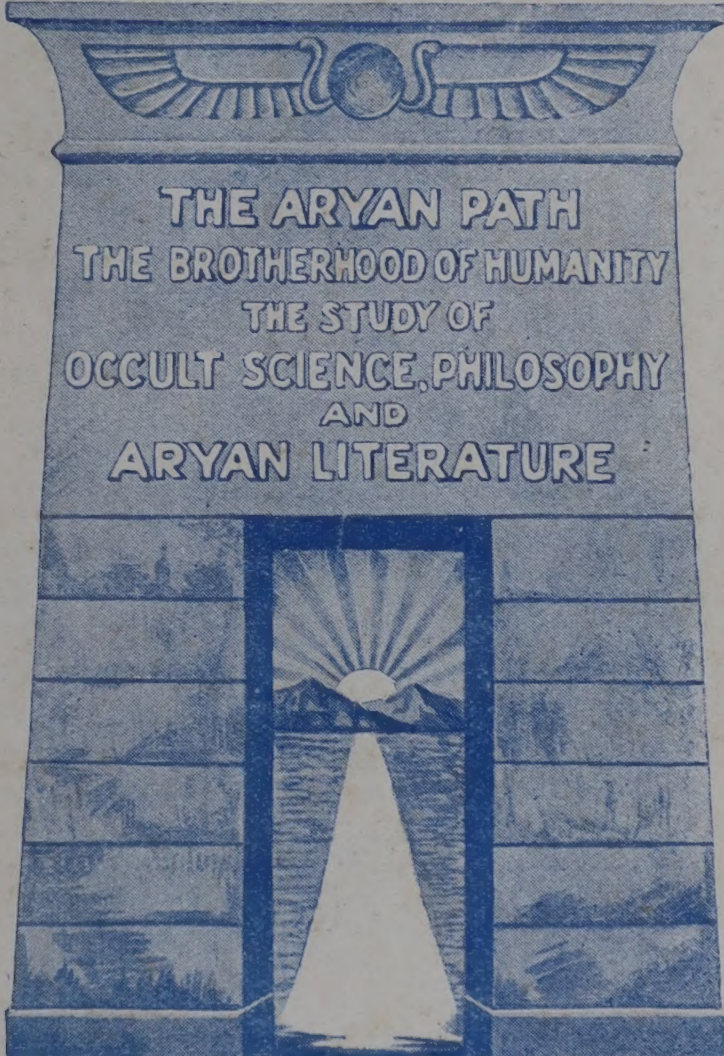




THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO



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

Vol. XXIII No. 7

May 17, 1953

To become a Buddha one has to break through the bondage of sense and personality ; to acquire a complete perception of the REAL SELF and learn not to separate it from all other selves ; to learn by experience the utter unreality of all phenomena of the visible Kosmos foremost of all ; to reach a complete detachment from all that is evanescent and finite, and live while yet on Earth in the immortal and the everlasting alone, in a supreme state of holiness.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study ; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।



There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth

BOMBAY, 17th May, 1953.

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AUM

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

BOMBAY, 17th May 1953.

VOL. XXIII. No. 7

A MESSAGE FOR BUDDHA JAYANTI

"Hear this, ye who are assembled here. May you be blessed!"

"Dig out the root of craving as one digs up the Birana grass to find the Ushira root."

"Let not Mara crush you again and again as a great flood destroys the reeds on the bank."

Students of Theosophy will participate in the celebration of the Buddha Festival during this month. Understanding the teachings imparted by H. P. Blavatsky, they know of the spiritual kinship subsisting between Theosophy and the pure teachings of the Enlightened One. Stripped of its superstitions, Buddhism, in both its metaphysics and its ethics, approximates Theosophy. Both the Hinayana and the Mahayana schools teach important doctrines. When dogmas and ritualistic practices are rejected and the truths of the two schools are properly synthesized and blended, Buddhism stands revealed as a grand expression of the ancient Wisdom-Religion.

It is but meet that this month we should direct our thoughts to some aspect of these teachings valuable to the devotee and the practitioner of the Esoteric Wisdom. All students are familiar with the small but priceless *Dhammapada*; of its Pali text there are numerous good translations. But not all are familiar with the Chinese version of that canon. Half a century ago Samuel Beal, a fine Sinologue, translated from the Chinese the *Dhammapada* text. The chief peculiarities of the Chinese version are two. One is that there are eight additional cantos in the Chinese MS. which do not form part of the Pali text. Secondly, each of the cantos has a prefatory story, which describes the occasion of the Master's uttering of the stanzas, and thus gives each canto a setting.

We should like to illustrate this by making use of one of the additional cantos, which has a message for every pilgrim who is taking steps on the Path of Holiness. Canto 2 of the Chinese

version is entitled "Inciting to Wisdom" (*Kian Hioh*). It contains 29 verses, divided into 4 groups, each of which has a story attached to it. The first was admonition to a sleepy disciple; the second, admonition to one who allowed himself to be swayed by foolish thoughts rooted in unrestrained desires; the third deals with the experience and emancipation of an obdurate and hardened Bhikkhu who had remained oblivious to the preaching of the Master; the fourth narrates the story of two aspirants on their way to the Master—one who followed the doctrine that the end justifies the means and the other, who would not compromise with the *Dhamma*.

These four types of student-aspirants are to be found in our midst. No use one telling another, "There is your prototype." Each must say to himself, "Thank Karma for showing me my portrait"—and act accordingly. John Bradford is reported to have exclaimed, on seeing some criminals led to execution, "But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford!"

In our animal nature we are mean and bad and selfish, each in his own particular way. But one weakness is no worse than another blemish. Our weaknesses may not be those of our companion or associate, but each of us has his own. Karma is gracious if we would learn from what it reveals to us.

So let each aspirant of the present generation learn from the four Bhikkhus who erred, but who were brought to Light and Peace by the loving knowledge of their Master. May we attain as they did some 2500 years ago!

I.—THE STORY OF THE SLEEPY ONE

A sluggard was he. He left his companions listening to the Master on the value of exertion in overcoming hindrances. He retired to his cell, indulged in effeminacy and slept. The Seeing Master knew that that mentally lazy one would die in seven days. So He walked to the cell and cried :—

"Arise, thou, companion of the spider and the insect! Do not seek forgetfulness of thy faults in sleep. Calamity is coming. Strive after true wisdom. Be possessed of right apprehension. Become a light for the world. However born, and however afflicted, seek bliss and peace, and escape every evil mode of existence."

On hearing this the disciple gained courage and fell at the feet of the Master. He was told how in a previous life the disciple had met a former Buddha but had not embraced his opportunity and had given way to self-indulgence and sleep. And now he was doing that again. Said the Bhikkhu to the Master: "Owing to the indulgence of my carnal desires I am disabled from penetrating such mysteries." Then he began. He became awakened. He walked on, faithful to the end. Ultimately he attained the Path to *Nirvana*.

II.—THE STORY OF THE CARNAL-MINDED

This was a young Bhikkhu. He was overcome by his foolish thoughts. He was unable to restrain his desires. Upset about this he grieved and resolved to dismember himself. He repaired to the house of his patron (*danapati*) and procured a sharp knife. Then he proceeded to his own cell and sat reflecting on the evil which resulted from the power of gratifying mental desires. The Seeing Master, aware of all this, walked to the cell of the young man, who confessed. The Master instructed him that the very first thing to do was to govern the mind; to get rid of the external instrument of evil was useless; and then He added :—

"Learn to cut off the mother. Follow the one true minister. Dismiss all the subordinate place-holders. This is the way to true enlightenment."

Doubt is the mother. Wisdom is the minister. The 12 Nidanas are the subordinates."

The young Bhikkhu followed the instruction and at last obtained enlightenment.

III.—THE STORY OF THE SOLITARY ASCETIC

Hardened and obdurate] was the aspirant on whom the words about the Law of Eternal Life had no effect. Reading his mind the Tathagata sent him to the wilderness to meditate beneath a particular tree in the middle of the gorge known as that of the Evil Sprites. When the aspirant began his new life he was constantly attacked; he saw nothing, but heard strange noises and notes. Naturally he was not able to compose himself and was thinking of returning to the Master but disliked the idea of reporting defeat.

After a period, in which the disciple passed his test, the Buddha came to the spot. This was the report the ascetic made to the Master :

"At first it was terrible and I was filled with abject fear. As I was planning to return an elephant arrived and, lying down close to me, slept. It seemed the elephant was happy to be away from the herd. He was at peace within himself. I copied his example and I am able to concentrate, and my contemplation is going very well indeed." Then the Master spoke these words :—

"The ignorant herd can never attain wisdom. The thoughtful man prefers solitude to guard himself. Not associating with the foolish he increases his Virtue-power. Rejoicing in the practice of moral principles (Sila) he pursues a mode of living conducive to his goal. At this stage he needs not companionship. Solitary in virtue, without sorrow, a man is content like your wild elephant away from his herd."

Then the disciple was ready for the ripening of real Soul Companionship. Wonder of wonders—those evil sprites caught the import of the Master's teaching. They were awed and they vowed never again to molest solitary ascetics. The disciple followed the Master and joined his composed companions.

IV.—THE STORY OF THE TWO NEW DISCIPLES

The Master was at Jetavana, at Shravasti. At Rajagriha were two aspirants yearning to go to the Master. Between the two places lay an inhospitable desert. They resolved to traverse it. One day, parched with the heat, they were utterly exhausted and under Karma came upon a pool of water. Eager they were to slake their thirst. But they saw that the water was full of insects. One of them said—"If I drink not I shall die. I shall not see the Buddha. The end justifies the means." He drank the water. The other aspirant valued the Law of Universal Compassion which the Master was expounding. This forbade the taking of life and so he refused to drink. He died of thirst and was born in Heaven. Then, full of his yearning to meet the Master face to face, he was able to descend from his high Heaven to where the Buddha was, and saluted him. After a while the first aspirant arrived, and related with tears the circumstances of the death of his companion. Then, the Master pointed to the Shining Presence of his friend from Heaven.

"You say you see me; but you have transgressed the Law, and so you do not truly see me. You are distant 10,000 li. Your companion dwells in my sight."

And the World-Honoured added:—

"He is the obedient disciple who follows the precepts without fail. He is exalted not only on earth, but also in Heaven. He realizes his aspirations. But he who is stint in obedience, who does not keep his precepts in all strictness, is grievously afflicted, laments that he was not strict to his former vows. But all the same both of them will attain if they persevere in their quest, watch their steps and save themselves from error, although with difficulty."

In this last half of the 20th century there are, among the aspirants in our U.L.T. Movement, the sluggard-hearted and the carnal-minded; there are those who badly need a period of "solitary

confinement" where they would learn not to be disturbed by Nature Sprites and Elementals. And there are those who are hasty and impulsive and fall through adopting wrong means to secure the right end; but, fortunately, there are also those who strictly adhere to searching the Scriptures and following the Teachings. Our U.L.T. Brotherhood is like the *Sangha* of 600 B.C. As human nature is always the same, now as then, aspirants encounter the selfsame problems. There are only a few books in this world of real value to the genuine and earnest aspirant walking the way to Peace and Joy and Enlightenment, and among them are the Sermons and Sayings of the Light of the World, whose Festival all should celebrate on May 28th, with inner fervour and devotion and outer charity and good works.

ANSWER THE QUESTION, NOT THE QUESTIONER

It is a good saying: "Answer the question, not the questioner." W. Q. Judge had a wonderful capacity for making each member of his audience feel that he was speaking to him individually. But that ability cannot be developed if the attention is focused on one person. Furthermore, one may be tempted to answer the questioner, using such terms and examples as one knows he will understand, but which may well not be comprehensible to others, and especially to newcomers.

There is also the added danger that, if the personalities of the questioner and the answerer are not sympathetic, the sense of tension may prevent the answerer from grasping the point of the question, for Theosophists are but human beings. So the procedure of repeating the question from the platform is a useful one, on all counts. It makes every one in the audience aware of it. It allows the speaker to see the question as such; and it gives him time to look within for the answer.

THE SEARCH AFTER OCCULTISM

[From *The Spiritual Scientist*]

[This article is reprinted from *The Modern Panarion*, pp. 49-54. It was written between 1875 and 1878.—Eds.]

Being daily in receipt of numerous letters, written with the view of obtaining advice as to the best method of receiving information respecting Occultism, and the direct relation it bears to modern Spiritualism, and not having sufficient time at my disposal to answer these requests, I now propose to facilitate the mutual labour of myself and correspondents by naming herein a few of the principal works treating upon *Magism*, and the mysteries of such modern Hermetists.

To this I feel bound to add, respecting what I have stated before, to wit: that would-be aspirants must not lure themselves with the idea of any possibility of their becoming practical Occultists by mere book-knowledge. The works of the Hermetic philosophers were never intended for the masses, as Mr. Charles Sotheran, a learned member of the Society Rosæ Crucis, in a late essay observes:

Gabriel Rossetti in his disquisitions on the anti-papal spirit which produced the Reformation shows that the art of speaking and writing in a language which bears a double interpretation is of very great antiquity, that it was in practice among the priests of Egypt, brought thence by the Manichees, whence it passed to the Templars and Albigenses, spread over Europe, and brought about the Reformation.

The ablest book that was ever written on Symbols and Mystic Orders, is most certainly Hargrave Jennings' *The Rosicrucians*, and yet it has been repeatedly called "obscure trash" in my presence, and that too, by individuals who were most decidedly well-versed in the rites and mysteries of modern Freemasonry. Persons who lack even the latter knowledge, can easily infer from this what would be the amount of information they might derive from still more obscure and mystical works; for if we compare Hargrave Jennings' book with some of the mediæval treatises and ancient works of the most noted Alchemists and Magi, we might find the latter as much more obscure than the former—as regards language—as a pupil in celestial philosophy would find the Book of the Heavens, if he should ex-

amine a far distant star with the naked eye, rather than with the help of a powerful telescope.

Far from me, though, the idea of disparaging in anyone the laudable impulse to search ardently after Truth, however arid and ungrateful the task may appear at first sight; for my own principle has ever been to make the Light of Truth the beacon of my life. The words uttered by Christ eighteen centuries ago: "Believe and you will understand," can be applied in the present case, and repeating them with but a slight modification, I may well say: "Study and you will believe."

But to particularize one or another book on Occultism, to those who are anxious to begin their studies in the hidden mysteries of nature, is something the responsibility of which I am not prepared to assume. What may be clear to one who is intuitional, if read in the same book by another person might prove meaningless. Unless one is prepared to devote to it his whole life, the superficial knowledge of Occult Sciences will lead him surely to become the target for millions of ignorant scoffers to aim their blunderbusses loaded with ridicule and chaff against. Besides this, it is in more than one way dangerous to select this science as a mere pastime. One must bear for ever in mind the impressive fable of *Œdipus*, and beware of the same consequences. *Œdipus* unriddled but one-half of the enigma offered him by the Sphinx and caused its death; the other half of the mystery avenged the death of the symbolic monster, and forced the King of Thebes to prefer blindness and exile in his despair rather than face what he did not feel himself pure enough to encounter. He unriddled the man, the form, and had forgotten God, the idea.

If a man would follow in the steps of Hermetic philosophers he must prepare himself beforehand for martyrdom. He must give up personal pride and all selfish purposes, and be ready for everlasting encounters with friends and foes. He must part, once for all, with every remembrance of his

earlier ideas, on all and on everything. Existing religions, knowledge, science, must rebecome a blank book for him, as in the days of his babyhood, for if he wants to succeed he must learn a new alphabet on the lap of Mother Nature, every letter of which will afford a new insight to him, every syllable and word an unexpected revelation. The two hitherto irreconcilable foes, science and theology—the Montecchi and Capuletti of the nineteenth century—will ally themselves with the ignorant masses against the modern Occultist. If we have outgrown the age of stakes, we are in the heyday, *per contra*, of slander, the venom of the press, and all these mephitic *venticelli* of calumny so vividly expressed by the immortal Don Basilio. To science it will be the duty—arid and sterile as a matter of course—of the Kabalist to prove that from the beginning of time there was but one positive science—Occultism; that it was the mysterious lever of all intellectual forces, the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil of the allegorical paradise, from whose gigantic trunk sprang in every direction boughs, branches and twigs, the former shooting forth straight enough at first, the latter deviating with every inch of growth, assuming more and more fantastical appearances, till at last one after the other lost its vital juice, got deformed, and, drying up, finally broke off, scattering the ground afar with heaps of rubbish. To theology the Occultist of the future will have to demonstrate that the Gods of the mythologies, the Elohim of Israel as well as the religious and theological mysteries of Christianity, to begin with the Trinity, sprang from the sanctuaries of Memphis and Thebes; that their mother Eve is but the spiritualized Psyche of old, both of them paying a like penalty for their curiosity, descending to Hades or hell, the latter to bring back to earth the famous Pandora's box, the former to search out and crush the head of the serpent—symbol of time and evil, the crime of both expiated by the pagan Prometheus and the Christian Lucifer; the first delivered by Hercules, the second conquered by the Saviour.

Furthermore, the Occultist will have to prove to Christian theology, publicly, what many of its priesthood are well aware of in secret, namely, that their God on earth was a Kabalist, the meek

representative of a tremendous Power, which, if misapplied, might shake the world to its foundations; and that of all their evangelical symbols, there is not one but can be traced up to its parent fount. For instance, their incarnated Verbum or Logos was worshipped at his birth by the three Magi led on by the star, and received from them the gold, the frankincense and myrrh—the whole of which is simply an excerpt from the Kabalah our modern theologians despise, and the representation of another and still more mysterious "Ternary" embodying allegorically in its emblems the highest secrets of the Kabalah.

A clergy whose main object has ever been to make of their Divine Cross the gallows of Truth and Freedom, could not do otherwise than try and bury in oblivion the origin of that same cross, which, in the most primitive symbols of the Egyptians' magic, represents the key to heaven. Their anathemas are powerless in our days—the multitude is wiser; but the greatest danger awaits us just in that latter direction, if we do not succeed in making the masses remain at least neutral—till they come to know better—in this forthcoming conflict between Truth, Superstition and Presumption, or to express it in other terms, Occult Spiritualism, Theology and Science. We have to fear neither the miniature thunderbolts of the clergy, nor the unwarranted negations of science. But Public Opinion, this invisible, intangible, omnipresent, despotic tyrant—this thousand-headed Hydra, the more dangerous for being composed of individual mediocrities—is not an enemy to be scorned by any would-be Occultist, courageous as he may be. Many of the far more innocent Spiritualists have left their sheepskins in the clutches of this ever-hungry, roaring lion, for he is the most dangerous of our three classes of enemies. What will be the fate in such a case of an unfortunate Occultist, if he once succeeds in demonstrating the close relationship existing between the two? The masses of people, though they do not generally appreciate the science of truth or have real knowledge, on the other hand are unerringly directed by mere instinct; they have intuitionally—if I may be allowed to so express myself—an idea of what is formidable in its genuine strength. People will never conspire

except against *real* Power. In their blind ignorance, the Mysteries and the Unknown have been, and ever will be, objects of terror for them. Civilization may progress; human nature will remain the same throughout all ages. Occultists, beware!

Let it be understood then that I address myself but to the truly courageous and persevering. Besides the danger expressed above, the difficulties in becoming a practical Occultist in this country are next to insurmountable. Barrier upon barrier, obstacles in every form and shape, will present themselves to the student; for the keys of the Golden Gate leading to the Infinite Truth lie buried deep, and the gate itself is enclosed in a mist which clears up only before the ardent rays of implicit faith. Faith alone—one grain of which as large as a mustard-seed, according to the words of Christ, can lift a mountain—is able to find out how simple becomes the Kabbalah to the Initiate once he has succeeded in conquering the first abstruse difficulties. The dogma of it is logical, easy and absolute. The necessary union of ideas and signs; the trinity of words, letters, numbers, and theorems; the religion of it can be compressed into a few words. "It is the Infinite condensed in the hand of an infant," says Éliphas Lévi. Ten ciphers, twenty-two alphabetical letters, one triangle, a square and a circle. Such are the elements of the Kabbalah from whose mysterious bosom sprang all the religions of the past and present; which endowed all the Freemasonic associations with their symbols and secrets, which alone can reconcile human reason with God and Faith, Power with Freedom, Science with Mystery, and which has alone the keys of present, past and future.

The first difficulty for the aspirant lies in the utter impossibility of his comprehending, as I said before, the meaning of the best books written by Hermetic philosophers. These, who mainly lived in the mediæval ages, prompted on the one hand by their duty towards their brethren, and by their desire to impart only to them and their successors the glorious truths, and on the other very naturally desirous to avoid the clutches of the blood-thirsty Christian Inquisition, enveloped themselves more than ever in mystery. They invented

new signs and hieroglyphs, renovated the ancient symbolical language of the high priests of antiquity, who had used it as a sacred barrier between their holy rites and the ignorance of the profane, and created a veritable Kabbalistic slang. This latter, which continually blinded the false neophyte, attracted towards the science only by his greediness for wealth and power which he would have surely misused were he to succeed, is a living, eloquent, clear language, but it is and can become such only to the true disciple of Hermes.

But were it even otherwise, and could books on Occultism, written in a plain and precise language be obtained in order to get initiated in the Kabbalah, it would not be sufficient to understand and meditate on certain authors. Galatinus and Pic de la Mirandola, Paracelsus and Robertus de Fluctibus do not furnish one with the key to the practical mysteries. They simply state what can be done and why it is done; but they do not tell one *how* to do it. More than one philosopher who has by heart the whole of the Hermetic literature, and who has devoted to the study of it upwards of thirty or forty years of his life, fails when he believes he is about reaching the final great result. One must understand the Hebrew authors, such as *Sepher Yetzirah*, for instance, learn by heart the great book of the *Zohar* in its original tongue, master the *Kabbalah Denudata* from the Collection of 1684 (Paris.); follow up the Kabbalistic pneumatics at first, and then throw oneself headlong into the turbid waters of that mysterious*... never tried to explain: the *Prophecy of Ezekiel* and the *Apocalypse*, two Kabbalistic treatises, reserved without doubt for the commentaries of the Magi kings, books closed with the seven seals to the faithful Christian, but perfectly clear to the Infidel initiated in the Occult Sciences.

Thus the works on Occultism, were not, I repeat, written for the masses, but for those of the Brethren who make the solution of the mysteries of the Kabbalah the principal object of their lives, and who are supposed to have conquered the first abstruse difficulties of the Alpha of Hermetic philosophy.

* The cutting is here imperfect—some paragraph or so wanting.

To fervent and persevering candidates for the above science, I have to offer but one word of advice, "try and become." One single journey to the Orient, made in the proper spirit, and the possible emergencies arising from the meeting of what may seem no more than the chance acquaintances and adventures of any traveller, may quite as likely as not throw wide open to the zealous student the heretofore closed doors of the final mysteries. I will go farther and say that such a journey, performed with the omnipresent idea of the one object, and with the help of a fervent will, is sure to produce more rapid, better, and far more practical results, than the most diligent study of Occultism in books—even though one were to devote to it dozens of years.

In the name of Truth, yours,

H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE "PUZZLE" OF INFLUENZA

The Listener of 26th February records the following statement of a doctor in the Home Service :—

Influenza is one of the most puzzling diseases known to man. If we limit the term, as I think we should, to an illness in which the virus can be recovered, then influenza apparently clean disappears for many months of the year. During these months people have short febrile illnesses, but no influenza virus can be obtained from them. Then, usually in late December or early January, every second or third year the virus reappears rather suddenly, sometimes in a number of different places at once, and an epidemic starts. One epidemic—that of 1949—started suddenly, of all places, in Sardinia. It next appeared in Sicily and Italy, and then spread over a large part of Europe, including Britain, and even got to Iceland.

There are puzzles enough here. What happens to the virus between the epidemics? Why does an epidemic flare up suddenly, and apparently in several places at once?...

The doctor then referred to the "Spanish Flu" epidemic of 1918-19, which is said to have killed 15,000,000 people, and the "Russian Flu" epidemic of 1889, in which features similar to those of 1949 were observed. He concludes by consider-

ing the possibilities of immunizing people for a year or so against the disease by means of a vaccine.

Is it to be wondered at that the puzzle remains when the observed facts, of a virus reappearing at irregular intervals and spreading rapidly across continents and oceans, are at obvious variance with the method proposed to combat it? The ordinary germ theory of infection is clearly inadequate to meet the situation. Even assuming that a vaccine could be produced to offset the effects of the virus that appeared in one manifestation, is there any assurance that it will be suitable for offsetting the effects of the new virus which may be isolated in the next appearance of the epidemic?

A full explanation of the causes of influenza was given by H. P. Blavatsky in February 1890 in her article, "The Last Song of the Swan," reprinted in *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT* for January 1941. She shows it to be "due to an abnormal exuberance of ozone in the air" and quotes a scientific statement to the effect that too much ozone in the atmosphere irritates the respiratory organs, and "an excess of more than 1% of it in the air kills him who breathes it." "Most of the deaths from influenza," she writes, "occur in consequence of lung paralysis." She praises a Russian newspaper correspondent for giving sound advice in the *Novoyé Vremya* of November 19th, 1889. He wrote :—

...The real causes of this simultaneous spread of the epidemic all over the Empire under the most varied meteorological conditions and climatic changes are to be sought elsewhere than in the unsatisfactory hygienical and sanitary conditions....The search for the causes which generated the disease and caused it to be spread is not incumbent upon the physician alone, but *would be the right duty of meteorologists, astronomers, physicists, and naturalists in general.*

The suggestion was spurned in 1889 and although since then many doctors and professors have commented on the close connection between weather conditions and the rapid spread of diseases, yet the appreciation of the bearing of those facts on the influenza endemics has been missed, perhaps because of the preoccupation of the medical profession with the germ theory of disease.

HOW SHALL WE PRAY?

It is often said: "Theosophists do not believe in prayer." Because the concept of Theosophy in reference to God or Deity, and therefore in reference to prayer, differs from what the ordinary person understands by these terms, the misunderstanding arises that Theosophists do not pray. But as students of this great philosophy of Theosophy we do believe in true prayer. So much so that Theosophy endorses the advice of St. Paul: "Pray without ceasing." The *Gita* has very much the same to say. Emphasis is laid throughout on fixing our heart and mind on the Krishna within, the Higher Self, "the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings," and, full of faith and devotion, worshipping Him, as the New Testament puts it, "in spirit and in truth," *i.e.*, becoming worthy of relationship with that higher aspect of Krishna. We are asked to become men of meditation and to be "constantly employed in devotion to meditation upon the Supreme Spirit." And what is meditation but "silent and *unuttered* prayer, or, as Plato expressed it, 'the ardent turning of the soul toward the divine' "? (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 10)

When we say that prayer must become a continuous process, or that we must engage in constant meditation, the implication surely is not that we are to abandon the duties of life and attempt the impossible task of ceasing to act, for, though the senses and organs may be restrained, if the proper attitude of heart and of mind be not formed, such a course will eventually make of one only "a false pietist of bewildered soul." The correct implication, therefore, of praying without ceasing is that all that we think, feel, speak or do should be offered, with humility of soul and purity of heart, on the altar of the Divine Presence at the very core of our innermost consciousness, which means that we must take care that all our actions are in harmony with the law of that Divine, which is the law of our true being.

If our concept of the object of our worship is a limited or an exclusive one, then necessarily our prayers and our worship will also be limited and will retard the progress of the aspiring soul.

There is no supreme power outside of and separate from us to whom prayers can be offered for special favours and from whom responses can be expected. Besides, such forms of worship awaken certain forces which would better be left alone unless one has a pure motive and true knowledge and understanding. Says H.P.B.:—

... woe unto those Occultists and Theosophists, who, instead of crushing out the desires of the lower personal *ego* or physical man, and saying, addressing their *Higher Spiritual Ego* immersed in Atma-Buddhic light, "Thy will be done, not mine," etc., send up waves of will-power for selfish or unholy purposes! For this is black magic, abomination, and spiritual sorcery. (*Key*, p. 68)

A proper understanding of the law of Karma will reveal to us the uselessness of personal prayer. For, if every man reaps the consequences of his own acts, does it not logically follow that it is futile to seek aught "from the helpless gods by gift and hymn," or to bribe them "with fruits and cakes"? Karma, the retributive law, the unfailing redresser of wrongs, is no respecter of persons, and can neither be propitiated nor turned aside by prayer. "Therefore," says H.P.B., "we try to replace fruitless and useless prayer by meritorious and good-producing actions." (*Key*, p. 70) And it is said:—

... the "service of man" and what is more or less accurately described as the "Worship of God" must go hand in hand, until they finally become one and identical. It is this final unity which we desire to bring into prominence. (*The Path*, Vol. III, p. 373)

Man, being the highest manifestation on earth of the Unseen Divine Principle which is universally diffused, has a portion of that Divine reflected in him. The inner man, our "Father which is in secret," is the only God we can have cognizance of, if we turn within, in the "inner chamber" of our Soul perception. So true prayer is an inward exercise, an inner communion with the Divine Presence in the only shrine where that Presence can be worshipped, and that is in our own heart.

It will be seen how different this idea of prayer, as communion with that part of man's own nature which is ordinarily unrecognized and ignored, is

from what usually passes as prayer and that demands the turning of the consciousness without, and which, Jesus shows, sometimes finds hypocritical expression. And hypocrisy, H.P.B. has warned us, is an unpardonable sin.

What happens within ourselves when we turn the consciousness within and enter the chamber of the heart? Having gone there we shut the door and reverently fix our consciousness upon the Spiritual Self. The "ardent turning of the soul towards the divine," as Plato says, is

"not to ask any particular good (as in the common meaning of prayer), but for good itself—for the universal Supreme Good" of which we are a part on earth, and out of the essence of which we have all emerged. Therefore, adds Plato, "remain silent in the presence of the *divine ones*, till they remove the clouds from thy eyes and enable thee to see by the light which issues from themselves, not what appears as good to thee, but what is intrinsically good." (*Key*, pp. 10-11)

We, therefore, pray to be guided by that Light, to be illuminated by the Self within, so that we may curb and discipline completely our lower personality. And then our prayer, instead of being a petition to some power outside, becomes an act of will, an internal command to the lower man to obey the behests of the Divine in acting for and as the Self of all creatures. The inner man confirms his position as a spiritual being, and, on that firm position assumed, demands cheerful obedience from the lower self. Says H.P.B.:—

The *Atharva-Veda* teaches that the exercise of such will-power [as the Adept is able to exercise] is the highest form of prayer and its instantaneous response. To desire is to realize in proportion to the intensity of the aspiration; and that, in its turn, is measured by inward purity. (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 592)

The inner communion in the sense of union with the Divine is true *Yoga*. The *Gita* teaches us that wisdom springs up within him who is perfected in devotion, and true prayer opens up the way for those aspiring to hear the "still, small voice" of the God within us. "Prayer opens the spiritual sight of man, for prayer is desire, and desire develops WILL." (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 434) It puts the mind *en rapport* with great and noble ideas, with the laws of Nature and with superior intelligences, awakening our intuition or inner

sight, which makes possible our being transported "beyond the scenes of this world, and...partaking the higher life and peculiar powers of the heavenly ones." Therefore inner communion in a higher sense means communion not only with our own inner nature or Spiritual Self, but also with higher powers and potencies residing in the infinitudes of space.

Among the preliminary steps necessary for preparing ourselves for spiritual prayer or meditation are purification, concentration and eradication of selfishness and egotism. When asked what was the greatest obstruction in the way of meditation and that most frequently present, Mr. Judge replied that it was "memory or recollection." To prevent images, impressions and sensations of the past from trooping through the brain and disturbing the meditation Mr. Judge emphasized "the need for less selfishness, less personality, less dwelling on objects and desiring them,—or sensation."

Those training themselves for true prayer or meditation should maintain an attitude of steady watchfulness with regard to their thoughts. Constant practice in dispassionate refusal to harbour evil thoughts, and in immediately replacing an undesirable thought by a good one of the opposite character, will so tune the mind that by degrees it will spontaneously think on a high level. And when a man's thoughts are pure and noble he will attract around him beneficent influences.

When he hath abandoned every desire that ariseth from the imagination and subdued with the mind the senses and organs which impel to action in every direction, being possessed of patience, he by degrees finds rest; and, having fixed his mind at rest in the true Self, he should think of nothing else. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, VI. 24-25)

Our task will be easier if the effort is kept up unremittingly and definite hours are fixed at which, for a few moments, we may withdraw inwards. The most suitable times for so doing are at the beginning and the end of the day. Beginning with the night, it is very necessary for one who desires to have a spiritual influence in his life to undertake, as a daily exercise or prayer, self-examination of four departments of his activity—thoughts, feelings, words and deeds. This review of our personal actions must be pursued in

the light of the great philosophy which we call Theosophy and, noting our good points and our defects, we should resolve to strengthen the good ones and eliminate the others. This review need not be very long. But in examining ourselves we must act, not as a lawyer trying to defend the lower self, but as an impartial judge who reviews the proceedings dispassionately and passes fair judgment on that lower man.

Having completed our self-examination we should think of the nature and character of our Spiritual Self, the thinker and the discernor, the seat of true compassion, which hardly gets an opportunity to express itself in our mundane existence. Next, we should read a passage from one of our devotional books, selecting perhaps one verse or statement and repeating it mentally so that we go to sleep with it in our mind.

On waking in the morning we must again prepare ourselves for a period of prayer or meditation or inner communion. We should try to remember the verse or the passage which we had taken up the night before and attempt to understand its full implications, finding applications of its contents to the affairs of daily life,

so that it will recur to the mind again and again during the day that has just opened. To gain a clear perception of what is implied in that verse we should think of our own inner Self as our real friend, refuge and guide. Then, making the mind tranquil, we should fix our Soul's gaze upon the star whose ray we are, that star which is our goal and which burns overhead.

Such inner communion will bring us understanding, contentment and peace, but we should ever remember that "the way of inward peace is in all things to conform to the pleasure and disposition of the Divine Will."

In *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 280) H.P.B. has described the highest aspect of prayer:—

The ever unknowable and incognizable *Karana* alone, the *Causeless* Cause of all causes, should have its shrine and altar on the holy and ever untrodden ground of our heart—invisible, intangible, unmentioned, save through "the still small voice" of our spiritual consciousness. Those who worship before it, ought to do so in the silence and the sanctified solitude of their Souls; making their spirit the sole mediator between them and the *Universal Spirit*, their good actions the only priests, and their sinful intentions the only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the *Presence*.

DIVINE PYTHAGORAS AND HIS TEACHINGS IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

[We publish here the concluding instalment of a lecture delivered at the United Lodge of Theosophists, Bombay, on 12th June 1952. The first instalment appeared in our last issue.—EDS.]

II

The arrival of Pythagoras in Crotona was an event of great significance for its inhabitants, who saw in him a God come to them in the guise of a man to benefit and correct their mortal lives. He told them that everyone prized gain and glory, but that these were not attained without toil or retained after death. Life was toil indeed, but why toil for those possessions which were of no use without the body which would perish? The best kind of toil was to control greed and vanity and to engage in the task of the enlightenment of the soul and the purification of the intellect. Thus everyone would be fitted to bear his burden with dignity, as none could bear the burden of an-

other. He advocated a life of discipline and philosophy for all who wished to acquire the strength to shun illusion, ignorance and obstinacy, which are hindrances on the path of the inner immortal man. He advised the citizens to dedicate a temple to the Muses, in preference to other goddesses or gods, for the preservation of concord and the promulgation and protection of the arts and sciences, because man was born to know and to contemplate.

Admirers in large numbers enthusiastically began to collect around him from far and near and evinced their desire to be guided by him. He, therefore, established himself in Crotona

around which in due course a colony of Pythagoreans and their families gathered. Erudition, abstinence from animal food, continence, temperance, sagacity, community of possessions—in one word, whatever was necessary for the lovers of wisdom and the practitioners of the higher life was conveyed to them by Pythagoras by personal example and precept and through the rules of conduct that he prescribed for the guidance of those who wished to be his pupils.

His benevolent influence was felt in other cities of Italy and Sicily whose mutually quarrelling people requisitioned his good offices for composing their differences. Through laws made with his help they removed from their midst hatred and party factions. In every city that he visited, Iamblichus tells us, he exhorted the inhabitants to remove, by every possible contrivance, "from the body, disease; from the soul, ignorance; from the belly, luxury; from a city, sedition; from a house, discord; from all things, immoderation." He advised the younger generation to pay respect to their elders because in nature and in life that which has a precedence is more honourable than that which is subsequent in time, as, for instance, morning is more inspiring than evening, youth more promising than old age, cause more important than effect. He stressed the sanctity of married life, the contract of which was inscribed in children, whereas other contracts were engraved only on tablets and pillars. He said that the one who foresaw what was beneficial for him, and exerted himself to achieve it, was the most excellent man; he who learned from the misfortunes of others was next best; but he who refused to see what was best till he was overpowered by suffering was the worst.

Having himself passed through the rigorous Egyptian discipline, Pythagoras imposed severe tests on those who aspired to join him as pupils. Every candidate, after submitting himself to a close examination as to his sincerity and studiousness, had to pass through a long period of probation during which he was only a listener beyond the veil. He was required to hold his tongue and to learn as much as he could through the ear, without asking questions. Those who successfully passed through this test of silent perseverance

were admitted as esoteric students, for being taught within the veil, according to their respective merits. Those who failed were dismissed with more gold and silver than they had brought to the common treasury and a tomb was raised to them by the Brotherhood as if they were dead. He advised them to choose rather to throw a stone at random than utter an idle or a useless word, and to say not a little in many words, but much in a few.

To minimize the chances of failures, and that the pupils selected with great care might be assured of all help and sympathy in their study and spiritual struggle, Pythagoras kept them under observation. He encouraged them to cultivate their eyes and ears for the correct evaluation of objects of art and beauty, conceiving that, like other ordinary men, they were accustomed to making much of sense impressions, which therefore needed to be properly guided. He also used for their benefit special kinds of melodies composed by himself. He had trained his ears and his intellect to hear, as others could not, in the different types of mundane sounds the archetypal rhythm and concord from which they had sprung. It is said that once, on hearing the sound of hammer strokes on the anvil in a brazier's shop, he was inspired to capture something of the divine symphony in appropriate songs and tunes. Being an adept appreciator and appraiser of the music of the spheres into whose mysteries he had probed, he developed a system of musical healing. Iamblichus says:—

He arranged and adapted for his disciples what are called apparatus and contrectations, divinely contriving mixtures of certain diatonic, chromatic, and euharmonic melodies, through which he easily transferred and circularly led the passions of the soul into a contrary direction, when they had recently and in an irrational and clandestine manner been formed; such as sorrow, rage, and pity, absurd emulation and fear, all-various desires, angers, and appetites, pride, supineness and vehemence. For he corrected each of these by the rule of virtue, attempering them through appropriate melodies, as through certain salutary medicines. In the evening, likewise, when his disciples were retiring to sleep, he liberated them by these means from diurnal perturbations and tumults and purified their intellective power from the influxive and effluxive waves of a corporeal nature; rendered their sleep quiet, and their dreams pleasing and prophetic. But when

they again rose from their bed, he freed them from nocturnal heaviness, relaxation and torpor, through certain peculiar songs and modulations, produced either by simply striking the lyre, or employing the voice.

Pythagoras has left no exoteric written works. The teachings attributed to him and contained in what are known as his "Golden Verses," his symbolical sayings and sentences, his public discourses and above all the conclusions of his mathematical and philosophical researches enshrined in the famous hieroglyph called the Tetractys or the Sacred Four, have all come to us through the writings left by distinguished followers and friends. The wisdom of Pythagoras was often conveyed to his associates in epigrammatic, sometimes enigmatical sentences, some of which have become our popular proverbs, such as: Well begun is half done; Suffer not swallows at your house; Stir not the fire with a sword; Go not beyond the balance; Go not in the public way; Eat not the heart, etc. More graphic illustrations of his symbolic method of imparting instruction are to be found in the following catechism:—

What is the Oracle at Delphi? The Tetractys.
 What is the most just thing? To sacrifice.
 What is the wisest thing? Number.
 What is the most beautiful? Harmony.
 What is the most powerful? Mental decision.
 What is the most excellent? Felicity.
 What is that which is most truly asserted? That men are depraved.

Each of these cryptic answers contains a mine of meaning which the disciples were left to dig out for themselves as best suited their practical needs. Thus, for example, when he taught that the Oracle at Delphi was the Tetractys, it seems obvious that he meant that, as the Greek people generally regarded the Oracle as guide, friend and philosopher, so should his disciples view the Tetractys, contemplate it and search for its hidden meaning. But when it is asserted that men are depraved, the aspirants to the higher life have a clear warning that all those who are not eternally vigilant incur the risk of slipping down, for, as *The Voice of the Silence* states, in the Hall of Learning "thy Soul will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower a serpent coiled."

Men are not depraved in their inner essence but only in the outer mask. But, if our Individ-

uality containing the divine essence is covered over through our heedlessness, and the mask of the Personality is allowed too freely to strut and fret on the stage of life, we have to bear the stigma of being called depraved. To avoid this catastrophe Theosophy recommends daily self-examination and Pythagoras gives the same advice in his "Golden Verses" given orally to his disciple Lysis:—

Let not the stealing God of sleep surprise
 Nor creep in slumbers on thy weary eyes,
 Ere ev'ry action of the former day
 Strictly thou dost and righteously survey.
 With rev'rence at thy own tribunal stand,
 And answer justly to thy own demand.
 Where have I been? In what have I transgress'd?
 What good or ill has this day's life express'd?
 Where have I failed in what I ought to do?
 In what to God, to man, or to my self I owe?

No one can object to the dictum of Pythagoras that number is the wisest thing in the world. The test of wisdom lies in its ability to assign accurate values to men and things. It is found most convenient to do so in numbers as they signify "the intelligible order, which comprehends the multitude of intellectual forms." He also said that the next wisest thing was to give appropriate names to objects, as it was not the business of any casual person to fabricate names, but of one looking to intellect and the nature of things. Applying this test to the Triangle (containing four rows of dots), which he named "Tetractys," i.e., four, we have three plus four which add up to seven—our most sacred number. It reminds us that our universe is septenary with seven planets, governed by seven hierarchies of divine beings variously called Rishis, Amshaspendas, Archangels, etc.; further, that man is also sevenfold, that we have seven sounds and seven colours and, above all, that we are required to be perfect in seven great virtues to perceive and prove our septenary heritage.

H.P.B. says that the Tetractys has a very mystic and varied signification. Its name, which means four, is therefore appropriate also because this triangular symbol represents the One in three rooted in the unknown Substance-Principle or what Pythagoras called the silent, solitary Monas. It thus becomes the symbol of both manifestation

and non-manifestation in four aspects. Besides the outer triangle which is of three equal sides and angles, there are inscribed within it pyramid-like ten points arranged in four rows: 1+2+3+4. *The Secret Doctrine* states:—

While the ten dots within the triangle represent the phenomenal world, the three sides of the equilateral triangle which enclose the pyramid of dots are the barriers of *noumenal* Matter, or Substance, that separate it from the world of Thought. "Pythagoras considered a *point* to correspond in proportion to unity; a *line* to 2; a *superficies* to 3; a *solid* to 4; and he defined a point as a Monad having position, and the beginning of all things; a line was thought to correspond with duality, because it was produced by the first motion from indivisible nature, and formed the junction of two points. A superficies was compared to the number three because it is the first of all causes that are found in figures; for a circle, which is the principal of all round figures, comprises a triad, in centre—space—circumference." (Vol. I, p. 616, quoted from *The Pythagorean Triangle*, p. 19)

To the Pythagoreans, who held that all things were related to number, the Tetractys was as worthy of reverence as the Higher Self is to a student of Theosophy. Their binding promises and resolutions were made in the name of the "Sacred Four" which to them was "perennial Nature's fountain, cause, and root."

Tell, O ye Gods! the source from whence you came,
Say whence, O men! thus evil you became?

Pythagoras found in this couplet of an ancient poet the twofold direction of his work: To know God and to point the way to man; to learn and to teach. This has ever been the self-imposed burden which great ones have taken upon themselves, to wean us away from evil. He did not favour idol-worship in temples but recognized the presence of divine "Categories," called Gods, Heroes and Dæmons, corresponding to the creative, preservative and destructive forces in nature, working as agents of the Silent Monas—the First Cause.

He also believed in an eternal Law of ethical causation and retribution in which he sensed an

"oath" or assurance of the Compassionate Divine Power to all beings that the universe is based on perfect justice and will be preserved intact through eternity. He taught that all the good that was in God was for the good of all beings, who were pledged in their turn to be submissive to the Law and friendly and co-operative among themselves.

He cognized man as the chooser of his destiny, having to learn to control his emotions, to see the world with the help of his reasoning mind and to make a wise choice ultimately as a spirit-being of light, who was, is and ever shall be. Each one needs what he deserves; therefore each one should deserve what he needs. Such is the law of justice and harmony in nature. The one who makes a wise choice upholds that Law by avoiding luxuries and excesses, because they create injustice in the world. From injustice is born discord; and discord, on a cosmical scale, means chaos—annihilation. Therefore temperance in all things is mentioned as a basic virtue in the Pythagorean wisdom. Pythagoras bids us "...ever keep the happy GOLDEN MEAN."

He, however, ponders with sorrow over the tragic plight of mankind under the sway of debasing desires and passions. In his "Golden Verses" he says:—

Unhappy race! that never yet could tell
How near their good and happiness they dwell.
Depriv'd of sense, they neither hear nor see;
Fetter'd in vice, they seek not to be free,
But stupid to their own sad fate agree.
Like pond'rous rolling stones, oppress'd with ill,
The weight that loads 'em makes 'em roll on still,
Bereft of choice, and freedom of the will.
For native strife in ev'ry bosom reigns,
And secretly an impious war maintains.

Finally we salute his memory and receive this farewell blessing:—

And yet be bold, O man, divine thou art,
And of the gods celestial essence part.
Nor sacred nature is from thee conceal'd,
But to thy race her mystic rules reveal'd.
These if to know thou happily attain,
Soon shalt thou perfect be in all that I ordain.
Thy wounded soul to health thou shalt restore,
And free from ev'ry pain she felt before.

PENAL REFORM

The Report on India's Prison System by Dr. Walter C. Reckless, together with his recommendations, was summarized in *The Hindu* for February 20th. Dr. Reckless, Head of the Department of Criminology in the Ohio State University, was loaned to India under the UN Technical Assistance Programme. He spent some time in India studying Prison Administration and organizing classes on Criminology and Correctional Administration at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay. He also gave an address at the Indian Institute of Culture in Bangalore; a report of his lecture on "Penal Reform" will be found in the Institute's Report for 1951 (pp. 127-28). A short note covering the features of Dr. Reckless's Report appeared in *The Aryan Path* for April 1953.

The basis of his recommendation is that there should be a complete change of the aim of imprisonment from that of punishment to that of rehabilitation. Instead of jailors there should be specially trained personnel skilled in rehabilitation work and probation officers, not the police, should look after released prisoners. The separation of juvenile delinquents from adult offenders and of gaols for women from men's gaols are other obviously good suggestions in his Report, together with the setting up of separate courts for juvenile offenders.

He recommends that the Government should form a Commission to draft necessary revisions of the Gaol Manual and the Indian Penal Code. It is to be hoped that such a Commission as he suggests will be appointed without delay as all these improvements are very much overdue and their acceptance in many other countries has proved their value over and over again.

Before passing on to some deeper considerations of this matter we must refer to an aspect of it which is well brought out in a broadcast by Mr. Justice Claud Mullins, reported in *The Listener* for January 29th, entitled "The Sentence on the Guilty." He stresses the great need for the judge, whether lawyer or lay magistrate, to acquire a knowledge of what goes on in the different kinds of penal establishments as well as a knowledge of the

different kinds of sentences that he can award so that he may best serve the interests of the offender as well as the community. This will require that judges shall also obtain a thorough knowledge of the circumstances of the offender and of the factors which caused him to do what he did. Each judge, too, should adjust his own thinking from the punitive to the rehabilitative concept so that thus he will have some knowledge of the real problem to be solved. Some advanced thinkers today, says Mr. Justice Mullins,

have come to the conclusion that crime is too serious a matter to be left entirely to the courts. They recommend that the power to fix sentences should be removed from the courts in all but trivial cases and be transferred to Treatment Boards, composed of experts.

The proposals put forward by penal reformers in general aim at the social rehabilitation of the offender, at fitting him into society again; and both educational and vocational training should play their parts in all attempts to restore the individual to ordinary social life. Crime is not inherent in human nature; therefore the responsibility for crime rests largely on society, which has failed to give adequate training to the offender.

The findings of the psychologist and the psychiatrist which suggest excusing the offender on account of his inherent or hereditary defects, do not, however, go to the root of the matter and do not really aid the wrong-doer by enabling him to recognize his own Soul nature and to become strong, able to shoulder his responsibilities and to reform himself from within. Although lacking, perhaps, in the distinct recognition of the real man as the Soul and not the body, many teachers in institutions for juvenile delinquents have instinctively adopted the method of trying to awaken appreciation of a high code of honour among their groups, in which individual responsibility for every action takes a foremost place. Excellent results from these efforts are reported. How much more, then, could be done by a thorough re-education on the basis of the science of the Soul!

Such an education would provide a safe and sound method of restoring the individual to ordinary social life and, by giving him a knowledge of his higher nature, would enable him to

draw from it the power to transmute the tendencies of the lower in such measure as would ensure his not relapsing into crime. All Souls are in the process of learning the lessons of life. The prisoner requires as careful an education as does a child; he should be taught the value of self-reliance and altruism, and should have his fears allayed by being helped to think and reason for himself on a basis of high principles. Once rehabilitated in his own eyes he will be rehabilitated for life in society—without fear or feelings of revenge. Also the ordinary citizen would lose his fear of the criminal if he looked upon him as he looks upon himself, *i.e.*, as a Soul learning the lessons of life, one needing the same sympathy and discipline as are accorded to children when they lapse from the standards required of them.

Besides, all of us shall be reincarnated. And while our new ledger sheet will carry forward the balance due, the old names will have been removed from it and the old personal relationships will not exist in the brain memory. Whether we shall continue the old enmities in our next incarnation will depend on how we treat those who offend against us in this one. We should best settle our debts by brotherly action *now*, and by helping as many as we can to pick themselves up and try again.

A knowledge of after-death states as given in Theosophy should also give us pause when we think about punishment, especially the crucial question of capital punishment. On this subject much has already been published, such as Mr. Judge's article "Theosophy and Capital Punishment," reprinted in *Vernal Blooms*, and *Theosophical Free Tract No. 18*, bearing the same title. Mr. Judge says:—

The killing of a human being by the authority of the state is morally wrong and also an injury to all the people; no criminal should be executed no matter what the offence. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 215)

The Theosophist who believes in the multiple nature of man... will oppose capital punishment. He sees it is unjust to the living, a danger to the state, and that it allows no chance whatever for any reformation of the criminal. (*Ibid.*, p. 219)

Capital punishment, instead of being a protection to society, is the exact opposite. When a criminal is executed he is not really dead; there is

only a violent separation of the man from his body. His *kamic* nature is now without any restraint and all the evil passions and forces are set free, as it were, to cause further damage to the community. Moreover, these forces work in a manner that leaves society at their mercy and unable to protect itself, as it is unaware of the very existence of the evil influences impinging upon it. It is important that this fact be well understood. Let us explain.

The majority of criminals die with feelings of anger, hatred and revenge aroused against the society that condemned them to death. This passion-filled consciousness, set free prematurely and violently from the body, does not disintegrate until the time when normal death would have occurred. After the shock of physical death is over, it regains a measure of self-consciousness. It thus becomes an active evil force with power to incite living people to crime. Such beings live on the same plane as that on which our own lower minds and passions and desires operate. Sensitive and nervous people may be infected with the strong vibrations of hate and malice which such executed criminals emit and in a weak moment may become obsessed and impelled thereby to commit crimes. Many an individual under trial has said that he did not know what possessed him to commit the dreadful deed.

From the point of view of the criminal it is obvious that instead of reforming him capital punishment can do him nothing but harm. Had he been allowed to live out his life, society would have been better protected and the man himself given an opportunity to realize the folly and enormity of his crime and redeem himself, might have been enabled to take his place in society once more. When, instead, he is forced out of bodily existence, his lower principles are left free to do additional harm, becoming thereby more depraved and, when finally dissolved, they will leave behind a fresh set of *skandhas*—attributes or tendencies for evil. When the ego reincarnates, it will have to pick up all these *skandhas* with their increased evil propensities and the lower principles developed therefrom will be in a worse condition than before. The chances of redemption will have been considerably lessened and society will thus have brought into its midst a being who will be to it a fresh scourge and tormentor.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

AT AN INFORMAL "OCEAN" CLASS

CHAPTER XI

I.—KARMA, NIRVANA AND THE "KARMALESS"

Q.—Isn't the habit we have of speaking of Karma and Reincarnation as separate doctrines a misleading one? Wouldn't it be better if we had one term for both of them?

Ans.—As a matter of fact, we have one term—"Action." The single term in Sanskrit is *Karma*. Throughout all the old literature, Reincarnation is simply a concomitant, a resultant, an effect of Karma, but our nature is dual and all of Nature is dual; that means that there are two sides to every question. So Karma and Reincarnation are the two sides of the question of manifested Nature. We have manifested being and manifested Nature. What are the two sides of it? Karma and Reincarnation.

Have you noticed in the statement of the Fundamentals as given in *The Secret Doctrine*, the immense change from the statement of the First Fundamental to the statement of the Second, and the immense difference between the statement of the Second and the statement of the Third? Take the Second Fundamental. It does not postulate cycles; nor does it postulate Karma and Reincarnation—it postulates the eternity of the universe *in toto*. That is the first fundamental; but in this universe *in toto* there incessantly appear and disappear the manifesting stars. So really the First and Second Fundamentals are a statement of Nature. Nature has two sides, the unmanifested side and the manifested side. The First Fundamental is the statement of Nature unqualified; the Second Fundamental is the statement of manifested Nature. The Third Fundamental is the statement of Nature as it appears to us; that is, a personified or individual manifestation of Nature as represented in us and about us. We have a pair of terms to distinguish everything; the thing of which we speak is a unity, whether it is phenomenon or noumenon, or the First Fundamental.

Q.—It is said that Spirit and Matter are a pair of opposites—but one and the same thing. Yet Karma has no effect on the Spiritual plane. How about that?

Ans.—Spirit and Matter are said to be the two poles of the one Life, a pair of opposites, and at the same time it is said that Spirit is unaffected by action. How *can* it be affected by action when it is unmanifested? Only that which is manifested can be affected by manifestation. You can't get burned in one house when you are living in some other house!

But we again have to distinguish between the various uses of terms. How would you represent in the English language what is in fact represented by the word "Nirvana"? Nirvana means, literally, "without an instrument"; that is, actionless existence, because there can be no action without a body or an instrument. That is what the Aphorisms mean: "There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it." There is no action unless there is a form or instrument of action, and Nirvana means without an instrument; therefore, it means actionless existence, unmanifested Life.

What English word shall we employ as equivalent to Nirvana? There is no other word than "Spirit." As used by H.P.B. throughout *The Secret Doctrine*, the word "Spirit" is the equivalent of Nirvana, unmanifested Nature—Nature at rest, as opposed to Nature in action. And "matter" is used fundamentally throughout *The Secret Doctrine* to mean all manifested existence in no matter what state, shape or form, highest or lowest. The Seventh *Gita* says the same thing. We say Manas-Buddhi, and think of the Spiritual; yet *The Secret Doctrine* says that Buddhi is an effect; it is matter.

Q.—H.P.B. says in *The Key to Theosophy* that

neither Atma nor Buddhi are ever reached by Karma.

Ans.—Well, what is Atma-Buddhi? It is the Self, actionless in the midst of its perfection. How could there then be any Karma? All Karma represents *imperfection*; Karma is the working over of the remains—whether we work them over today from yesterday, or this Manvantara from a former Manvantara—it is dealing always with imperfection.

We fail to realize that there is a condition of consciousness which cannot respond to discord; that is, there is a condition of Life in which there is no possibility of any consciousness of discord. In the case of the individual man, that is precisely his existence in Devachan; no discord whatever can reach the being in Devachan. He is just as unconscious of discord as we, here, are unconscious of Devachan. It is only in a world of contrasts, of impressions, that there is any possibility of pain or suffering.

Then again, the word *Spirit* is often used to distinguish man. Man is embodied Spirit as we know it, and we have but to turn to the greatest chapter on Karma and Reincarnation—the Thirteenth *Gita*—and study it thoughtfully, to see much that will clear up all our problems. Krishna says, for example, that embodied Spirit—or Purusha (individual spirit) when invested with matter—experienceth the qualities that proceed from matter. Take a being that we could imagine to be now in Nirvana. Seeing the miseries of the world, he chooses to leave and enter this earth. Then he would have to suffer the pains and pleasures of this earth! He might not permit his equilibrium to be upset by them, but if you stuck a pin in the highest of beings, he would feel it just the same as anybody else would. Our idea of a Mahatma is of one who is incapable of feeling pain. If he can feel our happiness he can also feel our woe, but he is incapable of being *disturbed* by pain, being upset by pain.

Don't you think we mistake the *bondage* of Karma for Karma itself? Everybody hates work, we say; but does he? Release this man from his job and he will go out and play football or play tennis or go out on the golf course or wrestle

with somebody and work four times as hard as he did on the bench or in the office! What is the difference? It is not in the expenditure of energy; he expends more energy in what he calls play than in what he calls work. The difference is that, in what we call play, body, senses, mind and heart are all *conjoined*.

When we think of Karma, there is in the background of our consciousness a perception of something disagreeable. Action and inaction are a pair of opposites, a pair of contrasts. We can't think of one without the other. The Self may be identified with inaction; when so identified, the Self is in Alaya, in Nirvana, in Devachan. The Self may be identified with action. When it is so identified, it is in the kingdoms below us and in the state of most men. But Self has an existence independent of both action and inaction. That's the whole theme of the *Gita*. The attachment of Self to action—that is, the more or less complete identification of Self with action—is what causes our bondage.

Q.—You spoke of a being in Nirvana becoming conscious of our woes. Can a being in Nirvana become conscious of our woes here on earth?

Ans.—As a matter of fact, the being that is in Nirvana cannot. If he is in Nirvana and he is conscious of pain, he is bound to feel it, isn't he? You can't be conscious of anything without feeling it. But if he feels pain, he isn't in Nirvana; that is a contradiction in terms. The result of evolution is the Mahatma. What is a Mahatma? He is the being who is beyond both manifested and unmanifested Nature; that is, he is beyond Karma, which is action, and he is beyond Nirvana, which is repose. Yet, how, in what sense? Why, he knows what Nirvana is—a state of measureless bliss, happiness, peace, perfectness. He knows what manifestation is, but he does not identify himself with either of them.

When you go to Devachan, that to you is the real; when you go to Nirvana, that is the real. It takes three and a half rounds to drag us out of Nirvana, we are so sure that that is all there is! In Nirvana, the Self is completely identified with bliss. The shadow of Nirvana, so to say, rests on every human being. What is it that everybody

is longing for, working for, fighting for? For happiness; that is, for enjoyment, for repose, where *he* can't be disturbed, where *he* can't suffer. There is only one way to find that place; and that is, get off the map!

So, when it was said that a being in Nirvana who is untouched by works, fruits of works or desires, sees the woes of earth and comes here, it does not make any difference if he comes in love or compassion instead of under duress: the moment he is here he feels what goes on here.

The upshot of evolution is the Mahatma. He never identifies Self with good; he never identifies Self with evil; he never identifies Self with bliss; he never identifies Self with misery; he never identifies Self with birth, or body, or circumstances, or environment, or death, or manifestation, or non-manifestation. He *knows* there is only *That* which eternally is, and That I am. That is the harvest, the fruit of evolution.

Q.—What is the difference between the Karma of animals and the Karma of Man?

Ans.—Broadly speaking, this question could be answered in a single sentence: There are no moral consequences to the animal from its actions; there is no Karma as the human being experiences Karma. Animals get the physical reaction from their actions and environment; they get the sense, or sensation—the psychic reaction—from their actions; they have no appraisal of good and evil, for this requires both self-consciousness and reason. Lacking these two balance principles, the animal can't suffer Karma in the sense that the human being does.

The difference, then, is that the real Karma of every man is moral suffering. He feels the injustice of what befalls him; that's Karma. From the standpoint of the individual being, Karma always presents, when you come to think about it, two great aspects. First, Karma is what he does; what he experiences in his actions. Second, Karma is what he feels as the *result* of what happens to him.

Q.—How about the Karma of what he *doesn't* do?

Ans.—A man may be in the world of action and refuse to act, physically. Then the result is disintegration of the body. A man may be in the mental world and refuse to act mentally. Then the result is the disintegration of the mind. We see people whose bodies are going to pieces for no other reason in the world than that they do not act. We see others going to pieces psychically, astrally, mentally, and morally because they will not act when they see that action is called for. Non-action is death, slow death.

Q.—Why is it that an animal has *physical* Karma? Why should an animal have any kind of Karma?

Ans.—Being human, and looking through human eyes, our difficulty is to avoid personifying other forms of life in nature around about us. It is these nature stories telling about what the wolf "thinks" and how the dog "chooses" that put us on the wrong track. An animal is in a world of action and has the power of action; it lives in an environment, the environment of its body, that of its senses, that of its appetites or necessities, and a *physical* environment which reacts to its own active principles. An animal can act, and does act from the moment of birth to the moment of death. There is also the other side of its action—the reaction. But Karma in our sense does not exist for the animal.

Q.—If you say an animal is not a responsible being, how do you account for the suffering that some of them undergo?

Ans.—It's our irresponsibility that makes the animal suffer, not its. We have to pay for it; we do pay for it in our moral suffering. Most of the moral suffering of humankind is the inarticulate groan of the whole of nature below man which reverberates in our own feeling, our own sense of futility and injustice. Mr. Crosbie often repeated that phrase of St. Paul: "Doth not the whole of creation groan in travail because of the iniquities of man?" The kingdoms below us are as absolutely in our power as our bodies are in our power. When we abuse our bodies, the body does not "suffer" from it—it is *we* who suffer

from that abuse. We abuse the animal kingdom in particular. It is not the animal kingdom which "suffers" in our sense; they suffer physically; they suffer psychically to a degree. But the real suffering is our own, because we are the responsible entities in manifested nature, whereas they, having neither self-consciousness nor reasoning power, can't suffer morally.

Q.—Would Karma react more strongly on an intelligent man than on an ignorant one?

Ans.—Don't we recall how Mr. Judge speaks about people whose mental and psychic and moral outlook is restricted? He says that the lower they are in the scale of being, the less they feel Karma, although they themselves may feel it to be very dreadful, very burdensome. The more refined and cultured a man is, that is, the more sensitive to the harmonies of life—doesn't it stand to reason that he will suffer the more when subjected to the disharmonies of life?

If we are keenly sensitive to harmony in some direction, say in music, our mode of life, our use of our principles in other directions may be just the reverse of our use of our principles in the direction of music. So, on the side of music we can be elevated to the highest heaven, but not having towards everything else in life the same attitude as that which we take towards music, we suffer abominably. This may explain the so-called "artistic temperament." Devoting their lives to some one aspect of nature, to some one field of possible activity or sympathy, as if that were *all*, they are then, in fact, *out of harmony* with all the rest of life.

Where our attitude is the same towards the whole of life, we tend more and more towards stable equilibrium. It would be possible for one to be sensitive to the fall of a pin on the farthest star—assuming that they have pins there—so sensitive that he could hear a sigh perhaps from some being on that farthest star, and yet move serene through the destruction of a universe. There would be poise in him. Why? Because the attitude of such a being will be the same towards all creatures, towards all that happens.

Q.—Since Karma is reaped in the place where the causes are sown, do we necessarily reap effects through the same beings with whom we set up the causes?

Ans.—Karma in itself, whether as a principle of action or the law of compensation, is absolutely and utterly impersonal. We are personal in most of our actions. To the extent to which we personify our relations with another, we have to settle with him. Does not that stand to reason? To the extent that his feeling is personally involved, he does not see Karma; he sees it personally just as we did. So whenever we are impersonal we learn from all, and that is the highest Karma there is. Our life is then an example to all. But we, taking the personal view, hate a given being or love a given being—this only means that we *personify*, we deify. So long as that feeling is in us, it will bring us in contact with that very being over and over again, until we cease to personify anything. Then what? Then all relations are relations of will, or duty, or choice, and not under duress of any kind.

Q.—Isn't that making the adjustment at the point of disturbance?

Ans.—Undoubtedly, this is the direct answer to the question: the spot, place or focus is wherever there is a disturbance, and the adjustment must necessarily be made at the point of disturbance.

Q.—Supposing the one personified or deified is impersonal in his actions towards us, but we are personal?

Ans.—An impersonal being doesn't take anything personally; therefore, he has no Karma. All Karma depends upon the way you take it. Karma consists simply of but one thing seen from two points of view: (a) it is our action; (b) it is *our* re-action—not the other fellow's.

Q.—On p. 101 (2nd Indian ed.), what is referred to in this statement?

... if he falls into indifference of thought and act, thus moulding himself into the general average karma of his race or nation, that national and race karma will at last carry him off in the general destiny. This is why

teachers of old cried, "Come ye out and be ye separate."

Ans.—Don't you feel it is perfectly clear that whoever tries to progress in anything, by that fact goes ahead of the mass? So he does come "out" from among them; he is a pioneer. Isn't it a fact that those whom we call radicals are also men who come out from among prevailing ideas or the mass mind, and seek something better? All progress, it seems, is due to that very thing.

Q.—While there is action, can equilibrium be established?

Ans.—If equilibrium is established, then there will necessarily be, under the Second Fundamental Proposition, a further period of activity. The whole thing might be said to come to rest at the centre. But there is the Spirit of Life itself, and its line of operation through its separations, always under the law of periodicity, so that there would be a *further* line of action on the basis of the experience gained. Always, where there is action or manifestation, there must be the pairs of opposites; where there is no manifestation, no pairs of opposites.

Take the question: Can there be action without a disturbance of equilibrium? Suppose I am hungry and desire food; my neighbour has food and desires to give me food; he gives me food. There certainly has been action, but has there been a disturbance of equilibrium? We forget that all disturbance of equilibrium is due to involuntary participation. Where there is *voluntary* participation on both sides, there is no disturbance in equilibrium; and there is plenty of action. All action could be without disturbance of equilibrium in the mental, moral and spiritual senses; there should be altruism in actu; that is, action without Karma.

Don't you think there is constant danger, because our state of consciousness is a personal one, of taking a personal view of Karma? There is neither morality nor immorality, neither good nor evil, neither pleasure nor pain, in the Law of Karma. The good and the evil, the pleasure and the pain, are in us, in our attitude towards Karma. Death comes to a man and he is content to die; where is the Karma for him? Death comes to a man and he wants to go on living—bad Karma, we say. Yet Karma is neither good nor bad.

CHANGING SCIENCE

In her article on "Psychic and Noetic Action" Madame H. P. Blavatsky referred to the "speculations that blossom forth today, to die tomorrow—on the shifting sands of modern scientific guess-work." (*Raja-Yoga*, p. 52) H.P.B. did not make such statements to be repeated unintelligently by her students but to stimulate critical examination of the assumptions of current thought. Criticism of the divorce of science from metaphysics and from ethics and ridicule of the ephemeral nature of scientific hypotheses are not sufficient. Criticism should be constructive, and to be constructive it must be based upon knowledge and understanding.

H.P.B. also wrote in her message to the American Theosophists of 1888:—

It is diversity of opinion, within certain limits, that keeps the Theosophical Society a living and a healthy body, its many other ugly features notwith-

standing. Were it not, also, for the existence of a large amount of uncertainty in the minds of students of Theosophy, such healthy divergencies would be impossible, and the Society would degenerate into a sect, in which a narrow and stereotyped creed would take the place of the living and breathing spirit of Truth and an ever growing Knowledge.

It must also be allowed that on the day that scientists ceased to be uncertain, ceased to change their opinions, on that day would science become as dead as any mummified religion.

Students who speak or write on science should, therefore, see beyond the fact of change to understand the nature of that change. It would not, for example, be a true comparison to liken science to that unstable person who never knows his own mind. A truer comparison would be to liken it to a rather inexperienced artist who, having cultivated the habit of careful observation of nature where other people are almost completely un-

observant, tries to produce a pencil drawing of what he observes. Constantly he has to erase pencil lines and redraw them, but slowly and patiently he achieves a fair representation of what he sees.

In the words of Max Planck:—

Physical Science demands that we admit the existence of a real world independent from us, a world which we can, however, never recognize directly but can apprehend through the medium of our sense experience and of the measurements mediated by them.

On the basis of what is apprehended a picture is drawn which is believed to approximate to a true representation of the real world. This picture is continually modified to accommodate additional observations but is never completely scrapped, and it is believed that the world picture of science approximates ever more closely to a correct representation of the real world. Probably few scientists, if any, would claim that the present world picture is necessarily near the truth, or that it can ever become a perfect representation of it. It is the quest that interests scientists and most would agree that "to travel hopefully is better than to arrive."

The foregoing is closely connected with scientists' rejection of the deductive method of reasoning in favour of the inductive and the reason for this choice should again be understood before it is criticized. Its historical origin lies in the speculative nature of Greek thought and Christian theology. In theology, for example, a doctrine such as that of the Trinity has been the premise from which deductions about the world have been made. There have been many variations of the doctrine and the resulting controversies between rival schools have been bitter and bloody. In philosophy, in the pre-scientific era, thinkers often argued in this way: The circle is the perfect figure and therefore the planetary orbits are circular. There was no attempt to settle the question by actual observation of the shape of the planetary orbits. In general, scientists in looking at the past see theologians and philosophers squabbling over their fundamental premises with no thought of an appeal to nature to settle their disputes. Where there is so much uncertainty about the fundamental premises, the

deductions therefrom cannot be reliable. Consequently the deductive method has fallen into complete disrepute among scientists.

Scientists know of only one firm ground on which to erect any logical structure: observation of nature. The observation that inflammable substances will not burn if air is excluded may be a very trivial thing compared with the doctrine of the Trinity, but it has this great advantage: no sensible man will deny it, for he can carry out the necessary experiments to prove it for himself. On the other hand, no two men can agree about general principles. Therefore the general scientific method is first to observe nature and then to seek some general hypothesis which links the observations together in a logical scheme. The hypothesis will suggest further investigation which will reveal further facts on the basis of which the original hypothesis may be modified to conform more closely to a correct picture of the real world.

The foregoing may be more understandable if an illustration is given. Clerk Maxwell, in the 19th century, connected most of the known facts of electricity in a hypothesis which, among other things, assumed the existence of an ether to which he gave a mechanical structure and properties. If such a medium existed it should be possible to detect the motion of the earth through it and the ingenuity of many experimenters was directed towards the detection and measurement of such a movement. The negative results of their experiments led to Einstein's theories of Relativity, one consequence of which was to modify the conceptions of our space and time as absolutes, another to inspire further research. Today, as a further result, apparently empty space is suspected to possess properties never dreamed of by Maxwell or his predecessors. In the preface to his recently published *History of the Theories of Æther and Electricity* Sir Edmund Whittaker, F.R.S., writes of space: "It seems absurd to retain the name 'vacuum' for an entity so rich in physical properties, and the historical word 'æther' may fitly be retained." It should be understood that no scientific hypothesis is ever regarded as the last word, except by the foolish, but only as a synthesis of known facts and a signpost to further discoveries, while all the time

scientists take as their motto the words of Wordsworth printed on the cover of the scientific journal *Nature*:—

To the solid ground
Of Nature trusts the Mind that builds for aye.

To sum up: science has abandoned the deductive method of speculative religion because, outside of blind faith, it understands no way in which the validity of the basic premises can be established; it has embraced the inductive method because the experiments and observations of one man can be repeated by another so that he, too, can satisfy himself of their validity and thus the two have an agreed starting-point.

On purely logical grounds the position of science is not easily assailed, yet the very absence of any principles of universal validity renders the whole of science of doubtful value, for it contributes nothing that can bring true content to men, nothing that can guide them through the terrible sufferings and difficulties which confront them and which threaten the existence of science itself.

It was part of H.P.B.'s mission to show that there are fundamental principles, which have been recognized and understood by wise men in every age, and that each man can establish their validity for himself.

So far as Science remains what in the words of Prof. Huxley it is, viz., "organized common sense"; so far as its inferences are drawn from accurate premises—its generalizations resting on a purely inductive basis—every Theosophist and Occultist welcomes respectfully and with due admiration its contributions to the domain of cosmological law. There can be no possible conflict between the teachings of occult and so-called exact Science, where the conclusions of the latter are grounded on a substratum of unassailable fact. It is only when its more ardent exponents, overstepping the limits of observed phenomena in order to penetrate into the arcana of Being, attempt to wrench the formation of Kosmos and its *living* Forces from Spirit, and attribute all to blind matter, that the Occultists claim the right to dispute and call in ques-

tion their theories. Science cannot, owing to the very nature of things, unveil the mystery of the universe around us. Science can, it is true, collect, classify and generalize upon phenomena; but the occultist, arguing from admitted metaphysical data declares that the daring explorer, who would probe the inmost secrets of Nature, must transcend the narrow limitations of sense, and transfer his consciousness into the region of noumena and the sphere of primal causes. To effect this, he must develop faculties which are absolutely dormant—save in a few rare and exceptional cases. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 477-8)

Her statement in the Preface of her first book deserves to be pondered over:—

It was while most anxious to solve these perplexing problems that we came into contact with certain men, endowed with such mysterious powers and such profound knowledge that we may truly designate them as the sages of the Orient. To their instructions we lent a ready ear. They showed us that by combining science with religion, the existence of God and immortality of man's spirit may be demonstrated like a problem of Euclid. For the first time we received the assurance that the Oriental philosophy has room for no other faith than an absolute and immovable faith in the omnipotence of man's own immortal self. We were taught that this omnipotence comes from the kinship of man's spirit with the Universal Soul—God! The latter, they said, can never be demonstrated but by the former. Man-spirit proves God spirit, as the one drop of water proves a source from which it must have come. Tell one who had never seen water, that there is an ocean of water, and he must accept it on faith or reject it altogether. But let one drop fall upon his hand, and he then has the fact from which all the rest may be inferred. After that he could by degrees understand that a boundless and fathomless ocean of water existed. Blind faith would no longer be necessary; he would have supplanted it with KNOWLEDGE. When one sees mortal man displaying tremendous capabilities, controlling the forces of nature and opening up to view the world of spirit, the reflective mind is overwhelmed with the conviction that if one man's spiritual *Ego* can do this much, the capabilities of the FATHER SPIRIT must be relatively as much vaster as the whole ocean surpasses the single drop in volume and potency. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; prove the soul of man by its wondrous powers—you have proved God! (*Isis Unveiled*, I. vi)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Mr. Ernest Wood's book, *The Glorious Presence*, is "a study of the Vedanta philosophy and its relation to modern thought." Indeed, Mr. Wood covers a wide ground in making his comparisons; for he considers not only the Hindu schools but a long tradition of Western thinkers, from Plato and Aristotle, through Locke, Berkeley and Hume, Kant and Schopenhauer, to Emerson and other American philosophers.

Now we should have expected that, in taking such a wide view, Mr. Wood would also discuss the significance of the Theosophical philosophy, especially its fundamental contribution as to the perspective in which comparative religion and philosophy should be viewed, since Mr. Wood has been a student of the Adyar School of Theosophy for many years. He is a member of the Theosophical Society and, after the death of Mrs. Besant, stood for the presidency of that Society, which, however, went to Mr. Arundale.

Mr. Wood must be familiar with the rich contributions to the comparative study of religious, philosophic and mystical traditions that are to be found in *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*. It is difficult to understand his silence as to Theosophy. Has it contributed nothing to the study of the subject of his book? Or has Mr. Wood come to the conclusion that its contribution is so worthless as not to deserve even a critical mention?

The article on "Comparative Philosophy and Intellectual Tolerance" which Dr. Robert L. Rein'1 of Louisiana State University contributes to the January issue of *Philosophy East and West* is a plea for the open mind. Tolerance of others' religious views may be practised, as he remarks, for the sake of social harmony, but the avoidance of dogmatism by philosophers is also necessary. The temptation to rigidity in regard even to what constitutes the proper subject-matter of philosophy has to be resisted.

...for reasonable beings, who possess, as Kant would put it, contingently determinable wills, intellectual tolerance is the moral life of reason, and comparative philosophy is one of the instruments of this life.

One who is intolerant of another's opinion without knowing it to be false, he implies, "excludes without evidence a possible means to knowledge." "To make up one's mind in advance," he writes, "is an instance of intellectual intolerance," which recalls Mr. W. Q. Judge's remark in *The Path* for January 1892 that "to judge or reject before examination is the province of little minds or prejudiced dogmatists," and also the injunction ascribed to Narada with which Mme. H. P. Blavatsky concluded the first volume of *Isis Unveiled* :—

"Never utter these words: 'I do not know this—therefore it is false.'"

"One must study to know, know to understand, understand to judge."

Dr. Rein'1 shows a truly open mind when he takes issue with the common philosophical tendency to assume a continuous philosophical advance. Intellectual tolerance, he maintains, demands keeping in mind that "knowledge may or may not involve integration." He writes:—

Although there is a tendency not to equate biological evolution with progress, the idea of progress clings to the concept of the evolution of thought, particularly when conceived in terms of the history of science.

He goes so far as to concede that "the Supreme State" of the *Katha Upanishad* is not perhaps "to be approached by the historical-cultural method." He reassures the Western reader by adding:—

These remarks need not be taken as indicating what Kwee calls "excessive reverence for ancient Oriental revelations," only caution. If we do not wish to exclude in advance the possible significance of statements, then we must be prepared for the possibility that wisdom has already been born.

Theosophy teaches that it *has* been born and that we have to recover, not discover it.

All too easily human beings excuse their inactivity and failure to take a stand for righteousness and peace by the old, unworthy phrase that paralyzes effort: "What can one man do?" Mr. Horace Alexander, a member of the Society of Friends, who addressed the Indian Institute of

Culture, Basavangudi, Bangalore, on April 9th on "Non-Violence in the Atomic Age," warned against assuming that the individual could do nothing for the cause of peace merely because atomic warfare had ruled out certain modes of action. Even the negative aspect of conscientious objection to participation in the military effort took courage and had its own value. In the last war, when a man who had held a good position in a factory which was partly converted into war production had sacrificed his post and taken a labourer's job rather than contribute to the war effort, it had made a great impression on his fellow workers.

The positive aspect of non-violence, *Satyagraha*, the power of Soul force, Mr. Alexander defined as "the power to face all difficulties with love and imagination, those forces which held us all together, and to find within ourselves the means to identify ourselves with others' points of view." Gandhiji, he said, had reached such a measure of self-identification with others' difficulties that he had said he would choose to be reborn an Untouchable, the better to help the members of that group as one of themselves. Yet he had been an ordinary man, a successful lawyer. There is an inspiration in that fact for other ordinary men, including Theosophical students, for Gandhiji had become the extraordinary power that he had been for liberating the forces for good, not because he was singularly endowed but because his conscience had been active and he had followed it with all the power of his will.

He denied, in answer to a question, that Truth force was "righteous indignation." He was very doubtful about "righteous indignation," so called. Usually, he said, the indignation got much the better of the righteousness!

The "Open Door" movement of the Peace Builders' Work-Study Travel Group (1109 Sterling Avenue, Berkeley 8, California, U.S.A.) is an effort at helping to bring into being a non-violent social order. This Group, with working committees or contacts in many countries, is seeking to build up a comprehensive system of "open doors" throughout most of the world, to facilitate

social study by young peace workers who pay their own way except for the hospitality received.

The programme laid down for themselves by the promoters of this Group seems very sound. Nothing spectacular is being attempted. The prospectus is a very modest four-page leaflet. It seeks only to facilitate the coming together of the people who can make the movement live, helping each other "to find the inspiration, understanding and courage necessary" for an organic movement to grow. Contributions are welcome but are not solicited. Though without special sources of income, it asks only for "practical help, believing it is the personal efforts and friendships that our world badly needs, and less emphasis on the materialistic things." In this, the humblest co-operation is welcomed as service to "young people who want to learn how they may build their lives on service to peace and to their fellow men." People are invited to offer hospitality, if only a mattress on the floor for two nights, or meals, or to help a visitor contact interesting community activities and worth-while people, or to find work for visitors, or write letters, or translate.

There is much in the task which this Group has laid down for itself that is both practical service and in accordance with Theosophical principles and students of Theosophy will wish their movement well.

The decision of the Government of India that in future Buddha Purnima shall be observed as a public holiday throughout India, beginning with May 27th this year, is a highly commendable one. It has been a sad anomaly that Gautama Buddha, commonly conceded to be one of the greatest (many hold, the greatest) of the sons of India, should not be thus honoured in the country of his birth. India honours herself in honouring the great Enlightened One by proclaiming the triple anniversary of his Birth, his Enlightenment and his Death a public holiday. Indians will, it is hoped, celebrate the day in the right spirit of reverence, turning to the Buddha's wise and compassionate words in the *Dhammapada* and other collections of his priceless sermons, which recognize the great fact of Sorrow, but also show its Cause and point the way to its Cure.

BOOKS

By H. P. BLAVATSKY

Isis Unveiled

Centenary Anniversary Edition. A photographic reprint of the original edition of 1877. Two volumes bound in one.

The Secret Doctrine

A photographic reprint of the original edition of 1888. Two volumes bound in one.

The Theosophical Glossary

A photographic reprint of the original edition of 1892.

Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge

The Key to Theosophy

Raja-Yoga or Occultism

The Voice of the Silence

Five Messages

By W. Q. JUDGE

Vernal Blooms

The Ocean of Theosophy

Letters That Have Helped Me

Echoes from the Orient

The Bhagavad-Gita

Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita

The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali

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Information as to the meeting place and times of meetings may be had from the United Lodge of Theosophists, Bombay.

The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

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

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

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

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge as set forth in its "Declaration" I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate; it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the Form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished to Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

Correspondence should be addressed to: The U. L. T., 51 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay.

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