

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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A DANGEROUS WAY

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The whole difficulty springs from the common tendency to draw conclusions from insufficient premises, and play the oracle before ridding oneself of that most stupefying of all psychic anaesthetics
—IGNORANCE.

—H.P.B.

ONE OF THE INDIRECT RESULTS of the sustained efforts to promulgate Theosophy has been to awaken in an increasing number of people the desire to abandon the life of the senses and to seek the way of life of the Soul. Disgusted with a mere round of sensuous gratification through the weeks and the months, quickened by the sorrows whose meaning no sectarian religion or materialistic science can explain, men and women in both hemispheres have adopted what they call “a life of the soul.” Many among them rush into adopting modes of existence which are unsuited to them. We know of numerous Westerners who have come to India looking for a Master, not at all knowing who or what a Mahatma may be! Others have run North and South, to live in this Ashram or that, trying to develop the “faculty of feeling the current of peace” to be found there. From place to place they have wandered trying to evaluate the extent or the depth of Peace and the nature of the Force, at one centre and another. Psychic intoxication has resulted, and many such intoxicated people have been absorbed in a life of “yoga” — let us name it the yoga of idleness. There are thousands of beggars in India who call themselves fakirs and sannyasis, and these psychically intoxicated ones have joined the ranks of such “sannyasis” without even the task of begging their livelihood. These ashramites contribute in money,

and food and shelter are provided for them. Those who do not become addicts of this kind of psychic intoxicant after sampling "the atmosphere" of one place and another are sorely disappointed, almost nauseated, and want to return either to their sectarian creed and become orthodox religionists, or to a sensuous life which they call normal and ordinary.

And just as these Westerners feel the fascination of *asana*, *Pranayama*, *dhyana*, of which they speak glibly without any knowledge, so too are there Easterners who fall prey to the practice of spiritism leading to necromancy, or of the occult arts — clairvoyance, astrology, palmistry and the like — dangerous weapons in the hands of mediums or sensitives who mostly ply a trade in giving messages from the dead or telling the future; thus "educated" Indians also become psychically intoxicated under the influence of Western circles and séances. For both, Easterner or Westerner, loss of mental clarity, emotional unbalance and bodily nervousness ensue.

To such seekers the plan of soul life taught in Theosophy looks tedious, irksome and long. The Ethics of Theosophy are not relished, the study of its philosophy looks profitless. When they are told to sit for meditation their conceit is tickled in a subtle way which pleases them. On the other hand, if they begin to study Theosophical metaphysics they soon find out what minds they have, even if they be wandering minds! Similarly, if they begin to apply and to practise Theosophical ethics they soon come upon the whole host of uncurbed emotions, petty meannesses, selfishnesses. The glib talk of renouncing the ordinary life is soon revealed by Theosophy to be childish prattle when not spiritually dangerous neglect of congenital duties.

Among students of Theosophy also there are mistaken enthusiasts who want to put the cart before the horse — who desire to sacrifice their all without ascertaining what they have to sacrifice; who aspire to serve humanity when the small plain duties of life remain unfulfilled; who plan to teach when learning has hardly begun; and so on.

When people — students of Theosophy or others — desire to "build" their seats for meditation according to the sixth chapter of the *Gita*, and sit gazing "at the tip of the nose," they have not learnt the art of performing duties and actions taught in the five preceding discourses. How many times have we not come across men and women earnestly enquiring about *asana* and *pranayama*, posture and breathing for meditation, when the two preliminary qualifications given in Patanjali's *Yoga-*

Sutras — to eliminate certain vices and to build certain virtues, have not been considered at all!

Right Occultism for men and women of our cycle should begin with a careful study and full recognition of the instructions given by H.P.B. in *The Key to Theosophy*, in Sections XII to XIV. Then should follow a sustained study of W. Q. Judge's *Letters That Have Helped Me*. To try to run before one has begun to walk is to endanger one's limbs. To cultivate one constituent of one's being at the expense of others, even when this is inadvertently done, is disastrous, for true Occultism does not create lop-sided men and women but well-balanced personalities. Students of Theosophy owe it to themselves as to the Science which they are learning to practise, to set a correct example of ordered progression. To unite by the power of a study of Theosophy and of its right practice is the task before all who aspire to sit at the feet of the Blessed Masters of H.P.B. One of Them wrote:

Self-personality, vanity and conceit harboured in the *higher* principles are enormously more dangerous than the same defects inherent only in the lower physical nature of man. They are the breakers against which the cause of chelaship, in its probationary stage, is sure to be dashed to pieces unless the would-be disciple carries with him the white shield of perfect confidence and trust in those he would seek out through mount and vale to guide him safely toward the light of Knowledge. The world moves and lives under the shadow of the deadly upas-tree of Evil; yet its dripping is dangerous to, and can reach only those whose higher and middle natures are as much susceptible of infection as their lower one. Its venomous seed can germinate but in a willing, well-prepared soil.

BELIEVERS IN, and the defenders of, the Secret Doctrine, however, will have to bear the accusation of madness *and worse*, as philosophically as for long years already the writer has done. Whenever a Theosophist is taxed with insanity, he ought to reply by quoting from Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*. "By opening so freely their lunatic asylums to their supposed madmen, men only seek to assure each other that they are not themselves mad."

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 676

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

[We reprint below the greater portion of H.P.B.'s opening editorial in Vol. I of *Lucifer* (September 1887).—EDS.]

WHAT'S in a name? Very often there is more in it than the profane is prepared to understand, or the learned mystic to explain. It is an invisible, secret, but very potential influence that every name carries about with it and "leaveth wherever it goeth." Carlyle thought that "there is much, nay, almost all, in names." "Could I unfold the influence of names, which are the most important of all clothings, I were a second great Trismegistus," he writes.

The name or title of a magazine started with a definite object, is, therefore, all important; for it is, indeed, the invisible seedgrain, which will either grow "to be an all-overshadowing tree" on the fruits of which must depend the nature of the results brought about by the said object, or the tree will wither and die. These considerations show that the name of the present magazine — rather equivocal to orthodox Christian ears — is due to no careless selection, but arose in consequence of much thinking over its fitness, and was adopted as the best symbol to express that object and the results in view.

Now, the first and most important, if not the sole object of the magazine, is expressed in the line from the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, on its title page. It is to bring light to "the hidden things of darkness" (iv. 5); to show in their true aspect and their original real meaning things and names, men and their doings and customs; it is finally to fight prejudice, hypocrisy and shams in every nation, in every class of Society, as in every department of life. The task is a laborious one, but it is neither impracticable nor useless, if even as an experiment.

Thus, for an attempt of such nature, no better title could ever be found than the one chosen. "Lucifer" is the pale morning-star, the precursor of the full blaze of the noon-day sun — the "Eosphoros" of the Greeks. It shines timidly at dawn to gather forces and dazzle the eye after sunset as its own brother "Hesperos" — the radiant evening star, or the planet Venus. No fitter symbol exists for the proposed work — that of throwing a ray of truth on everything hidden by the darkness of prejudice, by social or religious misconceptions; especially by that idiotic routine in life, which, once that a certain action, a thing, a name, has been branded by slanderous inventions, however unjust, makes

respectable people, so called, turn away shiveringly, refusing to even look at it from any other aspect than the one sanctioned by public opinion. Such an endeavour, then, to force the weak-hearted to look truth straight in the face, is helped most efficaciously by a title belonging to the category of branded names.

Piously inclined readers may argue that "Lucifer" is accepted by all the churches as one of the many names of the Devil. According to Milton's superb fiction, Lucifer is *Satan*, the "rebellious" angel, the enemy of God and man. If one analyses his rebellion, however, it will be found of no worse nature than an assertion of free-will and independent thought, as if Lucifer had been born in the XIXth century. This epithet of "rebellious" is a theological calumny, on a par with that other slander of God by the Predestinarians, one that makes of deity an "Almighty" fiend worse than the "rebellious" Spirit himself; "an omnipotent Devil desiring to be "complimented" as all-merciful when he is exerting the most fiendish cruelty, as put by J. Cotter Morrison. Both the foreordaining and predestining fiend-God and his subordinate agent are of human invention; they are two of the most morally repulsive and horrible theological dogmas that the nightmares of light-hating monks have ever evolved out of their unclean fancies.

They date from the Mediaeval age, the period of mental obscuration, during which most of the present prejudices and superstitions have been forcibly inoculated on the human mind, so as to have become nearly ineradicable in some cases, one of which is the present prejudice now under discussion.

So deeply rooted, indeed, is this preconception and aversion to the name of Lucifer — meaning no worse than "light-bringer" (from *lux*, *lucis*, "light," and *ferre* "to bring")¹ — even among the educated classes, that by adopting it for the title of their magazine the editors have the prospect of a long strife with public prejudice before them. So absurd and ridiculous is that prejudice, indeed, that no one has seemed to ever ask himself the question, how came Satan to be called a *light-bringer*, unless the silvery rays of the morning-star can in any way be made suggestive of the glare of the infernal flames. It is simply, as Henderson showed, "one of those gross perversions of sacred writ which so exten-

¹ "It was Gregory the Great who was the first to apply this passage of Isaiah, 'How art thou fallen from Heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning,' etc., to Satan, and ever since the bold metaphor of the prophet, which referred, after all, but to an Assyrian king inimical to the Israelites, has been applied to the Devil."

sively obtain, and which are to be traced to a proneness to seek for more in a given passage than it really contains — a disposition to be influenced by sound rather than sense, and an implicit faith in received interpretation” — which is not quite one of the weaknesses of our present age. Nevertheless, the prejudice is there, to the shame of our century.

This cannot be helped. The two editors would hold themselves as recreants in their own sight, as traitors to the very spirit of the proposed work, were they to yield and cry craven before the danger. If one would fight prejudice, and brush off the ugly cobwebs of superstition and materialism alike from the noblest ideals of our forefathers, one has to prepare for opposition. “The crown of the reformer and the innovator is a crown of thorns” indeed. If one would rescue Truth in all her chaste nudity from the almost bottomless well into which she has been hurled by cant and hypocritical propriety, one should not hesitate to descend into the dark, gaping pit of that well. No matter how badly the blind bats — the dwellers in darkness, and the haters of light — may treat in their gloomy abode the intruder, unless one is the first to show the spirit and courage he preaches to others, he must be justly held as a hypocrite and a seceder from his own principles. . . .

A glimpse into the real and primitive character of Lucifer can do men no harm and may, perchance, cure them of a bit of ridiculous prejudice. They ought to study their Homer and Hesiod’s *Theogony* if they would do justice to Lucifer, “*Eosphoros and Hesperos*,” the Morning and the Evening beautiful star. If there are more useful things to do in this life than “whitewash mythological characters,” to slander and blacken them is, at least, as useless, and shows, moreover, a narrow-mindedness which can do honour to no one.

To object to the title of LUCIFER, only because its “associations are so dreadful,” is pardonable — if it can be pardonable in any case — only in an ignorant American missionary of some dissenting sect, in one whose natural laziness and lack of education led him to prefer ploughing the minds of heathens, as ignorant as he is himself, to the more profitable, but rather more arduous, process of ploughing the fields of his own father’s farm. In the English clergy, however, who all receive a more or less classical education, and are, therefore, supposed to be acquainted with the *ins* and *outs* of theological sophistry and casuistry, this kind of opposition is absolutely unpardonable. It not only smacks of hypocrisy and deceit, but places them directly on a lower moral level than him they call the apostate angel. By endeavouring to

show the theological Lucifer, fallen through the idea that

“To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell;
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven,”

they are virtually putting into practice the supposed crime they would fain accuse him of. They prefer reigning over the spirit of the masses by means of a pernicious dark LIE, productive of many an evil, than serve heaven by serving TRUTH. Such practices are worthy only of the Jesuits.

But their sacred writ is the first to contradict their interpretations and the association of Lucifer, the Morning Star, with Satan. Chapter xxii of *Revelation*, verse 16th, says, “I Jesus . . . am the root . . . and the bright and morning star”: hence Eosphoros, or the Latin Lucifer. The opprobrium attached to this name is of such a very late date, that the Roman Church found itself forced to screen the theological slander behind a two-sided interpretation — as usual. Christ, we are told, is the “Morning Star,” the *divine* Lucifer; and Satan the *usurpator* of the *Verbum*, the “infernal Lucifer.”² “The great Archangel Michael, the conqueror of Satan, is identical in paganism³ with Mercury-Mithra, to whom, after defending the Sun (symbolical of God) from the attacks of Venus-Lucifer, was given the possession of this planet, *et datus est ei locus Luciferi*. And since the Archangel Michael is the ‘Angel of the Face,’ and ‘the Vicar of the *Verbum*’ he is now considered in the Roman Church as the regent of that planet Venus which ‘the vanquished fiend had usurped!’” *Angelus faciei Dei sedem superbi humilis obtinuit*, says Cornelius à Lapide (in Vol. VI, p. 229).

This gives the reason why one of the early Popes was called Lucifer, as Yonge and ecclesiastical records prove. It thus follows that the title chosen for our magazine is as much associated with divine and pious ideas as with the supposed rebellion of the hero of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. By choosing it, *we throw the first ray of light and truth* on a ridiculous prejudice which ought to have no room made for it in this our “age of facts and discovery.” We work for true Religion and Science, in the interest of fact as against fiction and prejudice. It is our duty, as it is that of physical Science — professedly its mission — to throw light on facts in Nature hitherto surrounded by the darkness of ignorance. And since ignorance is justly regarded as the chief promoter of

² Mirville’s *Memoires* to the Academy of France, Vol. IV, quoting Cardinal Ventura.

³ Which paganism has passed long millenniums, it would seem, in *copying beforehand* Christian dogmas to come.

superstition, that work is, therefore, a noble and beneficent work. But natural Sciences are only one aspect of SCIENCE and TRUTH. Psychological and moral Sciences, or theosophy, the knowledge of divine truth, wheresoever found, are still more important in human affairs, and real Science should not be limited simply to the physical aspect of life and nature. Science is an abstract of every fact, a comprehension of every truth within the scope of human research and intelligence. "Shakespeare's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy" (Coleridge), has proved more beneficent to the true philosopher in the study of the human heart — therefore, in the promotion of truth — than the more accurate, but certainly less deep, science of any Fellow of the Royal Institution.

Those readers, however, who do not find themselves convinced that the Church had no right to throw a slur upon a beautiful star, and that it did so through a mere necessity of accounting for one of its numerous loans from Paganism with all its poetical conceptions of the truths in Nature, are asked to read our article, "The History of a Planet."⁴ Perhaps, after its perusal, they will see how far Dupuis was justified in asserting that "all the theologies have their origin in astronomy." With the modern Orientalists every myth is *solar*. This is one more prejudice, and a preconception in favour of materialism and physical science. It will be one of our duties to combat it with much of the rest.

⁴ Reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, May 1974.—Eds.

Without the Way, there is no going,
Without the Truth, there is no knowing,
Without the Life, there is no living.

THOMAS A KEMPIS

SOME NOTES ON DEITY

[Babu Raj Narain Bose of the Adi Brahma Samaj wrote on "The God-Idea" in *The Theosophist* for December 1883, to which the following editorial notes were appended by H. P. Blavatsky.

—EDS.]

FOLLOWERS of all religions can be and have always counted among their numbers students of the subject in question, namely — Occultism.

We are forced to reply to our venerable friend that if the Theists claim to go "further" the Theosophists (of that school, at any rate, to which the writer belongs) claim to go *deeper*. Rejecting all *Externals* as true guides, they accept but the *Internal*, the invisible, the never to be described by any adjective or human qualification. And going deeper they reject the idea of "the soul of the soul" — *anima*; from which the word *animal* is derived. For us there is no *over-soul* or *under-soul*; but only ONE — *substance*: the last word being used in the sense Spinoza attaches to it; calling it the ONE *Existence*, we cannot limit its significance and dwarf it to the qualification "over"; but we apply it to the universal, ubiquitous Presence, rejecting the word "Being," and replacing it with "*All-Being*." Our Deity as the "God" of Spinoza and of the true Adwaitee — neither *thinks*, nor *creates*, for it is *All-thought* and *All-creation*. We say with Spinoza — who repeated in another key but what the Esoteric doctrine of the Upanishads teaches: "Extension is visible Thought; Thought is visible Extension." For Theosophists of our school the Deity is a UNITY in which all other units in their infinite variety merge and from which they are indistinguishable — except in the prism of theistic *Maya*. The individual drops of the curling waves of the universal Ocean have no independent existence. In short, while the Theist proclaims his God a gigantic universal BEING, the Theosophist declares with Heraclitus, as quoted by a modern author, that the ONE Absolute is not Being — but *becoming*: the ever-developing, cyclic evolution, the Perpetual Motion of Nature visible and invisible — moving, and breathing even during its long Pralayic Sleep.

It is easy to prove that the *Upanishads* do not teach belief in a *personal* God — with humanly conceived attributes, etc. *Iswar* is not mentioned in the *Upanishads* as a personal noun. On the other hand we see *Guhya Adesa*, the strictest preservation of the secrecy of the doctrines, constantly urged, the *Upanishads* showing in their very name

that the doctrines taught were never revealed but to the Initiates. At the very outset the seeker after knowledge of Brahma is enjoined to repair to a guru (*tad vijijnasartham sa guru mevavigachchet*), which is simply unmeaning if a literal interpretation of the text was capable of conveying the intended sense. This quotation from the *Upanishad*, we may add, is adopted by the Brahmoe of the Adi Samaj and finds a place in their *Brahma Dharma Grantha*, compiled by the Pradhanacharya.

We may be allowed to point out that we do not maintain that Parabrahm is absolutely without *any guna*, for *Presence* itself is a *guna*, but that it is beyond the three *gunas* — *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*.

When the term Logos, Verbum, Vach, the mystic *divine voice* of every nation and philosophy comes to be better understood, then only will come the first glimmering of the Dawn of one Universal Religion. *Logos* was never *human* reason with us.

We are afraid some misapprehension exists in our correspondent's mind as to what "Theosophic Yoga" is. Raja Janaka was a Theosophic Yogi. See in this connection Sankara's Commentaries on *Bhagavad-Gita*.

SUPREME beyond the power of speech to express, Brahman may yet be apprehended by the eye of pure illumination.

Though one, Brahman is the cause of the many. There is no other cause. And yet Brahman is independent of the law of causation. It is ignorance that causes us to identify ourselves with the body, the ego, the senses, or anything that is not the Atman. He is a wise man who overcomes this ignorance by devotion to the Atman.

When a man follows the way of the world, or the way of the flesh, or the way of tradition, knowledge of Reality cannot arise in him.

The wise say that this threefold way is like an iron chain, binding the feet of him who aspires to escape from the prison-house of this world. He who frees himself from the chain achieves Deliverance.

THE TEACHINGS OF THEOSOPHY

Education enthrones skepticism, but imprisons spirituality. You can do immense good by helping to give the Western nations a secure basis upon which to reconstitute their crumbling faith. And what they need is the evidence that Asiatic psychology alone supplies.

—MAHATMA K.H.

THERE ARE several branches of knowledge covering the various activities that man may want to pursue. To be a man of the world, one has to be familiar with a type of knowledge which is distinct from that required by the man of science or the man of learning. The composer of music avails himself of that stratum of knowledge which is different from the one drawn upon by the poet or the sculptor. The mathematician and the astronomer, the alchemist and the delver in magic lore have teachings and obey a discipline of which the ordinary man knows nothing and cares even less.

Each of these branches of learning has its utility, but none can take the man anywhere near his divine source and origin. Not one of these can reveal to man his beginnings or the why of his birth and the whither of his end. Is he projected on to this earth through a chance collision of the atoms? Did a god in a far-off heaven fashion his life of want and failure and misery? Why should lust and greed and anger hold him in bondage and make him do base things seemingly against his will? Is it man's destiny that he as a unit should snuff out or be snuffed out by other units in his struggle for existence? Is virtue all that powerful if more often than not it is seen bending its knees to vice? To answer queries and doubts such as these man needs to imbibe a knowledge which unfortunately is not available in institutes of learning except as a speculative venture into the unknown. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles — right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism — have to be found, experimented with and applied to life. A knowledge which can furnish answers to such problems is vital, and before it all other knowledge must appear petty and jejune.

Theosophy teaches that man as we know him has been on earth for 18 million years and a little over. It was in that far-off beginning that the school of life took on its pupil-souls. But long before the School started, the preparatory work must have gone on — the Teachers must

have been assembled and chosen, the Rules and Instructions framed and syllabuses kept ready suited to the various cycles through which humanity had to pass. Since these Teachings are but the formulations of Truth, the Teachers must have been trained in the applications of the Doctrine as also in the art of preserving the Truths across dark ages and periods of obscurity. In historical times, this School worked in secrecy until in the 19th century it broke its silence of centuries in order that its teachings might, if promulgated, induce men to a saner way of thought and action.

Blind belief, superstition and creedal fanaticism were separating man from man while the votaries of orthodox religions were fighting those of modern science, pushing man further into the paths of error. To achieve some degree of success in the effort to open men's minds to correct perception, they had to be weaned away from superstition, fanaticism and falsehoods. Wrong ideas based on false concepts have been the bane of men for centuries. The building up of the gargantuan image of a god made in the likeness of man with all the foibles of man multiplied a hundredfold, was a heinous crime perpetrated against humanity. A god who could be roused to anger and therefore could be appeased by prayers and sacrifices (both animal and human) is still believed in by masses of men. The idea of a god — some describe him as a youth seated on a lotus throne, others as indwelling in their images of stone and clay — has to be erased and at the same time replaced by the true concept of an infinite, impersonal and all-pervasive god-principle closer to man than hands and feet, nearer to him than breathing. When the truth of this dawns upon the man, he no longer believes that prayers or petitions on bended knees can wipe off the taint of misdeeds or favour him with an unmerited boon. No litanies can turn a sleeping fool into an awakened wizard, nor will prostrations and sacrificial rites bring rains when the monsoon fails.

If there is no God in high heaven, what is there which, being superior to man and all creation, dispenses glory or gloom and holds the balance of justice? The answer is that there is an absolute LAW which guides and governs all manifestation. Wherever life manifests and evolution runs its course, there, within that life — be it atom, molecule, moneron or man — resides the Spiritual Essence that some call God and others Law. This Law is a conscious living entity. Below the kingdom of man, it gives to nature its laws. In the human kingdom, it takes count of motive and intent. It resides in the hearts of all, and, being conscious and not

blind, it can distinguish between the action of the infant and of the idiot on the one hand and the same action done with deliberation by an awakened intellect on the other. What is important to understand is that action anywhere is produced and preceded by internal feeling or emotion, will or volition, and thought or mind. As with man, so with the manifested universe. Nature, even in its infinitesimal parts, is a physical something of more or less density which provides an area of experience to that which resides within and supplies the motivating energy. Thus, the Kosmos taken as a vast whole is seen to advantage as variegated shapes and forms of matter used by a vast and numerous host of sentient beings who vary in degrees of consciousness and of intelligence.

For the man, the judge, jury and executioner are all within. In the ultimate analysis, it is he himself in his inmost essence, and most times unbeknown to the outer man, who dispenses justice with an impartial hand. He himself is god and man and animal and is subject to the great laws that reign supreme in each domain and part of his being.

In the lower kingdoms, evolution moves its appointed course by natural impulse. There is no deviation from the set programme, for there is no choice. Man can to some extent interfere with, retard or accelerate this movement and he may people his current in space with elements coloured with his good or evil thoughts and intentions.

It is only in man that the power to judge and discriminate between moral values exists. He can rise to the plane where sit the gods — the *Dhyanis*, the rulers of our earth. He can on the other hand lend the strength of his mind and ideation to the animal within him and so take the road of ignominy and failure. His evolution is thus through self-induced ways and means, checked by karma. Karma itself is Law — intelligent, conscious, all-pervasive. Its chief function is not punitive, but lies in the restoration of broken harmony. Any action that violates unity or preaches by word and example unbrotherliness in any form, on any plane and through any media, invites its reaction.

Unless the man acknowledge the existence of Universal Brotherhood, he cannot understand the basis of morality and will not be able to come out from among the vast throng of men and become separate.

LEARNING TO READ WITH MR. JUDGE

To those of us who love reading it is always interesting to hear other people speak of it, very specially Mr. Judge, though he does so only occasionally. That he read deeply himself is self-evident; indeed he began to do so at the tender age of seven. We are told that during convalescence from a strange illness the child whom no one even knew to be able to read was found "devouring the contents of all the books he could obtain, relating to Mesmerism, Phrenology, Character-Reading, Religion, Magic, Rosicrucianism, and deeply absorbed in the Book of Revelation, trying to discover its real meaning."¹

Such reading as this, of course, pertains to the occult side of Mr. Judge's life; it is too recondite to be followed up in the present article. But on a foundation so laid his stand was certain — reading would, for him, be always a means of inner development. Naturally indeed would he, in later years, decry "the prevalent habit of reading trashy and sensational literature, both in newspaper and other form," as detrimental to this essential process. It "stupefies and degrades the mind," he warns, "wastes time and energy," both of which were in his own case unalterably dedicated to the cause of Theosophy. The motive for such reading he saw as lamentable. It was "similar to that which ends in the ruin of a dipsomaniac: a desire to deaden the personal consciousness . . . simply the alcohol habit removed to another plane" (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 63). Our present-day bookstalls laden with sensational paperbacks, the illustrated covers usually deliberately erotic, amply confirm this, do they not? And while it can "deaden," such reading at the same time incites to violence.

Motive, we know, was basic with Mr. Judge. All through his writings he lays the greatest possible stress on it. So our motive for reading, as for everything else, must be the right one, and it is set before us in one of his Editorials in the *Path*: "To direct inquiring minds . . . to hold out the possibility of finding the answer to the burning questions that vex the human soul."

Now, good fiction can, to some extent, do this. Mr. Judge does not seem to rule it out entirely. It is of interest to note that at one time he intended that a friend of his should write an occult novel, from incidents and material to be furnished by himself. The outlines of it

¹ *Letters That Have Helped Me*, Semicentennial Edition, p, 262.

may be found in the American Edition of *Letters That Have Helped Me* already referred to.

Never, we may be sure, would Mr. Judge read casually merely to while away an empty half-hour. In fact we have a glimpse of him doing just the opposite during his visit to London in 1884. In a letter to a friend he describes his daytime sight-seeing and evening visits — “except last eve,” he says, “when I was home at 9.15, read the *Theosophist* till 11 and then to bed” (*Ibid.*, p. 190). Those of us who have experienced that rather tedious hiatus between returning tired to a hotel and getting to bed will know how easy it is to pick up a newspaper or a thriller. Not so Mr. Judge, in whose mind Theosophy was always uppermost.

Sometimes the habit of worthwhile reading has to be deliberately acquired. One cannot assume that it will always come naturally, especially if good guidance has been lacking in childhood. So Mr. Judge urges effort — “compelling yourself to serious reading and thinking, even for a short time each day. If persisted in, this will gradually change the mental action” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 127). This sort of change would be understandable, but he seems to have a deeper one in mind when he says in another letter, “The best advice I ever saw was to read holy books or whatever books tend to elevate yourself, as you have found by experience. . . . All these *are instinct with a life of their own* which changes the vibrations. Vibration is the key to it all.” (*Ibid.*, p. 44)

At the opposite pole from this purposeful effort he warns against a too-wide range of careless reading, since “a few books well read, well analysed and thoroughly digested, are better than many books read over once” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 66). For those who already have the bent for serious reading, possibly inquirers into Theosophy, he has, naturally, a special word. “I recommend you to read and digest such of our books as you can conveniently procure” (*Letters*, p. 106). And the native common sense that always distinguished him comes out markedly in the simple observation, “Of course, in Theosophy, as in any other Science, one understands more as one reads more.” (*Ibid.*)

Mr. Judge's attitude to reading is clearly expressed in his letter to the Theosophical Publication Society (London), when it rejected his fine *Epitome of Theosophy* on the grounds that “the treatment was entirely too ‘deep’ for the average mind.”² Rejecting in his turn the

² See introductory “Historical Note” to the *Epitome*, p. 4.

Society's "weak and erroneous policy," he, a true teacher, urged "the pressing needs of earnest minds." "They want no padding in their search for truth," he wrote. "They are perfectly able to grasp that which you call 'too advanced'" (*Letters*, p. 83). Here is an instance of the challenge of the printed word which a teacher of the right sort encourages students to take up. "If any sincere reader grasp it" (*i.e.*, the *Epitome*), "he will have food for his reflection of the sort needed." Fortunately, Mr. Judge prevailed. The *Epitome*, as we now have it, and prize it, was published. Mr. Judge did not underestimate his students. As he says elsewhere (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 66), "They have learned how all that part of a book which they clearly understand at first is already their own, and that the rest, which is not so clear or quite obscure, is the portion they are to study, so that it also, if found true, may become an integral part of their constant thought."

So, "Forward on the path of knowledge" (*Letters*, p. 86). And if what we read eludes at present our mental grasp, if for the time being we cannot master these high themes, "we can have a patient trust in the processes of evolution and the Law... living up to our highest intuitions ourselves." (*Letters*, p. 30)

Again comes the encouragement of the true teacher. "If you will look for wisdom you will get it sure" (*Letters*, p. 136). Again, too, the necessary corollary, the warning that "the power to know does not come from book-study" (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 172). Too many are inclined to think so. Perhaps this illusion is fostered by the cramming for examinations. We sit down to our question-papers full of matter, well informed. A few years afterwards, how much of this remains with us?

"What is study?" asks Mr. Judge. "It is not the mere reading of books, but rather long, earnest, careful thought upon that which we have taken up" (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 58). Such thought must supplement our reading. We have not *learnt* to read unless such thought results from it. "I was reading a book —" writes Mr. Judge to Jasper Niemand. Note how he continues: "Reading a book and looking around within myself to see how I could enlarge my idea of brotherhood" (*Letters*, p. 7). That was the form *his* reading took. Looking around within himself was the vital part of it. Needless to say, his inner gaze was fastened upon the basic principles of Theosophy. And his immediate reaction was the urge to put it more perfectly into practice.

Nowhere in his writings does Mr. Judge present us with a scholastic

list of "Books to be read," though he commends "the study of the works of those who in the past have trodden this path and found out what is the real and what is not" (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 172-73). But over and over again he exalts and (may not we say?) rejoices in the *Bhagavad-Gita* as the perfect compendium of all Wisdom and all Truth. Students of Theosophy need no reminder of his oft-quoted eulogy of it: "Inquirers ought to read the *Bhagavad-Gita*. It will give them food for centuries if they read with spiritual eyes at all. Underneath its shell is the living spirit that will light us all. I read it ten times before I saw things that I did not see at first. In the night the ideas contained in it are digested and returned partly next day to the mind. It is the study of adepts." (*Letters*, p. 24)

Taking up the same rich theme in another letter, he writes, "I would therefore advise you to study and meditate over the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is a book that has done me more good than all others in the whole range of books, and is the one that can be studied all the time" (*Letters*, p. 114). And in *The Heart Doctrine* (p. 82), in his article on "Theosophical Study and Work," he says: "For those who desire to find the highest ethics and philosophy condensed in one book, I would commend the *Bhagavad-Gita*." His own Notes on this spiritual classic account for something of the mystic power in it. "A mighty spirit moves through the pages of the *Bhagavad-Gita*....Appealing alike to the warrior and the philosopher, it shows to the one the righteousness of lawful action, and to the other the calmness which results to him who has reached inaction through action." (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 39)

Since the days when Mr. Judge thus wrote and taught in the fateful last quarter of the last century, how richly has the stock of reading-matter for students of Theosophy been increased, thanks largely to himself! Articles from *The Path* and other sources have been brought together in *Vernal Blooms* and *The Heart Doctrine* and in a number of U.L.T. Pamphlets; they are frequently reprinted, too, in this and other Theosophical magazines, as are also his addresses to various Conferences pertaining to the early days of the Movement. All this is invaluable reading for us as we go forward into the correspondingly fateful last quarter of our own century, especially if our mental attitude is that which is advocated by Mr. Judge, namely, of one who "hears the word and endeavours to assimilate the meaning underneath; and if he cannot understand he lays it aside for a better time, while he presently endeav-

ours to understand what he can." (*Letters*, p. 52)

We are certainly given every aid to such understanding, both in our Lodge Meetings and classes and in the books and magazines provided for us. All of us who have come thus far on the path of studentship should be able whole-heartedly to echo Mr. Judge's words: "There is no help like association with those who think as we do, or like the reading of good books" (*Letters*, p. 44). And he himself, still a living Teacher in his writings, can always be looked to for present help in both these forms.

GROW LIKE THE FLOWER

THE MAIN THING is to keep ourselves energized by right study and real devotion. The first illumines our intelligence, the second brings peace and power to the heart. Both must go together to be effective. True progress is achieved by the spirit of self-sacrifice, and must be looked for in our steady, continuous and *even* attempt to live our best and highest, proceeding from within without. To be sacrificing spasmodically heightens our personality in our eyes; we fancy we are somebody and say to ourselves, "What a nice person I am to do this, or to do that!" But if we are evenly and continuously engaged in Work which is Theirs, or in service which is our fellowmen's, we get little time to ruminate upon ourselves. In comparison to Their effort, what is our puny attempt? And in the light of the intense anguish and suffering of millions of minds and hearts, what, after all, is the bulk of our petty service? To live, to live, and continue to live the highest within the very core of our being is at once to live in the eternal and to grow like the flower. All of us have to live and have to grow. If only we would realize that we *are* in the eternal, though we illusion ourselves by past memories and future anticipations; that we *are* growing like the rose, albiet we foolishly draw the attention of the world to our thorns and look like a cactus! To be *natural*, to be spontaneous, to hold everything sacred, to see not only the good in all things but also the beautiful — that is performing yoga, with objects in our environment, with people in our vicinity. Though we minimize the scope and depth of our progress, yet all the time within a change is taking place. Keep on trying, therefore. And do not pay any attention to the fact that you are trying. Only TRY.

HISTORICAL EPOCHS IN THEOSOPHY

[Reprinted from *Theosophy (The Path)* for April 1896.—EDS.]

ON page 512 of the *Secret Doctrine*, first edition, Vol. II, is found the following footnote:

Says Johannes Trithemius, the Abbot of Spanheim, the greatest astrologer and Kabalist of his day: "The art of divine magic consists in the ability to perceive the essence of things in the light of nature (astral light), and by using the soul-powers of the spirit to produce material things from the unseen universe, and in such operations the Above and the Below must be brought together and made to act harmoniously. The spirit of Nature (astral light) is a unity, creating and forming everything, and acting through the instrumentality of man it may produce wonderful things. Such processes take place according to law. You will learn the law by which these things are accomplished, if you learn to know yourself. You will know it by the power of the spirit that is in yourself, and accomplish it by mixing your spirit with the essence that comes out of yourself. If you wish to succeed in such a work you must know how to separate Spirit and Life in Nature, and, moreover, to separate the astral soul in yourself and to make it tangible, and then the substance of the soul will appear visibly and tangibly, rendered objective by the power of the spirit." (Quoted in Dr. Hartmann's *Paracelsus*)

Trithemius was an abbot of the Spanheim Benedictine monks at Würzburg, in Franconia. This was four hundred years ago, just at the dawn of the sixteenth century. Trithemius was noted far and wide for his great learning, and among the many who sought his instruction were Paracelsus and Cornelius Agrippa. Another noted scholar and Kabalist at this time was John Reuchlin, the preceptor and friend of Luther. The discovery of America in the West, and the dawn of religious liberty — the Protestant Reformation — in Europe, mark the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries.

Paracelsus was born in 1493, and was a pupil of Trithemius between his sixteenth and twentieth years; and Cornelius Agrippa — who afterwards wrote a treatise on Occultism greatly approved by his former teacher, Trithemius — was his fellow-student. The monasteries were then the seats of learning, and the monks were the learned men of the day, and those who sought learning seldom found it outside the monasteries.

That of St. Jacob, with which Trithemius was connected, was one of the most famous. Then, as now, occultism was in the air. It had not yet organized into schools, and it was ridiculed and bitterly opposed by the rank and file of the clergy. It was a formative period. Most students were familiar with the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. Martin Luther's first public utterances were a course of lectures on the philosophy of Aristotle. Luther presently took the initiative in reforming religious abuses. In the beginning of the fourteenth century mysticism had been perverted by the emotional Tauler, who packed the churches where he spoke, at times becoming speechless with emotion (as he was already weakened by fasting) in contemplating the Divine Beatitudes, and the reunion of the soul with God. Reuchlin endeavoured to disseminate the Kabalistic interpretation of the scriptures, and at least to supplement with reason and intelligence the dawning age of faith. The age was too gross, sensual and benighted, and the proffered knowledge was rejected for the triumph of creed and dogma, and "salvation by faith." The society calling itself "Friends of God" took the purely Theosophical phase of occultism, and the little mystical treatise, *Theologia Germanica*, gave comfort to the emotional and mystical element of society, that looked with repugnance and disgust on the hypocrisy and brutality of both laity and clergy in those days.

On the other hand, ceremonial magic (*hatha yoga*) carried away the more intellectual but less spiritual students of occultism like Cornelius Agrippa. True occultism as expounded by Trithemius gained no foothold, and finally became obscured and lost. Something of the true philosophy may be derived from the writings of Paracelsus, yet fragmentary and obscure to the average reader. A far better outline may be found in Browning's poem, *Paracelsus*. The poet's intuition, idealizing the life and aims of the great physician, has portrayed the journey of the soul in quest of the *great secret*, and outlined the process of the higher evolution of man as stated by Trithemius in the quotation at the head of this article.

After four hundred years we are nearing the end of another century, and the close of a great cycle; and the same old truths are again challenging the world. The Theosophical Movement has already gained a far greater impetus than at any time for many centuries. To those familiar with the history of past efforts to bring these truths to the world, the opposition encountered is not in the least surprising or discouraging. It has never been otherwise, and will not be for millenniums

to come. Humanity is too deeply immersed in matter and too closely wedded to sense to readily seize and firmly hold the truths of the spirit. The strength of the present Movement consists in its simple but firm *organization*, and in keeping it free from dogmatism, vapid mysticism (emotionalism) and the occult arts (ceremonial magic); or, in other words, in following the lines laid down by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy*; and the work of organizing and holding it intact fell upon one man, who has sacrificed fortune, health, and possibly life, to that *one idea*.¹ Under all sorts of specious pleas, others have sought to *disorganize*, and but for the stubborn, sphinx-like resistance of this one man, backed by those who realized the issues and trusted their leader, they might have succeeded. A careful study of the movement of four hundred years ago will make apparent the necessity of organization, and the wisdom of the course laid down by H.P.B. and persistently followed by Mr. Judge. If we learn why it failed then, we may the better judge how it may succeed now. Personal issues of every name and nature sink into utter insignificance in the face of the great work of holding these truths before the world, so that they cannot again become obscured and lost, and in refraining from obscuring them ourselves. They stand today like a beacon-light in the midst of the angry and contending waves blown into fury by agnosticism, materialism, and the expiring struggles of the age of blind belief which usurped their place four hundred years ago. *The Voice of the Silence*, "dedicated to the few," embodies those golden precepts vaguely and emotionally discerned in the *Theologia Germanica*. Every day adds proof to the wisdom and foresight of the secret doctrine, with its basis so broad and its foundation so deep that the twentieth century will not be able to shake them. In America the movement was never so strong as it is today. *Organize and work*, has been and still is the watchword. Ridicule has changed to interest, and though the great majority may still be indifferent, the organization will hold in spite of all disorganizers, so long as the few real workers hold steadfast to their traditions.

The period of four centuries of darkness and superstition, of persecutions, sorrow and despair, has been a long time for humanity to wait. At no intervening time has the truth been so revealed or gained such a hearing as now. America, then just discovered, could give no home to the Wisdom-Religion. It was then a howling wilderness, in-

¹The reference is to W. Q. Judge, who died in March 1896, shortly before this article appeared in print.—EDS., THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

habited only by bands of wild Indians. Now all is changed. Here is the home of the coming race, and bad as may be the outlook, with competition, selfishness and greed everywhere rampant, side by side into the coming twentieth century will go these old truths, no more to be obscured or lost unless we relax our work.

“There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at its flood leads on to fortune. There are epochs in history when old traditions are dethroned, superstitions dissipated, and grand opportunities presented to man. If, however, he fails to seize this opportunity, if the consensus of opinion is indifferent or adverse to the opportunity, then a new cycle begins with other factors shaping events, and it has to run through its course. It may be, as in the present instance, centuries before the opportunity will come again. The movement failed in the sixteenth century. People were not ready for it, and the emotionalism of Tauler was supplemented by the ceremonial magic of Cornelius Agrippa, and Theosophy became obscured and lost. Until H. P. Blavatsky had revived the old interest and called attention to former workers and movements, few persons had ever heard of either. The principles involved are eternal, and they concern the higher evolution of man and the advancement of the human race. Each age gathers, uses or garners what it can. The power of an individual or of any civilization to apprehend and use these principles is the measure of its previous evolution, and the capacity for further progress. It is because people do not perceive their transcendent importance that they fail to grasp and use them, or misinterpret, misapply or ridicule them. It is therefore of importance to show how these great truths have been offered to the world again and again; how here, as elsewhere, history repeats itself, and how back of all passing events, changing creeds or vanishing superstitions, these unchanging principles are pushing for recognition, and are discerned by the few who can understand and apply them.

... Man is not Man as yet,
 Nor shall I deem his object served, his end
 Attained, his genuine strength put fairly forth,
 While only here and there a star dispels
 The darkness, here and there a towering mind
 O'erlooks its prostrate fellows; when the host
 Is out at once to the despair of night,
 When all mankind alike is perfected,
 Equal in full-blown powers — then, not till then,
 I say, begins man's general infancy . . .

Such men are even now upon the earth,
 Serene amid the half-formed creatures round,
 Who should be saved by them and joined with them.²

—J. D. BUCK

² Browning's *Paracelsus*.

THE STRENGTH of Theosophy lies in the fact that it is not to be defined. It is the wisdom of the gods, or of nature. This means that evolution, slowly progressing, will bring out new truths and new aspects of old truths, thus absolutely preventing any dogmas or "unequivocal definitions." Were we to make and declare a definition of Theosophy it would be only the words of those who participated in drawing it up, and not acceptable to all. And were it possible that all would accept, then would be sounded the doom of the movement. Hence the reply to the question, "What is the criterion of Theosophy?" is that it is found in each man's perception of the Truth: therefore there is no single criterion.

If any persons regard H.P.B.'s writings as the infallible oracles of Theosophy, they go directly against her own words and the works themselves; they must be people who do not indulge in original thinking and cannot make much impression on the times.

As for the Theosophical Society, the moment it makes a hard-and-fast definition of Theosophy it will mark the first hour of its decay.

Inasmuch as Theosophy is the whole body of truth about man and nature, either known now or hereafter to be discovered, it has the "power of growth, progress and advancement," since every new truth makes it clearer. But among the truths will not be reckoned at any time the definitions, dogmas, creeds or beliefs laid down by man.

—W. Q. JUDGE

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

[These editorial answers to an Australian querist are extracted from *The Theosophist* for December 1883.—EDS.]

QUESTION: This refers to a painful subject — an accident in my family — which I shall detail as briefly as possible. On 17th March, 1870, a boy of mine was accidentally thrown out of my buggy and he sustained fracture of the skull. When I picked up the child (4 years old) I found him bleeding from a branch of the temporal artery, and whilst I was dressing the wound on the road and in the dark, my mind involuntarily was turned homeward where my wife was lying ill and in a very weak state from loss of blood after her confinement. I thought that the news of the fatal injury of our child would also prove fatal to herself in consequence of the shock produced by the news. Fancy, then, my astonishment when I came home to find that at about the same time that this accident happened, I appeared to my wife spiritually or phantasmically (?) with the child in my arms, which fact she mentioned to her nurse, who, however, could not see me or my apparition. Now what do you make of this phenomenon and what is your explanation of it?

Answer: This is easy enough to answer from the standpoint of occultism. It is a case of thought objectifying itself by its intensity to the person on whom it is centred. The sad occurrence was reflected in the sympathetic aura of the suffering (hence more than ever spiritually receptive) lady and she saw it in her mind's eye. We have amply discussed in previous numbers the phenomenal effects of thought intensified to the last degree, whether consciously through will-power or unconsciously through the strength of desire, produced by fear, joy, or any other feeling. The ordinary phenomenon of the thoughts of the mesmerizer appearing to the subject as objective reality belongs to the same class though different in degree. . . . In our correspondent's case there was nothing spiritualistic at all. It was simply and purely a psychophysiological phenomenon.

Question: This is connected with what I would consider a case of clairaudience which happened to me some eight or nine years ago. I had scarcely turned into bed at 11 o'clock on a certain night (date I cannot at present ascertain), when I found myself all night up to half-past 4 A.M. disturbed from sleep by the constant crying out of "doctor!" "doctor!" in a distinctly plaintive tone, the voice being that of a female.

At 6.30 the same morning I was called to attend a woman at a distance of 15 miles from my residence, a perfect stranger to me, and to my astonishment her voice was identical with the one of my nocturnal disturber! The woman, having been in labour all night and crying out for the doctor — for me — her husband cruelly paying no attention to her lamentation until it was almost too late to send for medical aid. Now I would ask you, how could I hear the voice of this woman a distance of 15 miles?

Answer: This will be sufficiently elucidated by what has been said above. Our respected correspondent seems to be somewhat of a clairaudient sensitive himself; the agonized cries were directed towards him, and as the Doctor's thought made itself objectively perceptible to Mrs. Rohner's astral sense of sight, similarly the poor woman's cries affected his sense of hearing. The one was a case of clairvoyance, the other of clairaudience.

Question: This concerns a mesmeric subject or experience of mine which took place 14 years ago. A friend of mine, named Mr. Crone, who is a powerful mesmerizer, brought a boy to my surgery one night at 8 o'clock; and this boy told me the time on my watch to a minute correctly four times in succession, although his eyes were bandaged and he himself in a state of mesmeric coma. Three times the boy indicated the time on my watch correctly, even after I had turned the hands round with my key until I did not know myself to what figures they pointed.

Answer: This is a common case of clairvoyance induced by mesmerism. The physical man when rendered comatose by the influence of mesmeric currents, leaves the inner man free to act and acquire knowledge without the mediation of sense.

A careful study of what has been said in these columns about the septenary constitution of man will throw considerable light on the whole subject. These abnormal developments of sense may be effected by conscious efforts of the will, by disease or by mesmeric influence.

LET US not pray for a light burden, but a strong back.

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT

THE DISSEMINATION OF IDEAS

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

—*I. Corinthians*, XIII. 1

EVEN THOUGH ideas may sway large masses of men, they have a tendency to lose their hold and be lost to mankind if the latter through perversity and indifference ceases to give them life through a studied usage. Sri Krishna refers to this phenomenon in Chapter IV of the *Bhagavad-Gita* where he says that in the course of time the once-prevalent mighty Art was lost. It is through disuse, neglect and short memories that ideas start losing their power and ultimately cease to govern the actions of men. It is therefore necessary that ideas based on the true be constantly reimplanted in the memory of successive generations and be continually charged with that vitality which conscious human usage can alone provide. The life-term of any idea is determined by the enthusiasm or the indifference with which it is communicated and received.

The ideas that Theosophy puts forward are but a reiteration of those same ideas of the mighty Art which were repromulgated by Krishna and which were again lost in the wilderness of man's increasing materiality. The Theosophical effort was made to instruct the public in the doctrine which asserts the existence of an indissoluble link that prevails between man and man and man and the universe. Once that the idea of Universal Brotherhood gets accepted in principle, the allied ideas of philanthropy, self-sacrifice and charity are bound to be readily recognized as worthy of practice. The Theosophical Movement was started to promote among men the idea of this great Oneness, and especially so among scientists and religionists who were parcelling humanity into two camps, each hugging its own fantasy to its breast. The teachings on karma and reincarnation; states after death; the seven principles in man and nature; the birth and evolution of systems of worlds; the progression of man — all these teachings were given out and shown as dovetailing one with the other and as forming part of one synthesizing whole where no one part was in conflict with the other. Theosophy shows all evolution as proceeding under a just and conscious LAW from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, to be ultimately reabsorbed (with all the experience gathered) into the original Unity. All these Teachings were revealed in books and instructions, periodicals and correspondence, with the hope that those who benefited from them would in their turn pass on that

benefit to others who were in need of it. The wheel of promulgation had thus been set revolving. It was expected that the realization of the truth of Universal Brotherhood with its applications in daily living would make man act in all things and always as his brother's keeper.

Since those far off days of 1875, the Movement has spread far and wide. The efforts at promulgation had necessarily to be directed towards the furthering of the original impulse and the giving of momentum and strength to the effort at weaning away men from paths of error. The present effort emphasizes the spreading broadcast of the ideas of an impersonal, all-pervasive god-principle, of a just and all-seeing Law, and of a human evolution that must run its cyclic rounds helped or hindered by the free will of man. Societies and Lodges will always remain the ephemera of a day and their utility is judged by their adherence to the three fundamental propositions set out in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 14 *et seq.*). If they have failed in this task, they can always pick themselves up and continue the work in the light of Truth and the Divine Paramitas. Whatever the record, the future and the present hold vast potentialities for good which can be tapped by the promulgation of the True. There is no time limit to effort.

It is a fundamental duty of Theosophists to hold forth to the public that anyone who is searching for the Perennial Philosophy can have easy access to it at places centrally situated, and that even if these remain far removed for some, clarification, advice and instruction can be readily available through correspondence. Once that such centres of force are established, therefrom must flow such information and instruction as would dissolve in men's minds the hard encrustations of superstition and bigotry with their attendant evils of fanaticism and casuistry. The pernicious, soul-destroying ideas that one need not fear the effects of wrongdoing because absolutions, gifts and favours can be purchased by groveling before and fawning upon a god has to be shown to be the fabrication of the clergy in most religious systems. Old and decrepit edifices built on crumbling foundations of half-truths and deceits have to be pulled down and good ideas planted on clean places. In this task, Theosophy has to fight intolerance, prejudice, ignorance and selfishness which hide under the mantle of faith in a personal god and behind the assumption of an air of piety. To gather the strength necessary to do all this, the student has to clean his own Augean stables lest with soiling substances residing in him he become the centre of a turbulent force which gathers strength at each occasion when he allows disharmony to

prevail between word and act. In trying to introduce reforms and present a new orientation, care has to be taken that the public is not roused to useless criticism and that storms are not unnecessarily raised where complete calmness is essential to make minds receptive to new ideas.

Whatever be the form that the act of promulgation may take, the state of the inner man — harmonious or disturbed — is bound to percolate through to his audience. When a sage or saint writes or speaks, his message carries an inner atmosphere that has the quality of his wisdom, compassion and piety. Common words and familiar ideas get invested with a new import and emphasis that seem to run with his message and remain potent for good across large periods of time. On the other hand, when the student becomes lethargic in the fight against his lower nature and starts preaching that standard of morality which he does not take the trouble to maintain himself, he sets up an inner turbulence that keeps him on the boil. His imbalance percolates through his speech, denuding it of its power to help and benefit and protect.

Where promulgation is through the spoken word, the level of intelligence of the audience has to be taken into account and the speech adjusted to that level. The effort at dissemination should not resemble that of a condescending elder talking to children. Such an attitude is irksome and the hold on the audience is to that extent weakened. The exposition should not be over-simple, nor on the other hand should it go over the heads of the majority. The atmosphere of the meeting should not be that of a new prophet laying down the law to errant mortals, nor should it be apologetic because the enunciation of truths may offend the susceptibilities of some or clash head-on with their preconceived ideas. The exposition should be in such manner as to imply that the lecturer is but passing on that which he has heard and benefited by and which he now desires to make available for the good of the many.

Any disquisition, however lucid, on one or the other aspects of the Wisdom is bound to degenerate into mere oratory and fine talk unless the words are impregnated with a sincere desire to help. Such a desire carries the strength with which Nature endows him who is impersonal and altruistic. But to invoke that benign strength, the promulgation must be of the True and therefore not violative of any law in Nature. A deviation prompted by personal or other exigencies or a dilution of the teachings to inflate one's ego or to suit local prejudices and loyalties carries the taint of falsity and therefore spreads no beneficence. A good speaker gone astray will at best touch only the emotional and psychic chords

of his audience. In such case, there can be no accretion of spirituality nor any appreciable enlightenment.

There are of course modes of promulgation other than by the spoken or the written word. Health may fix a man immobile to his bed and yet his promulgation may be effective for good. His noble thoughts directed by a purified will may roam free and carry his message of hope and cheer to those who may be in sore need of it. The power of human thought when directed by an altruistic will can create a floating storehouse of refined energy that can be tapped by those who can tune in to the higher vibration. The image-making faculty can be used to visualize a sequence of scenarios picturing in action the triumph of right over wrong, of love over strife and of sacrifice over slavery to the personal. Such picturizations remain in the unseen atmosphere and if ensouled with a desire to serve can contribute valuable support to the movement for human amelioration. The typist at his machine can effect wonders if, instead of seeing his work as a drudgery, he approaches his desk all enthusiastic and eager to join in the grand experiment. Albeit unconsciously, he pours forth from eye and finger his enthusiastic message of hope and loving sacrifice, contributing that as his mite towards the recognition and establishment of Brotherhood. And he can be sure that his message will go far and wide and be of help and comfort, for the power which he uses is of the awakening soul. Has he not read that "the soul of man is immortal and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit"?

Where will practice, application and promulgation lead to? What should be the ultimate aim of the aspirant? The Maha Chohan who was referred to by Madame Blavatsky as "the *Paraguru* — my Master's MASTER," wrote in the early days of the Theosophical Movement:

The incarnations of the Bodhisattva Padmapani or Avalokiteshvara, of Tsongkapa, and that of Amitabha, relinquished at their death the attainment of Buddhahood, *i.e.*, the *summum bonum* of bliss, and of individual personal felicity, that they might be born again and again for the benefit of mankind. In other words, that they might be again and again subjected to misery, imprisonment in flesh, and all the sorrows of life provided that they, by such a self-sacrifice, repeated through long and weary centuries, might become the means of securing salvation and bliss in the hereafter for a handful of men chosen among but one of the many planetary races of mankind.

STRAY THOUGHTS

IT IS INTERESTING to note that our present Movement was started in the West, by Egos using Western bodies; only later it was taken to the East. This is something to think about; but we ought to take note that West and East are divisions on the *physical plane*, and as such we must beware of emphasizing this as also other distinctions such as those of race, creed, caste, sex, etc.

Do we want India exclusively for the Indians, Europe for the Europeans, America for the Americans? Or, is our work a *joint* venture where part of our training is to amalgamate all trends, all ways of life?

What has the present cycle in store for us? It is essentially a cycle of test for the individual. The earnest and worthy ones, those imbued with devotion and aspiration, will succeed; the rest will fall away. Let us remember that if only three remain true to the Original Impulse and Programme, the work of H.P.B. and of her Masters will be saved. A seed will remain on which the new Messenger can work. Therefore the finding out of what is essential and what non-essential becomes a matter of necessity for each individual.

What we need is the strength to hold on as well as to apply what we know to be true. We can work in silence and wait for the opportunity to arise, but this silent work is the strengthening of the tie between the Master and ourselves — our EGO.

We are all students, so let us deepen our study; but at the same time let us hold fast to the strengthening of the ideal of U.L.T. It is an organism — alive — made up of the living hearts and minds of students — ourselves. It is part of the “plank of salvation” held out from the world of Masters to Humanity — to us.

The work of U.L.T. is not merely to give an opportunity for personal progress to each student. As a corporate body, it is a *vehicle* for Masters' use. We need, it seems, to keep this firmly in mind, lest U.L.T. become a mere shell of no use to Them in Their work for Humanity, a mere means whereby individual students seek to progress towards Them. Individual progress — yes; but there is also the need to hold fast to a focal point for Their work in the world.

FRAGMENTS FROM MADAME BLAVATSKY

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THE Saxon Spiritualists are rather confused between the spirit and the perisprit. Perhaps they do not distinguish the one from the other, describing the first by the word soul, the second by spirit. Theosophists do the opposite; for them the spirit properly is *Nous*, the spirit. The perisprit, or *Psyche*, is the soul.

Theosophists accept no dogmas, *i.e.*, preconceived ideas or principles, to which everything must be subordinated. They seek truth with wisdom and in good faith, and are willing to accept it from whatever source, even at the cost of the sacrifice of what they have hitherto accepted. Whatever they may teach at the present moment, they are far from thinking that they have settled everything. Such a claim would be that of omniscience; it would be ridiculous. On the day when a new Oedipus shall have found the *complete* solution of that riddle of the ages: "What is man?" — on that day the ancient and modern doctrines, the approximations of the Spiritualists themselves, will, like the ancient Sphinx, be flung into the ocean of oblivion.

Theosophists, like the ancient philosophers and their pupil Paul, who said that the physical body was penetrated and kept alive by the perisprit, *Psyche*, consider man as a trinity: body, perisprit, spirit.

The Buddhists, who distinguish these three entities, divide the perisprit still further into several parts. Nevertheless, on the point of approaching perfection — Nirvana — they hardly admit more than one of these parts: the Spirit.

The Greeks did the same, dividing the perisprit into life and the passional nature, or *Thumos*. The perisprit is thus itself a combination: the physiological vitality, *Bios*; the concupiscible nature, *Epithumia*; and the ideality, *Phren*. The perisprit is constituted of the ethereal substance that fills the universe, hence it is derived from the cosmic astral fluid, which is not spirit at all, because although intangible, impalpable, this astral fluid is objective matter as compared with spirit. Owing to its complex nature, the perisprit can ally itself intimately enough with the corporeal nature, to escape the moral influence of a higher life. In the same way it can unite closely enough with the spirit to partake of its

potency, in which case its vehicle, the physical man, can appear as a God, even during his terrestrial lifetime. If such a union, of the spirit and the perisprit, does not take place, a man does not become immortal as an entity: the perisprit is sooner or later dissociated.

Plutarch says that at death Proserpine separates the body from the soul (perisprit), after which the latter becomes a genius or *Daimon*, free and independent. A second dissolution has to occur, under the action of the Good. Demeter separates the perisprit from the spirit. The first in time is resolved into ethereal particles; the second ascends, assimilates with the divine powers, and gradually becomes a pure divine spirit.

Kapila, like all the Oriental philosophers, made little of the perisprital nature. It is this agglomeration of gross particles, of human emanations teeming with imperfections, weaknesses, passions, the very human appetites, able, under certain conditions, to become objective, that the Buddhists call *Skandhas*, groups; the Theosophists, soul; Allan Kardec, the perisprit.

The Brahmanas and the Buddhists say that the human individuality is not secure so long as man has not left behind with the last of these groups, the remaining vestige of terrestrial colouring. Hence their doctrine of metempsychosis, so much ridiculed but so little understood by our Orientalists themselves. Science teaches, indeed, that the material molecules that compose the physical body of man are, by the process of evolution, replaced by Nature into lower physical forms. Well, the Buddhists say the very same in regard to the particles of the astral body; they assert that the semi-material groups of the perisprit are appropriated to the evolution of lower astral forms and unite with them according to their degree of refinement. Consequently, so long as a discarnate man contains a single particle of these *skandhas*, some *parts* of his perisprit will have to enter the astral bodies of plants or animals. So if the astral man is composed of such material that Demeter cannot find a particle of spirit, the individual is dissolved, bit by bit, in the crucible of evolution. This is what the Hindus typify by a period of a thousand years spent in the impure bodies of animals. Theosophists are in essential agreement with this idea.

To Theosophists, the great characters, the geniuses, the poets, the true artists, are spiritually inspired, and are not — at least in general — simply mediums, passive instruments in the hands of their guides. They are, on the contrary, souls (perisprits) richly illuminated, *i.e.*,

possessing the spiritual element in a high degree, and therefore able to collaborate with pure Spirits for the spiritualization and elevation of mankind.

In what relates to the phenomena of the perisprit and of mediumship, we believe that the purely passive medium cannot discern good spirits from bad, that to do so he must become a conscious mediator. We also know that though the incarnated man, even if a high adept, cannot compete in power with pure Spirits, who, being liberated from their *skandhas* have become subjective to the physical senses, they can at least equal and even surpass in the matter of phenomenalism what is produced by ordinary mediums.

Can a child, *i.e.*, a not completely developed man, who passes into the other world, exist there in the conditions prepared for the perfected types of his species, any more than a plant or an animal?

The child does not yet possess a spirit, so to speak; he is merely a soul, and his education has only affected his astral nature, has only dealt with externals.

The cycle of man is not complete so long as he has not passed through terrestrial life. Not one stage of trial or experience can be skipped; he must have been a man before he reaches the state of pure Spirit.

A dead child then is a failure of nature; it must be born again; the same perisprit must in such a case pass through the interrupted trial by means of another birth. The same for the congenital idiot. *These are the only cases of human reincarnation.*¹

If the child, indeed, who is only a duality, were immortal, why not the animals also? The triad alone survives.

At death, the perisprit becomes the outermost body; within it is formed a more ethereal body, and the whole is more or less overshadowed by the Spirit.

The elementaries of the human body are, however, not always dissociated at bodily death; it may happen that by a supreme effort they are able to retain some of the third element, and in that way, slowly and with trouble, to ascend from sphere to sphere, throwing off at each step the heavier garment, and becoming clothed in more radiant vestures; finally arriving at perfection, disencumbered of every material particle, and becoming *unities*, Gods.

¹ "Reincarnation" is here used as a term applying only to the perisprit or *psyche*. This does not reincarnate, it has always been taught, except in the instances given.—EDS., THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT.

We said that the man who has not one spark of the divine spirit to save him after death can scarcely be distinguished from the animals.

There are some sad cases of this kind, not alone among the depraved but also among the willfully blind and the out-and-out deniers. It is, indeed, the will of man, his sovereign power, that partly rules his destiny, and if a man persists in believing in annihilation after death, it will take place. The conditions of the physical life, the kind of death, very often depend on the will.

There are some persons who, merely by the force of their resolution, escape the embrace of death, while others yield to trifling maladies. Now, what a man can do with his body, he can also do with his astral body, *i.e.*, with his discarnate perisprit.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

I have no parents; I make heaven and earth my parents.

I have no divine power; I make honesty my power.

I have no means; I make submission my means.

I have no magic power; I make inward strength my magic power.

I have neither life nor death; I make the eternal OM my life and death.

I have no body; I make fortitude my body.

I have no eyes; I make the flash of lightning my eyes.

I have no ears; I make sensibility my ears.

I have no limbs; I make promptitude my limbs.

I have no design; I make opportunity my design.

I have no miracles; I make the Dharma my miracle.

I have no principles; I make adaptability to all things my principles.

I have no friends; I make my mind my friend.

I have no enemy; I make incautiousness my enemy.

I have no armour; I make good will and righteousness my armour.

I have no castle; I make immovable mind my castle.

I have no sword; I make "the sleep of the mind" my sword.

And the "sleep of the mind" is ZEN.

—THE CONVICTION OF A MASTER OF ZEN

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Excerpts from the address given by Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, on his installation as Director-General of Unesco, appear in *Unesco Chronicle* for December 1974. Emphasizing that the world is a single entity and that the struggle for mankind is everywhere the same, the Director-General said:

If the struggle for mankind, in its variety and in its unity, must be pursued without respite, it is because the very future of the species seems to be threatened in different ways: by the uncertainties which hang over peace, by the anarchic exploitation of natural resources, by the destruction of the environment, by increasingly intolerable inequalities, not to mention the frequent spurning of human rights. And all this is because men refuse to build their relationships on foundations which would permit the promotion of progress for all, in justice.

Mankind has the choice between living as members one of another and falling prey to barbarism. To live as members one of another means first of all the acceptance of differences, whether they are biological in origin or the product of geography and history. It means the renunciation of all notions of hierarchy among peoples and nations. It means the abandonment, once and for all, of the historical vision of those who, from Ancient Greece and Rome right up to the age of modern imperialisms, have always confused civilization with power, reducing to the status of "barbarians" the subjugated peoples as well as those who rejected their yoke. But living as members one of another implies more: it calls for an effort to sublimate differences in the construction, on a world-wide scale, of a new economic, social and cultural order which, transcending the selfishness of nations, will enable man to organize the space around him rationally, so that each may live there freely and happily, in brotherhood with his neighbours, whoever they may be. It may well be feared that the only alternative is barbarism, for the balance of terror and the intensification of inequalities may lead, in the end, to clashes productive only of ruin and desolation: the destruction of all that human genius has helped to create over so many millennia.

The threat will be no less — even if peace can be secured — if the power of science is not exercised with wisdom. Man's capacity to calculate and to inquire has now expanded to the point at which he is in a position to study both the infinitely small and the infinitely great. Whether he penetrates the mysteries of genetics

or escapes from gravity to explore outer space, whether he pursues the study of the microcosm, dividing what — only yesterday — seemed indivisible, or sets out in conquest of the universe, man appears indeed to be standing on the threshold of a new age, as if the combined effects of two centuries of scientific progress were on the point of setting him free from all his bonds. . . .

I am fully aware of the scope of the struggle we have to wage: what we have to do is to ensure that each day the meaning of justice and truth is more clearly perceived; to strive against all that abases man physically and intellectually — poverty, ignorance, inequalities and restrictions of all kinds — and to deliver him from the sometimes overwhelming pressures of exploitation, alienation and mechanization which tend to reduce him to the status of a mere object.

If the goal at times seems very far away and the path to it so thorny, it is because the true achievement of our end would mean nothing less than an ethical revolution by which man — all men — may be assured of full development. I remain convinced — and this conviction will underlie all my work in the service of the Organization in the years to come, giving me an unfailing source of hope and energy — that hatred and misunderstanding can be overcome in the unity which is forged when ideals freely and jointly accepted are finally put into practice, and that man will one day succeed, as we read in the Vedas, in “overcoming hatred by love and falsehood by truth.”

The following ominous predictions were made recently by a distinguished scientist, Lord Ritchie-Calder, one-time winner of the Kalinga Prize for the “promotion of the common understanding of science,” and were printed in the February *Science Digest*:

Just as we have manipulated metals, we are now manipulating living materials and the nature of human beings. What we have seen so far in brain-washing is as crude as mental brimstone-and-treacle in comparison with what is coming. What we have seen in the genetic re-jigging of plants and bacteria we shall see presently being applied to people.

It cannot be gainsaid that every organ, with the possible exception of the brain, will be transferred from one individual to another, with spare parts stored in organ banks.

A disembodied brain will be contrived just as Carrel and

Lindberg developed a mechanical heart.

People are going to be modified by the conditions they themselves are creating and also by the deliberate techniques for interfering with free will, with the psyche as well as with the brain and the nervous system. Already there is evidence that the younger generation are deafening themselves with their strident, amplified music to the point of raising the threshold of their hearing so that they live in a world of higher registers, like riveters deaf outside their own din.

If behaviourists like B. F. Skinner get their way we shall be operant-conditioning humans into thinking like machines, feedback conformists, no longer with free-will or human dignity but "programmed" to accept the technological environment without questioning.

We shall, however, go much further. We are just at the beginning of the study of extrasensory perception, telepathic and cortical emanation, and mitogenic waves (the signals from dividing cells). One can foresee mass communication well beyond the capacity of the present media and the subliminal tricks played on the subconscious. I also foresee brainwashing far beyond McLuhan and bugging not only of speech but of thought — the telepathic invasion of privacy.

Such possibilities may seem melodramatic, but we should know by now that these things are not confrontable like clanking robots or Frankenstein's monster. They come subtly. The businessmen who hired what they thought was a glorified cash register did not foresee that they would be fired by the computer when numerical determinism replaced the hunches and business acumen of acquired experience.

One is left wondering — Whither mankind?

The effects of the mass media — especially the cinema in this country as the biggest single source of influence, along with its offshoots like the song discs, the posters, the film magazines and so on — are causing deep dents and repercussions at the subconscious level. This is the theme of Firoze Rangoonwalla's article, "Films and People," in *The Sunday Standard* for March 16. He deplores that though a lot has been said, little serious work has been done about studying the direct impact of the Indian cinema on the people, especially the young. The impact in almost all cases is a subjective one; what is visible on the surface is

only the outer reaction.

But these symptoms [says the author] can lead us on to a diagnosis of the cause-and-effect relations which may be wielding a pressure either for good or bad. We have not been able to ascertain how much the cinema has helped to glamorize and popularize certain habits like smoking and drinking.

Apart from the hard addicts who are not going to be affected either way by what the cinema encourages or decries, there are countless others who can take to these addictions merely because the films and film idols are making it look trendy, attractive and imitable. . . .

Recent trends show that liquor is being indirectly promoted as a status and glamour symbol, with every second film displaying well-stacked bars and a lot of Vat 69 bottles thrown around as props. Both male and female stars are shown smoking or drinking, like a part of current fashion. . . .

Luxuries of rich food, fantastic wardrobes, swanky cars and other exhibitionistic outcomes of high living are being peddled, for the transitory appeasement of large sections of people who are inevitably deprived of these and can only dream of the same. A further step in the same direction is of showing promiscuous living or womanizing. The cinema is thus becoming like a drug pill which the audience takes and goes back, only to return for some further escaping and day-dreaming.

A good side to it could be added if the luxury-oriented cinema motivates people to work and try for a better living and higher standard. But here, the frequent emphasis on smuggling or other anti-social activities as the only way for the poor good character to acquire riches works as a negative factor. . . .

Modes of talking and dressing, along with general behaviour patterns of cine-goers, especially youngsters, are being directly influenced by films. . . . In the sphere of social or public behaviour, transparent influences of the cinema can be seen in the young people shouting, posturing, grimacing and even singing, as done by the popular artistes. The line between being modern and uncivilized seems to be thinning out of existence. The same is largely found in the screen violence as reflected in the real-life fights and beatings.

The posters, photographs and the glossy film magazines, with their covers and other blown-up displays, further extend the game, from the fleeting visuals of the screen to the more permanent form of the frozen image, offering repeated enjoyment. In fact,

many of these are going far beyond the scope of the film and what is permitted in it by the censorship, since the posters and magazine photos in an uncensored form have often very little to do with the actual contents of the films.

The cinema, rightly used, could provide an hundred ways of educating the mass mind. Instead of being what it now is, a stimulant to the kamic nature, a sedative to the imagination and a strengthener of the lower Manas, it could be used to strengthen the rule of higher Manas, to kindle ideals and to aid human elevation and nation building. But before our films can enter the category of meaningful art, they will have to undergo a vital rebirth.

The following from the January *Reader's Digest* (Indian ed.) is apposite to our times:

One advantage of an open society is that it can experiment — even idiotically. An idiotic experiment is useful if we recognize the lessons that it teaches. And one lesson that is about to be learnt is that the “swinging society,” *i.e.*, the casual mating and unmating of men and women, bears a price tag.

A recent issue of *Harper's* carried a perceptive article, “The Suicide of the Sexes,” by George Gilder. “When sex is devalued and deformed, as at present,” Gilder says, “the quality of our lives declines and the social fabric unravels.”

Gilder's thesis is that males must be enticed into family responsibilities, and without such responsibilities they have a hard time standing tall in their own eyes. When no longer compelled by the institution of marriage to assume responsibilities, Gilder contends, men are robbed of the self-esteem that comes to the protector, the teacher and provider. They are only itinerant studs — career that may look alluring for the moment, but after 35, what?

Funny thing, all the great religions produced codes of conduct very close to the Ten Commandments. It wasn't because these religious leaders came down different sides of Mount Sinai. It was because without these commandments nothing much in human associations seemed to work. (Jenkin Lloyd Jones in *Tulsa Tribune*)

The following from the “News and Views” column in *Main Currents in Modern Thought* for January-February will be of interest to students

of Theosophy:

There is world-wide evidence that humanity is moving toward a critical episode or stage in its existence. Human beings always live on the threshold of the unknown, but in the year 1975 we find ourselves stepping into a wholly new world. We are entering the last quarter of a century — a moment which has traditionally signalled the occasion for a new, creative impulse in human life. (One remembers that the Enlightenment erupted in the American and French Revolutions in the last quarter of the 18th century, and that the scientific and technological revolutions intensified in the last quarter of the 19th, profoundly influencing the Western world-view.) Such a convergence of idea and energy is thus not unique in human experience, but never before has it been *global* in extent.

The truly revolutionary character of the 20th century transformation may lie in its universality, but its uniqueness lies in the fact that it embodies a world-wide shift in consciousness. This shift is becoming very apparent to all of us, but the form that it is taking is more difficult to apprehend. The Centre for Integrative Education sees it focused in the effort to perceive the whole without diminishing the part, to unite the inner world of experience with the outer world of form, to heal man's estrangement from nature. In every aspect of life, in every branch of knowledge, we perceive these tendencies, and sense the struggle toward a new vision of the whole.

Researches of a Punjab University professor in Vedic literature have yielded linguistic clues indicating that Vedic society did not believe in castes, untouchability, or inequality between man and woman. According to Dr. Ram Gopal Kali Das, professor in the Sanskrit department of the University, Vedic society conferred certain rights on those who later came to be known as *shudras*. It did not consider them untouchables. (*The Times of India*, June 17)

Referring to the composition of Vedic society, Dr. Ram Gopal said that the earliest Vedas mentioned only various professions, and not the castes as they came to be known later. It was only in the later Vedas, like the *Yajurveda*, that specific mention was made of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. There was no mention of untouchability in Vedic literature.
