctrine of Reincarnation has not its equal on earth.”

It is a belief in a perpetual progress for each incarnating Ego, or divine soul, in an evolution from the outward into the inward, from the material to the Spiritual, arriving at the end of each stage at absolute unity with the divine Principle. From strength to strength, from the beauty and perfection of one plane to the greater beauty and perfection of another, with accessions of new glory, of fresh knowledge and power in each cycle, such is the destiny of every Ego, which thus becomes its own Saviour in each world and incarnation. (H. P. Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy*)

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## THE SPIRIT OF REFORM

Everywhere, in one form or another, we come upon the force of conservatism. Custom and tradition envelop us on every side — in the home, in the office, in social life, in the political sphere. There is bigotry in science and orthodoxy in religion. But the heterodoxy of the irreligious smart set is also not free from its taboos. Who has built these walls of convention surrounding us on all sides?

There is another queer phenomenon. We have Hindus who chafe against the colour bar in South Africa and elsewhere, but observe caste rules in India. We have Radicals in politics who are orthodox in religion. We have one class or community fancying itself superior to another class or community, but railing against the same conceit in others who consider it inferior to themselves. If we observe we find that in each one of us the Liberal and the Conservative, the Reformer and the Orthodox are present. Most human beings are not integrated units. Conflicting forces work in them and produce confusion of thought and of duties, leading to struggle and to unhappiness.

Every national or racial struggle has its counterpart in the life of the individual, and the way to happiness lies in a harmonious blending of the two opposing forces of reform and of convention. He who wants to reform himself is up against the wall of his own habits, of communal customs, of national prejudices, of racial pride. Each one of us is called upon to distinguish between the forces of love and of lust, of liberty and of licence, of reform and of orthodoxy, which are struggling in our own consciousness. Our habits and customs which ordinarily are acquired by heredity and through early education are sometimes seen by us to need change and reform. When we attempt to modify them we encounter opposition from two sides — first from outside, from our relatives and friends who also have the same habits and observe the same customs, and who do not relish the criticism implied by our efforts at self-improvement; secondly, from inside, for when we brush their objections aside gently or brusquely, and endeavour to institute the change, we come upon obstacles from within ourselves and which are inherent in us. We desire to effect a reform, but circumstances wipe out whatever has been begun. Why is this?

A clever business man does not attempt reform in his establishment without ascertaining the causes of existing defects and without deliberately planning what should be substituted. But in introducing change in our own individual lives we do not seek the roots of causes. We do

not ask: "Will the change I am contemplating effect a reform, or the reverse?" There is no basis for rational action. We feel a change to be desirable and without any further thought we act.

Many young people of today, surfeited with the religious orthodoxy of their elders, try to break "the fetters the priest has imposed upon us." That there is great force and truth in their contention none can deny — not even their elders, if they be but logical and think for themselves. But the young reformers do not know the technique of breaking the fetters of conventional habits born of conventional thinking. In their zeal for progress they make so great a haste that they throw away the baby with the bath water; the prophet goes along with the priest; *Smriti* goes, but along with it *Shruti*; theology goes, but along with it philosophy; old customs go, but also good manners. Chafing against restraints, such young people start a life of what they call emancipation — and to most of them emancipation translates itself into an exaggerated sense-life. In addition, these young people, who are under the illusion that they are happy, are in reality making a sorry mess of their lives. This must not be taken as a sweeping statement applicable to each and all. There are exceptions, but a fair number of the youth of today in the so-called civilized lands are centred in sense-life and sex-ideation, and think that they are emancipated.

Now, in India, of all countries, the spirit of reform is necessary. By temperament, because of past mistakes leading to present vicissitudes, our people centuries ago became ultra-conservative. Tradition has acquired so strong a hold on the masses that the breaking of conventions has become a duty for those who want to renovate the life manifesting on our ancient soil. But in what way should we proceed? Shall we throw away conventions and risk a lower standard of thought and of morals? Or shall we, in breaking the fetters, rise to a higher attitude in culture and in good manners which are "not idle, but the fruit of loyal nature and of noble mind"?

Everyone will answer: "Of course, in emancipating ourselves we must ascend. In bodily health more sensitive and strong, in morals more chaste and humane, in manners more dignified and courteous, in mind more polished and cultured, in public life more urbane and cosmopolitan." The ideal to be realized agreed upon, there remains the method to be adopted.

Every type and system of education proceeds by precept and by example. What the mother or nurse says and then what she does; what

the father or teacher advises and then how he acts; what the author writes and then how he lives his personal life — this dual influence constantly affects us. One of the difficulties in reforming ourselves lies in the disparity we see between the advice given to us and the action performed by the one who advises. We find and are apt to excuse within ourselves this disparity between preachment and practice. But as we scan history and study the scale of human leadership we come upon spiritual figures like Krishna and Buddha, Jesus and Zoroaster, in whom we discern a harmonious blending between instruction and action. They fully practised what They preached. All others only attempt to square their actions with their ideas.

We find another phenomenon in the lives of such great spiritual reformers: They all taught the highest form of morality — purity of mind and chastity of body; detachment in consciousness, yet due performance of actions in the world of men; breaking of fetters, be they of iron or of gold, but always with the motive of bringing ourselves and the world to duty and to sacrifice. Ever condemning sin, They never cast the sinner out of Their heart.

In these two facts about the spiritual Instructors — Their example and Their integrated attitude to the whole of life, through the rhythm established between preachment and practice, and through Their high ethical precepts — we find the necessary clue to right reform, to the correct method of breaking conventions, which recognizes the place and the value of conventions, of restraint, of conservatism. The need of the individual today is for a proper blending between his thoughts and his actions, which will engender peace within himself and enable him to live in self-respect. Slavery to conventions is disturbing to conscience and to reason; but slavery to a thoughtless unconventionalism is injurious to conscience and contrary to reason. Peace of mind and self-respect in conscience do not emerge from either conventional orthodoxy or unconventional rejection of standards and proprieties.

In the *Gita* and the *Gathas*, in the Sermons of the Buddha and the Sayings of Jesus, we find knowledge about emancipation which elevates. It is only when the bondage of lust and of licence is broken that Love and Liberty manifest themselves. Krishna, Buddha and Jesus were not conventional. They were Free Men — Men who had freed Themselves from religious orthodoxy without becoming irreligious; from social cant and hypocrisy without becoming selfish, irreverent or sophisticated; from political conservatism without becoming Machiavellian. Their pre-

cepts and Their example can also free us if we study and apply the former and, using discernment, humbly copy the latter. We should aim at living the religion of the Higher Mind, which ennobles our social being, deepens our insight, and on every occasion and at every turn teaches what conventions to break and how to rise higher, thus enabling others to do likewise. If the society in which we live is not bettered by our freeing ourselves from conventions, we have erred.

To break conventions without knowledge and perception is risky; to acquire proper instruction to free ourselves from conventions is a duty; but how many really desire such instruction?

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### THE ELIXIR

Teach me, my God and King,  
 In all things Thee to see,  
 And what I do in any thing,  
 To do it as for Thee.

Not rudely, as a beast,  
 To runne into an action;  
 But still to make Thee prepossest,  
 And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glasse,  
 On it may stay his eye;  
 Or if he pleaseth, through it passe,  
 And then the heav'n espie.

All may of Thee partake:  
 Nothing can be so mean,  
 Which with his tincture, 'for Thy sake,'  
 Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause  
 Makes drudgerie divine;  
 Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,  
 Makes that and th' action fine.

This is the famous stone  
 That turneth all to gold;  
 For that which God doth touch and own  
 Cannot for lesse be told.

—GEORGE HERBERT

## THE VEGETARIAN WAY OF LIFE

It is customary for people to talk about the visible habits and manners of their friends and acquaintances and others, while ignoring their mental points of view, their inner hopes and aspirations, their energizing ideas and ideals. These mental and moral longings and realizations — and who does not have them? — are of the utmost importance, for they make the real man. They are the index of his character and give a clue to his actions. But most people live so much on the surface, are so overwhelmingly surrounded by superficialities, that it is natural that they notice only surface things and judge by mere appearances.

Thus, to take an example, what one eats or does not eat is quickly observed and readily becomes a topic of conversation among friends and even among strangers, but not what one thinks, what mental food sustains one. This would not so much matter if from appearances people proceeded to the ideas which produced these appearances.

Those who have accepted the vegetarian way of life are sometimes criticized by their non-vegetarian friends and relations who do not bother to seek causes and mental viewpoints. There are numerous reasons which would convince any honest mind that vegetarianism is mentally right, morally sane and physically healthful. We can give those reasons, but we cannot make people use their minds to grasp them. And yet the question of what we eat is very important. If people studied their own body-conditions, their small ailments, their general health, very soon many would undertake diet reform for themselves.

Unfortunately people do not energize themselves, or stop doing so after making a start, because of what their doctors and their friends say.

First, all medical men are not themselves open-minded enquirers, and they continue to believe what they have been taught — that vegetarianism is a fad or is unwise. They repeat their dictum parrot-like, proving thereby that they are unscientific and somewhat out of date. For, everywhere a growing number of front-rank doctors are vegetarians and advocate, not only sentimentally but intelligently, vegetarianism, prescribing it as a diet to their patients.

Secondly, our kin and friends are not always the best of advisers in the matter of our bodily health. Many are the causes which prompt them to discourage the sincere and earnest efforts a person makes to

improve his bodily health by suitable food reform. The most powerful of these causes is their own habit. People do not like to see a fellow man do something which they themselves do not feel up to doing. Many a weak-hearted man is easily influenced by the talk of relatives and friends, and even his clear mental perception is befogged when his doctor and other learned acquaintances begin to speak!

Let anyone who wants to be a vegetarian first equip himself with the conviction that vegetarianism is a noble institution — hygienically cleaner, medically more healthful, morally more harmonious, and mentally more sound. Let him make up his mind that what doctors say and others opine is not necessarily correct. If he desires to justify himself in their eyes, let him study a little of the vast literature now available.

The argument that cruelty is involved in killing animals and eating their corpses is sound; it needs to be supplemented with the philosophical basis of evolution; otherwise one will be puzzled when a quick tongue shouts: "Then don't drink water full of lives, and don't breathe air, for air too is alive." There is as quick an answer: "If that be so, then kill your fellow man and eat him, for according to your reasoning cannibalism is justified."

It is well known how Dr. Jagdish Chandra Bose experimentally demonstrated the old Upanishadic teaching of the One Life in all objects and in all beings throughout the entire universe. He taught us anew what the *Prashna Upanishad* teaches: "As spokes in nave, in Life are all things set." It is sometimes argued: "If Life is everywhere, then why is it wrong to eat meat? Instead of killing animals do you not kill vegetables?" This is not accurate. The one Life or Spirit is everywhere, but Its manifestations or expressions are myriad. The Upanishads also teach that "the same Self is in all beings, but in all It does not shine forth equally." Life is in our bones, in our muscles, in our nerves, in our brain — the same Life — but bone matter is different from brain matter. Even the retina of our eyes and the tympanum of our ears are not of the same grade of matter. So also the mineral in which the One Life which men call God is manifesting is different from the vegetable in which the same Life or God is manifesting. The sensitiveness of the body of a sage or a seer is different from that of the body of a savage or a soldier. Life is everywhere, but in different kingdoms its activity produces differences of form.

Medically there is a very sound case against meat-eating; digestive and intestinal troubles and many other physiological upsets are most

easily remedied by a non-meat diet, but — and it is an important but — that diet must be properly balanced. Our school and college education is woefully neglectful in teaching the elementary facts of anatomy and physiology and hygiene. But the person who desires to improve his health — and without adequate food reform it cannot be done — should equip himself with some knowledge if he wants to argue with those who recommend a meat diet. More important still, he should acquaint himself with food values, and learn to make proper menus for day-to-day use.

Our body is the Temple of the Soul. Alas, we do not treat it as such. Knowledge about the God living in that Temple is available in several religious texts, but people are so much taken up by religious beliefs and formalism that they do not look for religious knowledge. The scientific aspect of religion — the truly beneficent aspect — is sorely neglected. The defiling of the body seems to be carried on systematically. And yet, did not St. Paul write in his First Epistle to the Corinthians:

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. (iii. 16-17)

Food builds the body; it is like the bricks or stones which go to make the house. In the Vedantin classification, the physical body is named *Annamaya Kosha*, the sheath made of food. Through that which we eat and drink we are improving or deteriorating the body — its quality, its sensitiveness, etc. Does it require very great knowledge to perceive that meat is a defiling substance? The appearance and stench of a corpse are enough to show to anyone that to eat meat is to defile the temple of the body; the God within the Temple, our own Inner Soul, is bound to “destroy” us, as St. Paul warns, when we “defile” his Temple. What great wonder is it that our civilization is full of diseases and is being verily “destroyed” by a variety of defilements of which meat-eating is only one? There is not a great spiritual instructor worthy of the name who has not taught the value of keeping the body pure and healthy because it is the abode of the Soul.

Every man has as one of his important duties to look after the temple of his body. Except as a medicine, necessary only in some rare ailments, meats ought to be avoided; and the same is true of alcohol, which is not nourishing, but a poison to be administered like strychnine only in certain specific cases, and in minute doses.

There is a line of thought that is not very familiar to many. Meats affect our fears and hates, our passions and greeds, and not only our digestion, our kidneys, liver and spleen. The argument is well put by H. P. Blavatsky in her *Key to Theosophy* (pp. 258-59):

THEOSOPHIST. One of the great German scientists has shown that every kind of animal tissue, however you may cook it, still retains certain marked characteristics of the animal which it belonged to, which characteristics can be recognized. And apart from that, every one knows by the taste what meat he is eating. We go a step farther, and prove that when the flesh of animals is assimilated by man as food, it imparts to him, physiologically, some of the characteristics of the animal it came from. Moreover, occult science teaches and proves this to its students by ocular demonstration, showing also that this "coarsening" or "animalizing" effect on man is greatest from the flesh of the larger animals, less for birds, still less for fish and other cold-blooded animals, and least of all when he eats only vegetables.

ENQUIRER. Then he had better not eat at all?

THEO. If he could live without eating, of course it would. But as the matter stands, he must eat to live, and so we advise really earnest students to eat such food as will least clog and weight their brains and bodies, and will have the smallest effect in hampering and retarding the development of their intuition, their inner faculties and powers.

ENQ. Then you do not adopt all the arguments which vegetarians in general are in the habit of using?

THEO. Certainly not. Some of their arguments are very weak, and often based on assumptions which are quite false. But, on the other hand, many of the things they say are quite true. For instance, we believe that much disease, and especially the great predisposition to disease which is becoming so marked a feature in our time, is very largely due to the eating of meat, and especially of tinned meats. But it would take too long to go thoroughly into this question of vegetarianism on its merits.

In the above remarks there are implications of value. Are all vegetables to be used indiscriminately? Are there some vegetables which adversely affect our tissues and nerves as well as our loves and hates? The answer is — yes, there are, but of that another time.

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## WHO AM I?

Master, who am I? Some say I am the Ego, some say I am the personality, but just what do they mean? When I am talking to you, is it my Ego that talks, or is it the personality, or is it both? If I am the Ego, why am I not enlightened like the Buddha or the Christ? If I am my personality, when will I begin to live like an Ego?

I am familiar, of course, with the theoretical teaching that at birth, and gradually till I am mature, the real Ego, the Manasaputra, the Christ or Buddha within, sends down a portion of himself to make of my personality a thinking, choosing entity in incarnation. But what I do not grasp is how this Higher Ego, the Manasaputra, immortal for this *Maha-Manvantara*, is related to me, the man speaking to you now.

Friend, the trouble is that we learn by rote, but we do not think and meditate and ask real questions on what we learn, and so difficulties arise. How many of us study the *Transactions*? There we find an important key given to us on this point. H.P.B. tells us, "During the waking hours the thoughts and Voice of the Higher Ego do or do not reach his gaoler — the physical man, for they are the *Voice of his Conscience*" (p. 61). So the answer to your question is plain. When you are talking to me of your worries you are not listening to your Voice of Conscience, and therefore it is the physical man, the fourfold lower entity, who is speaking. Yet she says that "There is a sort of conscious telegraphic communication going on incessantly, day and night, between the physical brain and the inner man" (p. 64).

Master, how do we use that telegraphic communication? Who communicates with whom, and who benefits by it? It seems to me that sometimes we send a telegraphic communication to the Higher, and sometimes the Higher sends it to us, for we may appeal to it for help. At times it seems that a prick of conscience prevents us in the nick of time from some line of conduct, or makes us feel uneasy just after we have done a wrong.

Friend, if we do not look at a telegram when it is received, or let the telephone go on ringing, we miss contact with the friend who is trying to get in touch with us. Therefore it is that we are asked to try to keep in mind who we are and what life is for. We are asked to remember every day that life is for the experience of the soul. Hence our getting up in the morning, our going to the office or working at home, our meeting with friends and our moments of leisure — all these

daily events are avenues through which the soul, not only the personal man, is gaining, or should gain, experience. Whatever we think, feel or act, do we ask ourselves, "What would the Master do if He were in my place?" Do we ask ourselves before retiring for the night, "What has my soul experienced today?" If we do so, are we sure that our answer is a true one, or do we just take for granted that the thought we should like to have has been in the background of our consciousness?

Master, life is indeed difficult!

Friend, it is so. We are mostly in the position of those who have cast aside the idea of religion and devotion without understanding what real religion is, or what true devotion implies. We know about the sevenfold man, the sevenfold universe, the states after death, and so forth, but have we dwelt on the Higher Self and what It means? Has our practising religion been true brotherhood *in actu* and not merely in name? Have we thought of the untrodden ground of our own heart where real worship is to be offered?

Who are we devoted to? To leaders, to the philosophy? What does devotion to H.P.B. mean, and how does it show itself — emotionally or practically? In the coming years, try to grasp the inner side of life and of Theosophy. How else can we put ourselves *en rapport* with the new Messenger? Unless we spiritualize ourselves, how can we appreciate spirituality?

Master, I see; but it is hard to know what to do.

Friend, it is easy, but we turn our back on it. Ponder over the heart aspect of the Teachings, not merely the emotional aspect. Try to think why those Teachings were given to us. Realize, definitely *realize*, that our own characters, as shown by our actions and thoughts, need to be changed. Selfishness, inaccuracies of speech, anger, injustice, envy — all these are yet present within us. Let us obey our conscience, not from the point of view of what will happen to our personal self, but from the point of view of the larger issue. Consider what sort of a future you are building for your true Self by your present actions. Only an awakening sense of responsibility to ourselves, to our divine Ego, to H.P.B., to the Great Servants of Humanity, can help us. Cut asunder all doubts by understanding, by turning theoretical knowledge into practical knowledge, through application. Who is willing to do this?

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## REPLIES TO AN ENGLISH F.T.S.

[Reprinted here from *The Theosophist* of September 1883 is the concluding part of T. Subba Row's long reply to Question VIII.—EDS.]

### QUESTION VIII

#### SRI SHANKARACHARYA'S DATE AND DOCTRINE

(*Concluded*)

It is unnecessary for us to say anything about the Madhwa traditions or the opinion of the Vaishnava Brahmins of Madura regarding Shankara's date. It is, in our humble opinion, hopeless to expect anything but falsehood regarding Shankara's history and his philosophy from the Madhwas and the Vaishnavas. They are always very anxious to show to the world at large that their doctrines existed before the time of Shankara, and that the Adwaitee doctrine was a deviation from their pre-existing orthodox Hinduism. And consequently they have assigned to him an antiquity of less than 1,500 years.

It does not appear why Dr. Taylor thinks that he can allow Shankara about 900 years, or on what grounds Mr. Colebrooke is inclined to give him an antiquity of about 1,000 years. No reliance can be placed on such statements before the reasons assigned therefor are thoroughly sifted.

Fortunately, Mr. Wilson gives us the reason for Ram Mohun Roy's opinion. We are inclined to believe that Ram Mohun Roy's calculation was made with reference to the Sringeri list of Teachers or Gurus, as that was the only list published up to this time, and as no other Matham, except perhaps the Kumbaconum Matham, has a list of Gurus coming up to the present time in uninterrupted succession. There is no necessity for depending upon his calculation (which from its very nature cannot be anything more than mere guesswork) when the old list preserved at Sringeri contains the dates assigned to the various teachers. As these dates have not been published up to the present time, and as Ram Mohun Roy had merely a string of names before him, he was obliged to ascertain Shankara's date by assigning a certain number of years on the average to every teacher. Consequently, his opinion is of no importance whatever when we have the statement of the Sringeri Matham which, as we have already said, places Shankara some centuries before the Christian era. The same remarks will apply

to the calculation in question even if it were made on the basis of the number of teachers contained in the list preserved in the Kumbaconum Matham.

Very little importance can be attached to the oral evidence adduced by some unknown persons before Dr. Buchanan in his travels through Malabar; and we have only to consider the inferences that may be drawn from the accounts contained in *Kerala Utpatti*. The various manuscript copies of this work seem to differ in the date they assign to Shankaracharya; even if the case were otherwise, we cannot place any reliance upon this work, for the following among other reasons:

I. It is a well-known fact that the customs of Malabar are very peculiar. Their defenders have been, consequently, pointing to some great Rishi or some great philosopher of ancient India as their originator. Some of them affirm (probably the majority) that Parasurama brought into existence some of these customs and left a special *Smriti* for the guidance of the people of Malabar; others say that it was Shankaracharya who sanctioned these peculiar customs. It is not very difficult to perceive why these two persons were selected by them. According to the Hindu Puranas, Parasurama lived in Malabar for some time, and according to Hindu traditions Shankara was born in that country. But it is extremely doubtful whether either of them had anything to do with the peculiar customs of the said country. There is no allusion whatever to any of these customs in Shankara's works. He seems to have devoted his whole attention to religious reform, and it is very improbable that he should have ever directed his attention to the local customs of Malabar. While attempting to revive the philosophy of the ancient Rishis, it is not likely that he should have sanctioned the customs of Malabar, which are at variance with the rules laid down in the *Smritis* of those very Rishis; and as far as our knowledge goes, he left no written regulations regarding the castes of Malabar.

II. The statements contained in *Kerala Utpatti* are opposed to the account of Shankara's life given in almost all the *Shankara Vijayams* (Biographies of Shankara) examined up to this time, viz., Vidyaranya's *Shankara Vijayam*, Chitsukhachary's *Shankara Vijayavilasam*, *Brihat Shankara Vijayam*, etc. According to the account contained in these works, Shankara left Malabar in his eighth year, and returned to his native village when his mother was on her death-bed, and on that occasion he remained there only for a few days. It is difficult to see at what period of his lifetime he was engaged in making regulations for the castes of Malabar.

III. The work under consideration represents Malabar as the seat of Bhattapada's triumphs over the Buddhists, and says that this teacher established himself in Malabar and expelled the Buddhists from that country. This statement alone will be sufficient to show to our readers the fictitious character of the account contained in this book. According to every other Hindu work, this great teacher of Purva Mimamsa was born in Northern India; almost all his famous disciples and followers were living in that part of the country, and according to Vidyaranya's account he died at Allahabad.

For the foregoing reasons we cannot place any reliance upon this account of Malabar.

From an examination of the traditions and other accounts which we have hitherto examined, Mr. Wilson comes to the conclusion that Shankaracharya lived in the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century of the Christian era. The accounts of the Sringeri, Kudali and Kumbaconum Mathams, and the traditions current in the Bombay Presidency, as shown in the biographical sketches published at Bombay, place Shankara in some century before the Christian era. On the other hand, *Kerala Utpatti*, the information obtained by Dr. Buchanan in his travels through Malabar, and the opinions expressed by Dr. Taylor and Mr. Colebrooke, concur in assigning to him an antiquity of about 1,000 years. The remaining traditions referred to by Mr. Wilson are as much opposed to his opinion as to the conclusion that Shankara lived before Christ. We shall now leave it to our readers to say whether, under such circumstances, Mr. Wilson is justified in asserting that "the weight of authority is altogether in favour" of his theory.

We have already referred to the writings of almost all the European Orientalists who expressed an opinion upon the subject under discussion; and we need hardly say that Shankara's date is yet to be ascertained.

We are obliged to comment at length on the opinions of European Orientalists regarding Shankara's date, as there will be no probability of any attention being paid to the opinion of Indian and Tibetan Initiates when it is generally believed that the question has been finally settled by the Orientalists. The Adepts referred to by "An English F.T.S." are certainly in a position to clear up some of the problems in Indian religious history. But there is very little chance of their opinions being accepted by the general public under present circumstances, unless they are supported by such evidence as is within the reach of the outside

world. As it is not always possible to procure such evidence, there is very little use in publishing the information which is in their possession until the public are willing to recognize and admit the antiquity and trustworthiness of their traditions, the extent of their powers and the vastness of their knowledge. In the absence of such proof as is above indicated, there is every likelihood of their opinions being rejected as absurd and untenable; their motives will no doubt be questioned and some people may be tempted to deny even the fact of their existence.

It is often asked by Hindus as well as by Englishmen why these Adepts are so very unwilling to publish some portion at least of the information they possess regarding the truths of physical science. But in doing so, they do not seem to perceive the difference between the method by which they obtain their knowledge and the process of modern scientific investigation by which the facts of nature are ascertained and its laws are discovered. Unless an Adept can prove his conclusions by the same kind of reasoning as is adopted by the modern scientist, they remain undemonstrated to the outside world. It is of course impossible for him to develop in a considerable number of human beings such faculties as would enable them to perceive their truth; and it is not always practicable to establish them by the ordinary scientific method unless all the facts and laws on which his demonstration is to be based have already been ascertained by modern science. No Adept can be expected to anticipate the discoveries of the next four or five centuries, and prove some grand scientific truth to the entire satisfaction of the educated public after having discovered every fact and law of nature required for the said purpose by such process of reasoning as would be accepted by them. They have to encounter similar difficulties in giving any information regarding the events of the ancient history of India.

However, before giving the exact date assigned to Shankaracharya by the Indian and Tibetan Initiates, we shall indicate a few circumstances by which his date may be approximately determined. It is our humble opinion that the *Shankara Vijayams* hitherto published can be relied upon as far as they are consistent with each other regarding the general outline of Shankara's life. We cannot, however, place any reliance whatever upon Anandagiri's *Shankara Vijaya* published at Calcutta. The Calcutta edition not only differs in some very material points from the manuscript copies of the same work found in Southern India, but is opposed to every other *Shankara Vijayam* hitherto examined. It is

quite clear from its style and some of the statements contained therein that it was not the production of Anandagiri, one of the four chief disciples of Shankara and the commentator on his *Upanishad Bhashyam*. For instance, it represents Shankara as the author of a certain verse which is to be found in Vidyaranya's *Adhikaranaratnamala*, written in the 14th century. It represents Shankara as giving orders to two of his disciples to preach the Visishtadwaitee and the Dwaitee doctrines, which are directly opposed to his own doctrine. The book under consideration says that Shankara went to conquer Mandanamisra in debate, followed by Sureswaracharya, though Mandanamisra assumed the latter name at the time of initiation. It is unnecessary for us here to point out all the blunders and absurdities of this book. It will be sufficient to say that in our opinion it was not written by Anandagiri, and that it was the production of an unknown author who does not appear to have been even tolerably well acquainted with the history of the Adwaitee doctrine. Vidyaranya's (otherwise Sayanacharya, the great commentator of the Vedas) *Shankara Vijaya* is decidedly the most reliable source of information as regards the main features of Shankara's biography. Its authorship has been universally accepted, and the information contained therein was derived by its author, as may be seen from his own statements, from certain old biographies of Shankara existing at the time of its composition. Taking into consideration the author's vast knowledge and information, and the opportunities he had for collecting materials for his work when he was the head of the Sringeri Matham, there is every reason to believe that he had embodied in his work the most reliable information he could obtain. Mr. Wilson, however, says that the book in question is "much too poetical and legendary" to be acknowledged as a great authority. We admit that the style is highly poetical, but we deny that the work is legendary. Mr. Wilson is not justified in characterizing it as such on account of its description of some of the wonderful phenomena shown by Shankara. Probably the learned Orientalist would not be inclined to consider the Biblical account of Christ in the same light. It is not the peculiar privilege of Christianity to have a miracle-worker for its first propagator. In the following observations we shall take such facts as are required from this work.

It is generally believed that a person named Govinda Yogi was Shankara's Guru, but it is not generally known that this Yogi was in fact Patanjali — the great author of the *Mahabhashya* and the *Yoga Sutras* — under a new name. A tradition current in Southern India represents him as one of the chelas of Patanjali; but it is very doubtful

if this tradition has anything like a proper foundation. But it is quite clear from the 94th, 95th, 96th and 97th verses of the fifth chapter of Vidyaranya's *Shankara Vijayam* that Govinda Yogi and Patanjali were identical. According to the immemorial custom observed amongst Initiates, Patanjali assumed the name of Govinda Yogi at the time of his initiation by Gaudapada. It cannot be contended that Vidyaranya represented Patanjali as Shankara's Guru merely for the purpose of assigning some importance to Shankara and his teaching. Shankara is looked upon as a far greater man than Patanjali by the Adwaites, and nothing can be added to Shankara's reputation by Vidyaranya's assertion. Moreover, Patanjali's views are not altogether identical with Shankara's views; it may be seen from Shankara's writings that he attached no importance whatever to the practices of Hatha Yog regarding which Patanjali composed his *Yoga Sutras*. Under such circumstances, if Vidyaranya had the option of selecting a Guru for Shankara, he would no doubt have represented Vyasa himself (who is supposed to be still living) as his Guru. We see no reason, therefore, to doubt the correctness of the statement under examination. Therefore, as Shankara was Patanjali's chela, and as Gaudapada was his Guru, his date will enable us to fix the dates of Shankara and Gaudapada. We may here point out to our readers a mistake that appears on p. 148 of Mr. Sinnett's book on *Esoteric Buddhism* as regards the latter personage. He is there represented as Shankara's Guru; Mr. Sinnett was informed, we believe, that he was Shankara's Paramaguru, and not having properly understood the meaning of this expression, Mr. Sinnett wrote that he was Shankara's Guru.

It is generally admitted by Orientalists that Patanjali lived before the commencement of the Christian era. Mr. Barth places him in the second century before the Christian era, accepting Goldstücker's opinion, and Monier Williams does the same thing. Weber, who seems to have carefully examined the opinions of all the other Orientalists who have written upon the subject, comes to the conclusion that "we must for the present rest satisfied with placing the date of the composition of the *Bhashya* between B.C. 140 and A.D. 60, a result which, considering the wretched state of the chronology of Indian literature generally, is, despite its indefiniteness, of no mean importance." And yet even this date rests upon inferences drawn from one or two unimportant expressions contained in Patanjali's *Mahabhashya*. It is always dangerous to draw such inferences, and especially so when it is known that, according to the tradition current amongst Hindu grammarians,

some portions of *Mahabhashya* were lost and the gaps were filled up by subsequent writers. Even supposing that we should consider the expressions quoted as written by Patanjali himself, there is nothing in those expressions which would enable us to fix the writer's date. For instance, the connection between the expression "*arunad Yavanah Sâketam*" and the expedition of Menander against Ayodhya between B.C. 144 and 120 relied upon by Goldstücker is merely imaginary. There is nothing in the expression to show that the allusion contained therein points necessarily to Menander's expedition. We believe that Patanjali is referring to the expedition of *Yavanas* against Ayodhya during the lifetime of Sagara's father, described in *Harivamsa*. This expedition occurred long before Rama's time, and there is nothing to connect it with Menander. Goldstücker's inference is based upon the assumption that there was no other *Yavana* expedition against Ayodhya known to Patanjali, and it will be easily seen from *Harivamsa* (written by Vyasa) that the said assumption is unwarranted. Consequently the whole theory constructed by Goldstücker on this weak foundation falls to the ground. No valid inferences can be drawn from the mere names of kings contained in *Mahabhashya*, even if they are traced to Patanjali himself, as there would be several kings in the same dynasty bearing the same name.

From the foregoing remarks it will be clear that we cannot fix, as Weber has done, B.C. 140 as the maximum limit of antiquity that can be assigned to Patanjali. It is now necessary to see whether any other such limit has been ascertained by Orientalists. As Panini's date still remains undetermined, the limit cannot be fixed with reference to his date. But it is assumed by some Orientalists that Panini must have lived at some time subsequent to Alexander's invasion, from the fact that Panini explains in his grammar the formation of the word *Yavanani*. We are very sorry that European Orientalists have taken the pains to construct theories upon this basis without ascertaining the meaning assigned to the word *Yavana* and the time when the Hindus first became acquainted with the Greeks. It is unreasonable to assume without proof that this acquaintance commenced at the time of Alexander's invasion. On the other hand, there are very good reasons for believing that the Greeks were known to the Hindus long before this event. Pythagoras visited India, according to the traditions current amongst Indian Initiates, and he is alluded to in Indian astrological works under the name of *Yavanacharya*. Moreover, it is not quite certain that the word *Yavana* was strictly confined to the Greeks by

the ancient Hindu writers. Probably it was originally applied to the Egyptians and the Ethiopians; it was probably extended first to the Alexandrian Greeks, and subsequently to the Greeks, Persians and Arabians. Besides the *Yavana* invasion of Ayodhya described in *Harivamsa*, there was another subsequent expedition to India by *Kala Yavana* (Black *Yavana*) during Krishna's lifetime, described in the same work. This expedition was probably undertaken by the Ethiopians. Anyhow, there are no reasons whatever, as far as we can see, for asserting that Hindu writers began to use the word *Yavana* after Alexander's invasion. We can attach no importance whatever to any inferences that may be drawn regarding the dates of Panini and Katyayana (both of them lived before Patanjali) from the statements contained in *Katha Sarit Sagara*, which is nothing more than a mere collection of fables. It is now seen by Orientalists that no proper conclusions can be drawn regarding the dates of Panini and Katyayana from the statements made by Hiuan Thsang, and we need not therefore say anything here regarding the said statements. Consequently the dates of Panini and Katyayana still remain undetermined by European Orientalists.

Goldstücker is probably correct in his conclusion that Panini lived before Buddha, and the Buddhists' accounts agree with the traditions of the Initiates in asserting that Katyayana was a contemporary of Buddha. From the fact that Patanjali must have composed his *Mahabhashya* after the composition of Panini's *Sutras* and *Katyayana's Varttika*, we can only infer that it was written after Buddha's birth. But there are a few considerations which may help us in coming to the conclusion that Patanjali must have lived about the year 500 B.C. Max Müller fixed the Sutra period between 500 B.C. and 600 B.C. We agree with him in supposing that the period probably ended with B.C. 500, though it is uncertain how far it extended into the depths of Indian antiquity. Patanjali was the author of the *Yoga Sutras*, and this fact has not been doubted by any Hindu writer up to this time. Mr. Weber *thinks*, however, that the author of the *Yoga Sutras* might be a different man from the author of the *Mahabhashya*, though he does not venture to assign any reason for his supposition. We very much doubt if any European Orientalist can ever find out the connection between the first Anhika of the *Mahabhashya* and the real secrets of Hatha Yoga contained in the *Yoga Sutras*. No one but an Initiate can understand the full significance of the said Anhika; and the "eternity of the Logos" or Shabda is one of the principal doctrines of the

ancient Gymnosophists of India, who were generally Hatha Yogis. In the opinion of Hindu writers and pundits, Patanjali was the author of three works, *viz.*, *Mahabhashya*, *Yoga Sutras* and a book on Medicine and Anatomy; and there is not the slightest reason for questioning the correctness of this opinion. We must, therefore, place Patanjali in the Sutra period, and this conclusion is confirmed by the traditions of the Indian Initiates. As Shankaracharya was a contemporary of Patanjali (being his Chela), he must have lived about the same time.

We have thus shown that there are no reasons for placing Shankara in the eighth or ninth century after Christ, as some of the European Orientalists have done. We have further shown that Shankara was Patanjali's Chela, and that his date should be ascertained with reference to Patanjali's date. We have also shown that neither the year B.C. 140 nor the date of Alexander's invasion can be accepted as the maximum limit of antiquity that can be assigned to him, and we have lastly pointed out a few circumstances which will justify us in expressing an opinion that Patanjali and his Chela Shankara belonged to the Sutra period.

We may perhaps now venture to place before the public the exact date assigned to Shankaracharya by Tibetan and Indian Initiates. According to the historical information in their possession, he was born in the year B.C. 510 (51 years and two months after the date of Buddha's Nirvana), and we believe that satisfactory evidence in support of this date can be obtained in India if the inscriptions at Conjeevaram, Sringeri, Jagannath, Benares, Kashmir, and various other places visited by Shankara, are properly deciphered. Shankara built Conjeevaram, which is considered as one of the most ancient towns in Southern India; and it may be possible to ascertain the time of its construction if proper enquiries are made. But even the evidence now brought before the public supports the opinion of the Initiates above indicated. As Gaudapada was Shankaracharya's Guru's Guru, his date entirely depends on Shankara's date; and there is every reason to suppose that he lived before Buddha. As this article has already become very lengthy we will now bring it to a close. Our remarks about Buddha's date and Shankaracharya's doctrine will appear in the next issue of *The Theosophist*.

—T. SUBBA ROW

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## IS CONDEMNATION A DUTY?

[Reprinted from *The Theosophical Forum* for January 1891.

—EDS.]

*First*, I fail to see that in order to train the moral sense one has to practise condemnation of others. *Second*, the *necessity* for condemnation will never pass away if we occupy ourselves in such practice while waiting for the world to grow so good that there will be no one to condemn. *Third*, it appears to me to be a new and untheosophical doctrine that our moral sense is to be or can be properly cultivated by engaging in condemnation of others.

The maxim cited was intended solely for earnest disciples who endeavour to follow the very highest rules of conduct. We are so prone to condemn others and let our own faults go by that sincere disciples are taught, as a discipline, to cultivate their moral sense by inspecting their own faults, and let others do the same for themselves, but when the occasion demands condemnation, that it shall be of the wrong act. This cannot apply to a judge, or any other proper inquisitor, teacher, or guide. It is meant solely for those who, believing that our span of life is so short that there will be no time left if we busy ourselves with faults of others, prefer to improve their opportunity by purging themselves, by cleaning their own doorway, by taking the beam out of their own eye. For all sages and occult practitioners declare that among the necessary facts to be known is the fact that each time a man indulges in condemnation of another he is himself prevented by his own act from seeing his own faults, and that sooner or later his faults increase. If a sincere student thinks this be true he will hesitate about others and occupy himself with self-examination and self-conquest. This will take all his time. We are not born as universal reformers of all people's faults and abuses, and theosophists cannot waste their energies in criticasting others. Furthermore, I strongly doubt if anyone was ever improved by the fault-finding of his acquaintances. It is natural discipline that makes the improvement, and that only. Indeed, I have observed in much experience with those who constantly criticize others that nothing results in 99 cases out of 100 but a smirking self-satisfaction in the breast of the critic, and anger or contempt in the heart of the victim of the fault-finding.

—W. Q. JUDGE

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## THE AGELESS WISDOM

An age means a period of time, and therefore it has a beginning and an end. That which is ageless has no beginning and will have no end. Time, as we know it, does not exist for it.

The word Wisdom means in its highest sense spiritual perception. It is experience and knowledge, together with the power of applying them practically.

Theosophy teaches that there are two kinds of knowledge, archetypal and relative. Both are aspects of that real knowledge which can only be sensed, not even perceived, and there is a sensing which is quite different from the sensing through our sense-organs which separate us from what we see. This is the noumenal knowledge, or *Para Vidya*, while relative knowledge is *Apara Vidya*.

Evolution is the recognition of the reality of the Ideas behind all manifestation. This recognition comes through spiritual perception; intellectual perception is the understanding of those ideas when manifested. Archetypal knowledge is the knowledge of causes; relative knowledge has to do with effects. Effects change; cause, as a principle, does not change. Beyond archetypal knowledge is Reality.

The ancient Wisdom speaks of ideas in themselves, manifested ideas, and the reflection of ideas in their perfection by Adepts, and in their distortion by ordinary human minds.

To evolve is to build the capacity to reflect the ideas perfectly, so that past, present and future blend into one. It is because the fundamental Cause of all manifestation is the Divine Principle that those who have spiritual perception and the capacity to "sense" that which is beyond ideas have been able to record their knowledge, not in words, but in geometrical signs and glyphs, or in abstract mathematical figures and laws.

Theosophy states that "There is one eternal Law in Nature, one that always tends to adjust contraries and to produce final harmony" (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 420). With this as a starting point, all true knowledge or archetypal knowledge must be seen as one and unified, whereas the applications of this knowledge in manifestation, as understood by man, are many and varied.

This brings up an important point as to study. Study must be dual in character, attention being paid to the universal aspect of everything as well as to the particular aspect which we see and know. But it

should not be forgotten that the particular is also important. By studying it in the light of the universal it can be known whether our understanding of it is correct; that is to say, whether what is seen is a manifestation of the universal idea, good, bad, or indifferent.

When the universal aspect of the Divine Principle manifesting as Eternal LAW is considered, the ramifications of cause-effect in all actions, feelings and thoughts are seen as part of the operation of that Law. An understanding of that Law as one which "adjusts contraries" in order that harmony shall prevail, shows that all actions, feelings and thoughts should have as a basis the creation of harmony.

Seeing the troubles which we and the world at large have created, and the lack of surety in our minds as to a solution, we must search for the fundamental idea of life which we have held. If the search is made it will be found that, instead of looking at the Divine Principle manifesting in matter as Law, with the special purpose of readjusting the broken harmony, we have thought that behind this Law stands a personal, all-powerful God whose son or reflection in manifestation is man. Hence man has arrogated to himself the role of lawgiver and lawbreaker. Once it is admitted that Law is Divine, meaning selfless, immutable and omnipresent, it can be seen that each manifested aspect is part of it, and, at the same time, a mover of it. Man must move in line with this Divine Law, and not against it, if he would survive.

Therefore we have been told that one of the first things we need to do is to reject all orthodox creeds or beliefs which teach dependence on some power or force outside of man himself.

Secondly, we need to practise self-reliance. If there are no privileges or special gifts in man, each one gets only what he has worked for, good or bad. If this idea can be thoroughly grasped, then with the sense — an awful sense — of our own responsibility for everything that comes to us must be born the energy of the spiritual Will aspect of the Divine Principle. We need to convince ourselves of these facts; then only can we co-operate fully with the Law, without fear.

One final point arises. There is one aspect of the Divine Principle or Law which is only seen when self-responsibility has been grasped, namely, the aspect of Love, the desire for the happiness of all. It is said that Love is the fulcrum that can move the world. Harmony is the opposite of disharmony, love the opposite of hate, willing sacrifice the opposite of selfishness, kindness the opposite of unkindness. The goal at the end of life and of lives has always been pictured as an energizing

love or harmony which spells happiness.

The ageless Wisdom is brought to us by Those who have reached the high stages of life's journey. They *know*, for They have embodied in themselves the LOVE and the SACRIFICE behind the apparently hard, cruel, immutable LAW, which is, in fact, the only rock and sustainer on which life can be built with surety and peace.

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#### A LETTER FROM LOUIS CLAUDE DE SAINT-MARTIN

[An extract reprinted from *The Theosophist*, April 1885.—EDS.]

At the end of the last century, Claude de Saint-Martin (the unknown philosopher) wrote the following lines, which sound like a prediction of what is now on the way towards fulfilment:

“Perhaps the time is not distant, when Europeans will look eagerly at things which they now treat with distrust or contempt. Their scientific edifice is not so firmly established that it will not have some revolutions to undergo. They are now beginning to recognize in organic bodies what they call *elective* attraction — an expression which will carry them a long way, notwithstanding the pains they take not to call the truth by its right name.

“The literary wealth of Asia will come to their aid. When they see the treasures which Indian literature begins to open; when they have studied the Mahabharata — a collection of sixteen epic poems, containing one hundred thousand stanzas on the mythology, religion, morals and history of the Indians, etc., they will be struck with the similarity between the opinions of the East and those of the West on the most important subjects.

“In this way some will seek correspondences of languages in alphabets, inscriptions and other monuments; others may discover the grounds of all the fabulous theogonies of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, and others again will find remarkable coincidences with the dogmas published within the last centuries in Europe by different spiritualists, who will never be suspected of deriving their ideas from India.

“But while waiting to know more of this theosophic wealth of India, from which I expect more light myself, I must admonish my fellow men that it is not in these books more than in any others, to take them beyond speculative philosophy. The radical development of our intimate essence alone can lead us into active spirituality.”

## “ACT FOR AND AS THE SELF”

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vol. IX, pp. 17-18, for December 1938.—EDS.]

In the task of self-preparation to work with the Law and help Nature, the Theosophical student has no better friend in the entire body of the Teachings than the *mantramic* phrase — Act for and as the Self. Simple in its wording, the phrase is profound, needing more than one lifetime of meditation. It contains the key to the whole of the discipline of one who has undertaken to look upon life as probationary. The phrase shows the beginning of the way to the Higher Life, the end of which is the glorious realization of the phrase's full import.

W. Q. Judge, writing about the illusions of life, stated that they are difficult to surmount, but that success can be attained by taking refuge in the Self. This is not done in an hour; even a mental perception of the truth requires time, and the realization of it in the sphere of Maya, wherein we live and act, comes after several lives. This should deject no one. For a score of lives and more we have taken Maya to our bosom as real, and it takes time to free ourselves from her tight hold of our being, because of the habit of thought and of psychic nature already established. Mr. Judge states that “those who with the eye of spiritual wisdom see that the Self is all, begin to reincarnate with that belief ingrained in them.” Among the Theosophical students are those who have hardly perceived, even with the mind, the significance of the truth that the Self is All, that there is but One Self. There are those who repeat with the lips while forgetting in the brain the memorized *mantram*. But when an earnest practitioner has succeeded in stamping his own consciousness with the hall-mark of this truth, and aspires to act out its implications, he encounters the most serious difficulty in discerning how the Self of Spirit or the One Self functions, and in distinguishing the subtle, mysterious and cunning action of the Self of Matter or Maya.

Act for and as the Self: but there are aspects of the One Self in Nature, which includes our fellow men, that puzzle us. It is not difficult for us to see the beauty of the One Self in a gorgeous sunrise, but when the sky is overcast, and the note of desolation is sounded by the siren of the hurricane, when death is busy and destruction stalks, it is difficult to say — this is the Self, the Supreme Spirit. Much more easy it is to see Divinity in the sage and the saint, but what kind of

divinity is there in the prostitute and the profligate? When the student endeavours to practise altruism the practical difficulties in the day-to-day contact with the mass of men and women are many and formidable.

The Self lives in masks; the Spirit robes itself in matter; the Soul is encased in a body. Personality is illusory — be it that of god or man or elemental. To pierce the mask anywhere so that the Self is glimpsed, we have to pierce first the mask which hides the Self within our selves, and hides it so thoroughly and so cunningly that we mistake the mask for the Self. The mask is a composite entity and is like the composite photograph. Behind that entity the Self shines, and until the mind which is the radiant ray of the Self is used to distinguish between the mask which imprisons it and the Self of which it is an emanation, there is no hope for man.

Therefore, as the starting point, it is the mind which has to be educated; we must make the mind perceive the truth, first as an abstraction, that there is but One Self. The myriad aspects of that Self are avenues to glimpse the Self, and they should not be allowed to glamour us. An illustration will make clear the point about the reality which is the Self and the glamour of aspects of the Self: a study of the human eyes and ears, of the organs of speech and of the creative function enables us to understand the nature of man; but when they are mistaken for man, the Embodied Spirit, error ensues. The functioning of these organs helps us to trace the existence of the living actor behind them. The senses and the organs of a corpse do not bring us that knowledge, though we learn from it of another aspect of the One Life. Similarly, through the living organisms of Nature we can go to the God in Nature. Of all the living organisms, our own Spirit-Being is the window through which we see the Light of That which is the mystery of the Supreme. At the lower rung the Mind-Being is the window through which the Light of the Spirit-Being is glimpsed. When we make the thinking mind grasp this truth we begin to act up to it. We will fail and fall, but the assurance is given to us:

The truth is obscured by that which is not true, and therefore all creatures are led astray. But in those for whom knowledge of the true Self has dispersed ignorance, the Supreme, as if lighted by the sun, is revealed. Those whose souls are in the Spirit, whose asylum is in it, who are intent on it and purified by knowledge from all sins, go to that place from which there is no return.

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## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Speaking on "The Economics and Ethics of Liquor Revenue" under the auspices of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Shri Tek Chand, former chairman of the Prohibition Study Team, advised the dry and partially dry States not to relax or scrap prohibition in the interest of the poorer section of the people (*The Times of India*, June 4). He chided Congressmen who all the while paid only lip service to prohibition. It appeared to him, Shri Tek Chand said, that "the so-called pseudo-Gandhians are going to torpedo prohibition—a cause dear to Gandhiji's heart."

He criticized those States which were eager to scrap or relax prohibition in order to collect higher revenue. Statistics would establish that the expansion, development and growth of the dry States had not been retarded because they did not collect liquor revenue. For every rupee that the Government collected, four rupees were collected by the manufacturers and the distributors of liquor.

Almost every country in the world is afflicted with the "demon of drink," yet, in Madame Blavatsky's words,

it is not so much the Karma of the nation, as that of their respective governments, whose Karmic burden is growing heavier and more terrible with every year. This curse and universal incubus, drink, is the direct and legitimate progeny of the Rulers; it is begotten by their greed for money, and FORCED by them on the unfortunate masses. Why, in Karma's name, should the latter be made to suffer here, and hereafter? (*Lucifer*, November 1889)

Elsewhere, H.P.B. wrote:

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. ("Civilization, the Death of Art and Beauty," *She Being Dead Yet Speaketh*, pp. 42-43)

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Attempts to explain the origins and meaning of life are leading some scientists to the idea that life and mind exist in all matter—an idea which is age-old, though relatively new for modern science.

In *Main Currents in Modern Thought* (March-April 1966), physi-

cist Andrew A. Cochran explores and expands on this idea. Scientists have come to realize, he reports, that there is nowhere a sharp dividing line between living and non-living matter. There is instead an unbroken series of small gradations in complexity that bridge the gap. Since there is no dividing line, it is proposed that the ultimate unit of life is a common something that underlies and unifies all life.

The presently accepted view [says Cochran] is that atoms and the fundamental particles of matter are lifeless, and that life appears when the proper atoms are combined in a sufficiently complex organization. An alternative hypothesis is that these particles have a rudimentary degree of life as one of their fundamental properties, and that living organisms are a direct result of this property of matter.

Biological substances, writes Cochran, have an inherent property of life called "directiveness," even on the molecular level. On a higher level, for example, embryologists know that long before a brain develops, the growth of the embryo is following an intelligent plan.

Cochran cites examples of how mind seems to operate in matter. Experiments suggest that matter has a purpose, an intelligence. How can one account for such behaviour if, as science assumes, atoms are lifeless? In one experiment, monochromatic electrons (or photons) passing through two tiny holes close together in a screen are seen to behave in a manner which shows a degree of intelligence. Describing the experiment, Cochran quotes Dr. Henry Margenau of Yale University:

Different atoms owe their characteristic features to a kind of social behaviour of the electrons which may be summed up by saying: One electron knows what the others are doing and acts accordingly. . . . The particles, though initially assumed free, are seen to avoid each other. . . . In a crude manner of speaking, each particle wants to be alone; each runs away when it "smells" the other, and its sense of smell is keener the more nearly its velocity equals the others.

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There are many implications in the idea outlined above, that life and mind pervade all matter. One which Curtis Fuller discusses in the May 1967 issue of *Fate* is its relevance as a possible explanation for some kinds of psychic phenomena:

What they [Dr. Henry Margenau and Andrew Cochran] are saying in other language is that we are all of us — humans and inanimate matter, the distant stars of other universes and the thin gases of interstellar space itself — somehow all linked in a gigantic matrix or field. And moreover, *all* of the objects in this constellation are alive in varying degree and *all* have a degree of mind and “directiveness” or “purposiveness.”

If this be true, many of the happenings that we call psychic events spring into focus. The carelessly used term “universal mind” takes on new dimensions. If all minds are linked in some kind of field, telepathy, for instance, is more readily explained. So are problems of psychokinesis and clairvoyance.

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“*Fruits and grain, unknown to Earth to that day, were brought by the ‘Lords of Wisdom’ for the benefit of those they ruled — from other lokas (spheres),*” says an Occult Commentary (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 373). H.P.B. specifically mentions wheat as having been brought down by the “gods.” “It is the Kabiri [the Instructors of mankind] who are credited with having revealed, by *producing* corn or wheat, the great boon of agriculture” (*S.D.*, II. 364). “This will be doubted and denied in our proud generation,” adds H.P.B. Yet the fact remains that the origin of the remote wild differentiated forms of cultivated wheat has not so far been definitely traced by botanists, and they will continue to remain in the dark till the hints given by H.P.B. and W. Q. Judge are examined.

*News from Israel* for March 15 contains an article on “The Romantic Discovery of Wild Wheat.” For centuries, scientists had been looking in vain for answers to these questions: “What was the wild form of wheat which had served as the starting point for prehistoric man? What was the true character of this plant and how far had man, by cultivating it for thousands of years, caused it to deviate from its original habits?” In 1906, Aaron Aaronsohn, a young farmer from Zihron Yaakov, discovered wheat growing wild on the slopes of the mountains of Upper Galilee. Later, botanists, notably the Russian authority Vavilov, discredited Aaronsohn’s theory that the wild wheat which he had found, and which was afterwards discovered in northern Iraq, Persia, Asia Minor and Armenia, could have been the ancestor of modern wheat. He maintained that studies of ancient finds had failed

to reveal transitional forms between wild wheat and the earliest cultivated species.

Dr. David V. Zaitschek, a Jerusalem botanist working on the origin of cultivated cereals, now believes that the wheat found in the Judæan Desert caves in 1916 is the "missing link" between the wild two-grained wheat discovered in Palestine by Aaronsohn and the primitive hard wheat species cultivated by farmers in that region for hundreds of years.

What the investigators are overlooking is that certain species of plants, such as wheat, as also of animals, "could not have had their differentiation in this chain of globes, but must have been produced and finished in some other from which they were brought over into this" (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 141). The forms thus brought over carry on their evolution and undergo transformation first in the astral regions, before the gross physical stage is reached. There is many an undiscoverable "missing link" for modern science, which takes only physical evolution into account.

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Some interesting conclusions can be drawn from the World Health Organization's list of the 10 leading causes of death in the industrially advanced and the developing countries. (For the WHO report on the health situation in the world, see "In the Light of Theosophy," May 1967.)

The advanced countries are supposed to be examples of "progress." Their people are healthier, better fed, clothed and housed, and parasitic and infectious diseases do not afflict them to the same extent they do the populations of the developing countries. But does this mean that those living in the advanced countries are free from fear, anxiety and insecurity? On the contrary, their condition is just as precarious. In the age-group 1-45, the most wide-spread cause of death is accidents, a purely man-made visitation. Cancer, heart diseases and suicide are other major causes, all of them attributable, at least indirectly, to the nervous tension, hurry and bustle without which, paradoxically, "progress" does not seem possible.

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Why do some people always seem to attract mishaps? It is estimated by researchers that about one person in every four is accident-prone to some degree. At work, on the roads, in the home, wherever they may be, such people endanger their own safety, as also that of others.

The world's leading authority in this comparatively recent field of investigation is German-born Dr. Hans Hahn, Professor of Psychology at the Transylvania College in Lexington, Kentucky, U.S.A. He has worked on the problem for over 35 years, and his investigations suggest that accident-proneness is inborn and incurable (*Humanist*, September 1966). He has devised a number of tests to single out men and women from all walks of life who have this unhappy tendency, and believes that it is far easier and more effective to remove the accident-prone from conditions where accidents might occur than to try to cure them of their condition. "I believe firmly that the margin of safety is a deeply rooted trait that shows up accident-proneness in the form of carelessness," says the expert. He has also designed tests to gauge a person's staying power when danger threatens or confusion reigns.

With this question of accident-proneness is connected the entire subject of karmic propensity as also the doctrine of the elementals and the teaching of the astral body. The Karma of past lives makes some people literally *attract* accidents to themselves. W. Q. Judge in "The Moral Law of Compensation" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 6*) gives the rationale of the operation of this law — how and why the elementals bring continual disaster to certain individuals.

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