

World Culture
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Bengaluru
सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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SRIMATHI KANTHIMATHI KUMAR
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THE TATHAGATA SHOWS THE WAY

King Milinda said: “Did you, revered Nagasena, see the Buddha?”

“No, sire.”

“Then did your teachers see the Buddha?”

“No, sire.”

“Well, then, revered Nagasena, there is not a Buddha.”

“But have you, sire, seen the Himalayan river Uha?”

“No, revered sir.”

“Then did your father ever see it?”

“No, revered sir.”

“Well then, sire, there is not a river Uha.”

“There is, revered sir. Even if neither my father nor I have seen it, there is the river Uha all the same.”

“Even so, sire, even if neither my teachers nor I have seen the Lord, there is the Lord all the same... He who sees Dhamma sees the Lord; for Dhamma, sire, was taught by the Lord.”

—*Milindapanha*

According to Buddhist history and tradition, Prince Siddhartha who became the Buddha was born on the full-moon day of the Hindu-Buddhist month of Vaisakh; on the same day 35 years later he attained enlightenment; on the same day when he was 80 years old he cast off his body of flesh. The Buddhist world celebrates this triple festival annually, and this year it falls on the 19th of May.

All students of Theosophy revere the memory of the Enlightened One and know of the spiritual kinship subsisting between his pure teachings and Theosophy. Stripped of its dogmas and ritualistic practices, 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. The Buddha taught that he who takes refuge in the Enlightened Ones, in the Dhamma, the Law or the Teachings reiterated by Them, and in the Sangha or the Brotherhood of Co-Disciples, would in time be free from all pain; for “that, verily, is the safe refuge, the best refuge.” The disciples of the Buddha down the ages have re-

peated the vow, "I take my refuge in the Buddha; I take my refuge in the Dhamma; I take my refuge in the Sangha" — words of power which dispel doubt and give the soul renewed strength to fight the ancient foes: *Mara*, Passion, and *Avidya*, Ignorance. Today laymen also repeat the words and they have lost at least some of their sacredness, just as has been the case with so many other things in other religions.

What does taking refuge in the Buddha imply? The Buddha proclaimed himself to be but one of the Deathless Race of Buddhas. In his lifetime he was addressed by the title of Tathagata — he who follows in the footsteps of his Illustrious Predecessors. The Buddhist recognizes a long line of Buddhas, as the Hindu speaks of the *Guruparampara* — the ever-lengthening chain of Gurus, each of whom is but a *shishya*, a pupil, to a mightier Lord. The office of the Guru was deemed essential and was greatly revered in the olden days when Soul-life was more of a reality than it is today.

In no country of the ancient world was the Ideal of the Guru higher, or better recognized, than in India; today it is corrupted to degradation and it is now said that at every street corner one can find a guru. These sham gurus, the worst kind of exploiters of the minds and hearts of men, have overrun this land because would-be pupils did not ascertain the credentials of their chosen guru. There have been many whose aspiration has been exploited but who could have saved themselves by a humble but cautious examination of the claimants and their claims. The first step, to quote the words of H.P.B., is to "compare all things, and, putting aside emotionalism as unworthy of the logician and the experimentalist, hold fast only to that which passes the ordeal of ultimate analysis."

The Buddha taught never to believe merely on authority but to test the latter by means of one's personal reason and highest intuition. The true teacher is not he who invents new ideas — for great ideas are never invented; they are new only in the sense that they are never out of date — but he who, having rediscovered them through his own search and effort, is able to assimilate them, to make them part of his own store of knowledge and to reproclaim them for the daily needs of ordinary men. The Buddha, like other great Teachers, never claimed that he could dispel others' ignorance, sorrows or fears; he taught man to trace the source of his troubles and unhappiness to himself, to take his life into his own hands and himself to direct the process of his growth. His message of self-reliance, self-energization and self-redemption is his legacy to the ages.

The greatness of the Buddha consists not merely in the fact that, after efforts continued through many births, he rediscovered the Path to *Nirvana* and himself won the right to that state of Emancipation and Eternal Bliss — only to renounce it in order to remain with suffering humanity — but in his having rendered the attainment of *Nirvana* once more practicable for countless millions of human beings. The Path he showed could be trodden by *all*. Universality is the hall-mark of his age-

less Teaching.

Like all true Teachers his role was that of an Instructor as to the Way. To laymen his teaching was a simple one: All men suffer; but there is a way by which suffering, both personal and collective, can be overcome. Tracing the root of all misery in this jungle of life to *Trishna*, *Tanha*, *Kama*, the thirst and longing for sensuous existence, he taught that the force of passion overpowering the force of Compassion in the human heart produces strife, just as Compassion overpowering passion creates the peace and serenity of *Nirvana*.

The Buddha could be as profound in his teaching to his disciples as he could be simple in his exposition to lay people. The following from the *Majjhima Nikaya* (iii. 107), as translated by F. L. Woodward in *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, throws light on his technique as a Promulgator of the Law:—

Thus have I heard. Once the Exalted One was staying at Savatthi, in East Park, at the storeyed house of Migara's mother.

Then the brahmin Moggallana, the accountant, came to the Exalted One and gave Him friendly greeting, and after the exchange of courtesies sat down at one side. So seated, the brahmin Moggallana, the accountant, said this to the Exalted One:

“Just as, Master Gotama, one gets a gradual view of this storeyed house, a progress, a graduated path, and so on right up to the last step of the stairs, just so is the progressive training of us brahmins: that is to say, in our course of study (in the Vedas). Just as in a course of archery, the training of archers is a progressive training, so also, Master Gotama, with us brahmins the training, the progress, the approach is step by step; for instance, in counting. When we take a private pupil we make him count thus: ‘Once one, twice two, thrice three, four times four,’ and so on up to a hundred. Now is it possible, Master Gotama, for this Norm-Discipline of yours to point to a similar progressive training?”

“It is so, brahmin. Take the case, brahmin, of a clever horse-trainer. He takes a thoroughbred in hand, gives him his first lesson with bit and bridle, and then proceeds to the further course. Just so, brahmin, the Tathagata takes in hand a man who is to be trained and gives him his first lesson, thus: ‘Come thou, brother! Be virtuous. Abide constrained by the restraint of the obligation. Become versed in the practice of right behaviour; seeing danger in trifling faults, do you undertake the training and be a pupil in the moralities.’

“As soon as he has mastered all that, the Tathagata gives him his second lesson, thus: ‘Come thou, brother! Seeing an object with the eye, be not charmed by its general appearance or its details. Persist in the restraint of that dejection that comes from craving, caused by remaining with the sense of sight uncontrolled, those ill states which would overwhelm one like a flood. Guard the sense of sight, win control over the sense of sight. And so do with the other organs of sense. When you hear

a sound with the ear, or smell a scent with the nose, taste a taste with the tongue, or with body touch things tangible, and when with mind you are conscious of a thing, be not charmed with its general appearance.'

"As soon as he has mastered all that, the Tathagata gives him a further lesson, thus: 'Come thou, brother! Be moderate in eating; earnest and heedful do you take your food, not for sport, not for indulgence, not for adding personal charm or comeliness to body, but do it for body's stablishing, for its support, for protection from harm, and for keeping up the practice of the righteous life, with this thought: "I will check my former feeling. To no new feeling will I give rise, that maintenance and comfort may be mine."'

"Then, brahmin, when he has won restraint in food, the Tathagata gives him a further lesson, thus: 'Come thou, brother! Abide given to watchfulness. By day, when walking or sitting, cleanse your heart from things that may hinder you. By night spend the first watch walking up and down or sitting, and do likewise. By night in the second watch, lie down on the right side in the posture of a lion, and placing one foot upon the other, mindful and self-possessed, set your thoughts on the idea of exertion. Then in the third watch of the night, rise up, and walking up and down, or sitting, cleanse the heart of things that may hinder.'

"Then, brahmin, when the brother is devoted to watchfulness, the Tathagata gives him a further lesson, thus: 'Come thou, brother! Be possessed of mindfulness and self-control. In going forth or going back, have yourself under control. In looking forward or looking back, in bending or relaxing, in wearing robes or carrying robe and bowl, in eating, chewing, tasting, in easing yourself, in going, standing, sitting, lying, sleeping or waking, in speaking or keeping silence, have yourself under control.'

"Then, brahmin, when he is possessed of self-control, the Tathagata gives him a further lesson, thus: 'Come thou, brother! Seek out a secluded lodging, a forest or root of a tree, a mountain or cave or mountain-grotto, a charnel field, a forest retreat, the open air, a heap of straw.' And he does so. And when he has eaten his food he sits down crosslegged, and keeping his body straight up he proceeds to practise the Four Musings....

"Now, brahmin, for all brothers who are pupils, who have not yet attained mastery of mind, who abide aspiring for the security unsurpassed (which is Nibbana) ... such is the manner of my training.

"But as to those brethren who are Arahants [perfected disciples], who have destroyed the *asavas* [the three fundamental tendencies: sensual desire, desire for existence, ignorance], who have lived the life, done their task, laid down the burden, won their own salvation, utterly destroyed the fetters of becoming, and are released by the perfect insight — for such as those these things are conducive to ease in the present life and to mindful self-control as well."

FACTS AND IDEATIONS

[The following article was printed in two parts in *The Theosophist*, Vol. VI, pp. 253-255 and 289-290, for August and September 1885.—EDS.]

The current of public attraction runs towards psychic phenomena, and is becoming in Europe stronger every year. Even German science and philosophy are beginning to feel interested: Professor Virchoff of Berlin, once the sternest opponent of the claims of mediumship and the personal enemy of Dr. Slade, is said to have fallen a victim to evidence, and is preparing to investigate psychic manifestations with scales and crucible. On the other hand the well-known philosopher, E. von Hartmann, has just published a new work, called *Der Spiritismus*.

The writer of these lines is not yet acquainted with the views held on spiritualism *proper* by that distinguished disciple of Schopenhauer; but the probability that he attributes most of its phenomena to "illusion" is very great. The evening takes its character generally from the day that has preceded it; hence the *Philosophy of the Unconscious* should find itself reflected in *Der Spiritismus*. Phenomena will not be denied, but their objective and subjective, their physical and mental manifestations will be grouped together, and crammed within the narrow boundaries of that philosophy of negation that would see in our notions of matter the "mere illusions of our senses" — in each and every case.

However this may be, we would bring to the notice of those of our readers who are interested in the question, several new cases that have been mentioned in European papers; and which, having been thoroughly investigated and found as authentic as undeniable, have greatly puzzled some learned materialists, who refuse to account for them.

It is difficult to find a man or a woman who has lived and died without ever having experienced some feeling of presentiment, generated with no visible cause, yet justified after days, weeks, or perchance long years. The book of Futurity, which is said to have been wisely closed to every mortal eye, opens, nevertheless, its pages to many among the sons of earth; to so many, indeed, that an impartial observer may find it awkward now to regard such cases as simple exceptions to the rule. As Wilkie Collins so justly remarks — "Among the workings of the hidden life within us, which we may experience but cannot explain, are there any more remarkable than those mysterious moral influences constantly exercised, either for attraction or repulsion, by one human being over another? In the simplest, as in the most important affairs of life, how startling, how irresistible is their power!" And if no biologist or physiologist can as yet explain to us, in accordance with the canons of his science, why it is that we prophesy so often and so truly to ourselves "the approach of friend or enemy just before either has really appeared"; or another daily and quite common occurrence even among

the most sceptical — why we become convinced “so strangely and abruptly, at a first introduction, that we shall secretly love this person and loathe that, before experience has guided us with a single fact in relation to their characters.” If the causes of such frequent mental phenomena are left unexplained by our latter-day philosophers, how shall they account for the following facts, that are now being commented upon in all the St. Petersburg and Warsaw papers?

A poor seamstress living at St. Petersburg had, by perseverance and hard work, become a clever dressmaker. Finding her only baby troublesome and an impediment to her work, and unable to hire a nurse to take care of the little girl, she entrusted the child, for a small remuneration, to a friend who lived in the country. During the eighteen months of the child’s stay in the friend’s family, the poor mother visited her occasionally, and remained each time very well satisfied with the care her baby was receiving. She had meanwhile worked harder than ever, and during that period had succeeded in her business so well that she had already begun to contemplate the possibility of taking her child home once more.

About the end of April last, a few days after one of her country trips, which she had decided would be the last one, as she had now the means of hiring a nurse, she was visited by two acquaintances. Happy in having found her little girl so rosy and healthy, she was sitting with her two friends at her afternoon tea, talking merrily with them about her intention of fetching the child home. A lady had dropped in, a rich and well-known “patroness,” with an order for a costume to be made without delay. These are the three witnesses — the wealthy aristocrat, and the two poor seamstresses — who, later on, vouched for the truth of the strange occurrence that took place in their presence.

The mother was at the window, with the rich material brought by the lady in her hands, measuring it and discussing with her customer the mysteries of its transformation into a Spring attire, when the doorbell was suddenly rung. Mrs. L—(the name of the dressmaker) opened the door and let in a little old woman, modestly dressed in deep mourning, and very delicate in appearance. All those present were struck with the livid pallor of her face and the great sweetness of her tone and manners. The newcomer was evidently a lady.

“Are you Mrs L—?” she asked, addressing the dressmaker, and upon receiving an answer in the affirmative, added: “I have brought you some work. Here is a piece of fine white muslin. You will kindly prepare out of it a little cap and a long gown for a dead child, a baby two years old, one of my many grandchildren.”

“Your order, of course, has to be executed immediately and I have other work to do, that cannot be put aside,” remarked the dressmaker sympathetically.

“Not at all,” was the quick answer. “I shall not need it until this day fortnight, not one hour earlier. My little girl has been taken ill with measles today, and *will not die before that time.*”

Mrs. L— could not help smiling in answer to the rather amused looks of her rich customer and her own female friends, at such a careful preparation in anticipation of a possible future event. But she said nothing and undertook to prepare the order for the day named.

Two days later she received a letter informing her that her own child had been taken ill with measles, and on the very morning of the visit of the mysterious old lady in black. The disease had become serious and the mother was summoned in all haste. Thirteen days later the child died, *just a fortnight after the order received* for the funeral clothes. But the little old woman never came to claim them for *her* grandchild. A month passed, and “the little cap and long gown” are there still as a living remembrance to the bereaved mother of her own loss and sorrow.

This weird event reminds one of the story told of the way in which Mozart’s “Requiem” came into existence — remarks the correspondent of *Swyet*, a Russian paper.

Another puzzling fact which attracted attention, owing to its principal hero having belonged to the highest nobility, is copied by all the principal papers of Germany and Russia.

A well-known resident of Warsaw, the rich Count O— of B—, finding himself in the first stage of consumption, and when there was as yet no immediate danger to his life, called his friends and relatives into the house of his parents and declared to them that he was going to die on the following day at 12 o’clock precisely, notwithstanding the protests of those present. He coolly gave an order for a coffin to be made and brought into his room on that same night. After that, he sent for a priest, and paid him in advance for a certain number of masses and *requiems*; made his will, and ended by sending printed letters of invitation to his own funeral to a number of his friends and acquaintances. The black-bordered cards were addressed by himself, in his own handwriting, and appointed the exact date and hour of the solemn ceremony for the transfer of the body from the house to the cathedral; as also the day of the burial. On the next day, as foretold, he dressed himself in a black evening suit, white tie, and gloves which he carefully buttoned, after which, placing himself in the coffin a few minutes before the clock struck twelve, he *laid himself out* in prescribed form, and — expired at the appointed hour. The case appeared so strange to the authorities that an autopsy was ordered; but no traces of poison or violent death by other means were found.

Was this *prevision*, or a consequence of a fixed idea; of an imagination so strongly overexcited, that death had to become subservient to the thought? Who can say?

The first symptom of approaching death — Wakley tells us — “is, with some, the strong presentiment that they are about to die.”

Then, the author mentions Ozanam, the mathematician, who, while in apparent good health, rejected pupils, “from the feeling that he was on the eve of resting from his labours.” He expired very soon after of

an apoplectic stroke.

Mozart wrote his "Requiem" mentioned above under the firm belief that this *chef-d'œuvre* of his genius was written for himself; that it would be heard for the first time over his own remains. When death was fast approaching he called for the *partiture* and, addressing those present, musingly asked: "Did I not tell you truly that it was for myself that I composed this death chant?" The order for the latter was given to him, as is well known, in a strange vision or dream, and Wakley thinks that John Hunter has solved the mystery of such presentiments in one sentence — "if mystery it can be called," he adds sceptically. "We sometimes," says the great physiologist, "feel within ourselves that we shall not live; for the living powers become weak, and the nerves communicate the intelligence to the brain."

To this Wakley also adds that certain circumstances when health is failing, are often accepted *as omens*. He says, "The order for the 'Requiem' with Mozart, the dreams with Fletcher, turned the current of their thoughts to the grave." But forthwith the learned sceptic contradicts his own theory by narrating the case of Wolsey, reminding us somewhat of the one just mentioned that happened at Warsaw. The probability of near dissolution can certainly turn "the current of the thought" to an intimate assurance of death; when, however, that assurance makes us foresee and point out the exact hour, to the minute, of our death, there must be something besides the "natural current of thought" to help and guide our intuition so unerringly. In Wakley's own words, "The case of Wolsey was singular." The morning before he died he asked Cavendish the hour, and was answered, "Past eight." "Eight!" said Wolsey; "that cannot be; eight of the clock, nay, nay, it cannot be eight of the clock, for by eight of the clock shall you lose your master." The day he miscalculated; the hour came true. On the following morning, as the clock struck eight, his troubled spirit passed from life.

While rejecting the theory of Cavendish that Wolsey had received a *revelation*, Wakley suspects "from the way in which the fact had taken possession of his mind — that he (Wolsey) relied on astrological prediction, which had the credit of a revelation in his own esteem."

Astrology, notwithstanding the scorn of the nineteenth century, is not always a vain pretence. Astronomy and astrology are twin-sisters, that were equally respected and studied in antiquity. It is but yesterday that the dogmatic arrogance of Western astronomers reduced the elder sister to the position of the Cinderella in the household of Science: modern astronomy profits by the works of ancient astrology and kicks it out of sight. "The contemplation of celestial things will make man both speak and think more sublimely and magnificently when he descends to human affairs" — says Cicero. The West will yet return to astrology and thus vindicate the intuition of the East, where it has been always cultivated.

"The body being only the covering of the soul, at its dissolution we shall discover all the secrets of nature and darkness shall be dispelled."

Such is the "ideation" of the sage Seneca.

MAN is composed of two bodies, the *internal* and the *external*; the inner one being moreover, double, *i.e.*, having, in its turn, a semi-physical outer shell which serves as the *astral* being only during the lifetime of man; while the latter is still in seeming health, the dissolution of the former, or rather of its outer shell, may have already begun. For, during its captivity in the living body, the "double" — or that covering of the astral form that alone survives — is too closely bound by its jailor (man), too much encumbered with the physical particles derived from the prison of flesh within which it is confined, not to imperiously require, before the astral form proper is set entirely free, to be thrown off from the latter. Thus, this preliminary process of purification may be justly called "the dissolution of the *inner* man," and it begins much earlier than the agony or even the final disease of the physical man. Let us admit so much and then ask: why should we require, in such a case, in order to account for the insight some persons have of the hour of their death, to explain the phenomenon by "revelation" from *without*, supernaturalism, or the still more unsatisfactory hypothesis of a purely physiological character as given by Hunter and Wakley, and that explain to us moreover nothing at all? During and after the dissolution of the "double,"¹ the darkness of our human ignorance beginning to be dispelled, there are many things we can see. Among these, things hidden in futurity, the nearest events of which, overshadowing the purified "soul," have become to her as the present. The "former-self" is making room for the *actual*-self, the latter to be transformed in its turn, after the final dissolution of both the "double" and the physical body, into the "Eternal Ego." Thus the "*actual*-self" may pass its knowledge to the physical brain of man; and thus also we may see and hear the precise hour of our death striking on the clock of eternity. It is made visible to us through the decaying nature of our dying "double," the latter surviving us during a very short period, if at all,² and through the newly acquired powers of the purified "soul" (the higher *tetraktis* or quaternary) as yet in its integral whole, and which is already possessing itself

¹ That such dissolution *has* to precede that of the physical body, is proved to us by several things. One of these is the well ascertained *fact* (to those, of course, who believe in such facts) that the astral doubles of living men—of *sorcerers* for instance—fear steel, and may be wounded by sword or fire; their wounds, moreover, reacting upon and leaving marks and scars upon the physical shells—whereas the astral bodies of even the "Elementary apparitions"—*cannot be hurt*.—ED., *The Theosophist*.

² When the "double" of the living man has been disintegrated before the death of man, it is annihilated for ever. When, however, death comes suddenly, it may survive the body that held it captive, but then, the process of dissolution going on outside of the dead body, the "soul" suffers, and *in its impatience tries often to throw off the particles that encumber its freedom and chain it to the earth upon the living*—says the M.S.S. of the Copt Terentius. The cases of accidental *deaths and suicides* are fairly described in Mr. A. P. Sinnett's *Fragments of Occult Truth* by a Lay Chela. (See *Theosophist*.) Suicides fare the worst.—ED., *The Theosophist*.

of those faculties that are in store for it, on a higher plane. Through our "soul" it is then that we see, clearer and still clearer, as we approach the end; and it is through the throbs of dissolution that horizons of vaster, profounder knowledge are drawn on, bursting upon our mental vision, and becoming with every hour plainer to our inner eye. Otherwise, how account for those bright flashes of memory, for the prophetic insight that comes as often to the enfeebled grandsire, as to the youth who is passing away? The nearer some approach death, the brighter becomes their long lost memory and the more correct the previsions. The unfolding of the inner faculties increases as life-blood becomes more stagnant.

Truly is life on earth like a day passed in a deep valley surrounded on all sides by high mountains and with a cloudy, stormy sky above our heads. The tall hills conceal from us every horizon, and the dark clouds hide the sun. It is only at the close of the stormy day that the sunshine, breaking through the clefts of the rocks, affords us its glorious light to enable us to catch occasional glimpses of things around, behind and before us.

Another subject has interested the mystically inclined of the capital of the Russian Empire; namely, a lecture given, March 27th, at the "Pedagogical Museum," by Prof. N. Wagner, the eminent naturalist and no less eminent spiritualist. Whatever the views of that great man of science about the powers that may be behind the so-called mediumistic manifestations, the professor has evidently assimilated the Vedantic and even the Adwaita theories about "Life and Death" — the subject of his lecture.

The vexed question about Life and Death, said the lecturer, preoccupied many other philosophers besides Hamlet. Eminent naturalists, physicians and thinkers have vainly endeavoured to solve the great mystery. Various men of science have given us various definitions of life. Bichat, for instance, defines life as a faculty to withstand natural laws, while another scientist says that life represents a series of modifications and is a faculty in living beings to oppose and resist the destructive powers of nature. Cuvier, the famous physiologist, finds that life is the faculty in creatures of constant change, preserving meanwhile certain particles, and ridding themselves on the other hand of those elements which prove to them useless and would be injurious if left. Kemper tells us that life is only a constant modification of substances.

According to Herbert Spencer, "life is a co-ordination of action" and "an adaptation of the interior processes to external conditions."

All of the above definitions are found incorrect by Professor Wagner, as well they may be. They sketch only the external side of life without touching its essence. The universal manifestation of life, said the lecturer, rises progressively in all its phenomena from the simplest forms toward the most complex. "What then may be the causes, what are the

forces," he asks, "that govern life and modify it? It is from this standpoint that we shall examine the life-phenomenon. Life is a chemical manifestation, we are told by the majority of our physiologists. *Chemism* is the prominent feature in vegetable and animal organisms."

Kant has defined life as the motion of composition and decomposition, in which chemical action plays the most prominent part.

Schelling declared that "life is an aspiration towards individuality; it is the synthesis, harmonizing those processes that are accomplished in the organism!" Then how can we believe, enquires the lecturer, "that this *individuality* disappears with our death? The soil of the province of Champagne consists of microscopical shells, the whole city of Paris is built on a soil that is the remaining relic of organic life. In nature, that which *was* is ever preparing that which *will be*. Life is an ENERGY (the ONE LIFE of Esoteric Philosophy? — ED.). *All individual energies have, sooner or later, to merge into, and become one with, the UNIVERSAL ENERGY.*"

Thus saith the lecturer. It is, as Longfellow has it,

... Ah! the souls of those that die
Are but sunbeams lifted higher. . . .

The spiritual SUN within which they merge finally, not to disappear but to return to earth as other sunbeams, is no "Land" from whence visitors can appear to us in their *individuality*. A little heat left behind is *not* the sunbeam, but the remnant of its chemical action, as the *photograph* is not the person it represents but his reflection. But,

Spirits they say,
Flit round invisible, as thick as motes
Dance in the sunbeam. If that spell,
Or necromancer's sigil can compel them
They shall hold council with men. . . .

If for "necromancer" we write "medium," the lines quoted will represent the hidden spirit and object of the learned lecturer who, nevertheless, winds up his lecture by a remark that no Vedantin would disavow. Prof. Wagner is a well-known *orthodox* spiritualist. How then can he, who shows on undeniable and scientific grounds that all the "individual energies," *i.e.*, "souls," merge into, and finally become one with "universal energy" (the PARABRAHM of the Vedanta) or the universal soul; how can he harmonize this belief with that in the "spirits" of spiritualism? It is a strange contradiction. For our spirit is either *the* "sunbeam" of Longfellow's poetical metaphor, or it is only "dancing in the sunbeam" agreeably to James Duff's imagery. It cannot be both.

Life and *death* are as much of a mystery to the man of science as they are to the spiritualist and the profane unbeliever. The less they talk of it, in the present chaotic state of knowledge with reference to that great riddle, the better for the truth. Modern science and spiritualism are two opposite poles. One denies pointblank everything outside chemical action

and matter; the other by its own fanciful arrangement sets both at nought; and thus the middle ground of sound philosophy and logic is abandoned. Science will not hear of the metaphysics of the spiritualists, and the latter will not admit the theory of even that transcendental chemical action that the Theosophists show as playing a more important part in the likenesses of their dead — that so bewilder people — than the *spiritual* “energy” of disembodied friends.

However, that is a moot question that we shall leave the combatants who are directly interested to settle among themselves. Both claim to be guided by the *logic of facts*, and both claim for their respective opinions the name of “philosophy,” and so far — both are right and both are wrong. The method of materialistic exact science is that philosophy that

... will clip an angel's wings,
 Conquer all mysteries by rule and line;
 Empty the haunted air and 'gnomed mine —
 Unweave a rainbow....

The “philosophy” of the spiritualists consists in rejecting every other philosophy save their own. They will prove a formidable foe to the former, however. The men of science call spiritualism a “mischievous superstition,” as Pliny and the men of his day called rising Christianity “a most pernicious sect.” They and the leaders of Spiritualism have a mutual right to complain of each other; for, as Fielding has it, “if superstition renders a man a fool, scepticism makes him MAD.” Neither of the two enemies, however, knows anything of the mysteries of life and death; though both behave as if each of them had become the sole confidants of Nature, in whose ear the weird Sphinx had whispered the word of her great riddle. The Materialist *scorns* death; he fears him not, he says, for in his sight there is no “hereafter.” The Spiritualist welcomes “the Angel with the amaranthine wreath,” singing, “Oh Death, where is thy sting?” etc. And yet, ten to one, the majority on both sides prefer life to that change which, according to their respective views, disintegrates the one into chemical molecules, and transforms the other into a dematerialized Angel!

Which of them is right and which wrong, time alone — that great Revealer of hidden truths — will decide. To the writer, who rejects the speculations of both, keeping on the safe side of the middle path, Death, before whose majestic stillness and tranquillity so many shudder with fear, has no terrors; perhaps, because he does not endow it with any more mystery than needed. Death is “the old, old fashion” that crept to the little Paul Dombey's rescue; and life, but the swift river that bears us all to that Ocean of rest.... “Put me quietly in the earth, place a sun-dial over my grave, and let me be forgotten,” prays John Howard, who found, perhaps, as we do, that people make too much fuss over death and too little over the birth of every new candidate for it. Life is at best a play, often a drama, but far more frequently partaking of the

element of a low comedy. It "is a phenomenon" after which the curtain is dropped, the light extinguished, and the hero, tired out, drops into his bed with a feeling of delicious relief. As Shakespeare expresses it:—

Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

—BETA

What kind of immortality is at all conceivable? Of all doctrines of a future life palingenesis or rebirth, which carries with it the idea of pre-existence, is by far the most ancient and most widely held, "the only system to which," as said Hume, "philosophy can hearken." "The soul is eternal and migratory, say the Egyptians," reports Laertius. In its existence birth and death are events. And though this doctrine has for European thought a strangeness, it is in fact the most natural and easily imagined, since what has been can be again. This belief, taught by Pythagoras, to which Plato and Plotinus were attached, has been held by Christian fathers as well as by many philosophers since the dawn of civilization. It "has made the tour of the world," and seems, indeed, to be in accordance with nature's own favourite way of thought, of which she so insistently reminds us, in her rhythms and recurrences, her cycles and revolving seasons. "It presents itself," wrote Schopenhauer, "as the natural conviction of man whenever he reflects at all in an unprejudiced manner."

According to Plato's theory of reminiscence, our present knowledge is a recollection of what was learnt or known by the soul in a previous state. You will say, it has no knowledge of its previous lives. But what man remembers every day of his life? And lost memories, as the psychologist will tell you, are recoverable. For the memory appears to be a palimpsest, from which nothing is ever obliterated. If we have forgotten most days and incidents of our present lives it is natural that memories of previous lives should fail us. Yet from infancy every forgotten day and hour has added to our experiences, to our growth and capacity. All that a child was and did, though unremembered, is still a part of him and is knit up into his present nature. Every day and hour had its value and made its contribution to the mind and soul. So it may be with former lives, each of them but a day in our past history. The universe is wide, and life here or elsewhere might on this view be regarded as a self-prescription, a venture willed by the soul for some end and through some prompting of its own, to enlarge its experience, learn more of the universe, recover lost friends, or resume a task begun but not fulfilled.

—W. MACNEILE DIXON in *The Human Situation*

“UNITY IN VARIETY”

In this article are set down a few reflections set in train by the reading of a recent book, *Science and Human Values* by Dr. Jacob Bronowski, distinguished scientist and man of letters. It brings together three essays: “The Creative Mind,” “The Habit of Truth” and “The Sense of Human Dignity.” The titles alone convey their quality. They are the work of a truly liberal mind.

The theme of the first essay is suggestive of the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine* and of W. Q. Judge’s article “The Synthesis of Occult Science.” In it Dr. Bronowski quotes the words which appear as the title of this article. They are, he says, a definition of beauty by Coleridge.

Dr. Bronowski argues that what we see, as we see it, in nature is mere disorder.

For order does not display itself of itself; if it can be said to be there at all, it is not there for the mere looking. There is no way of pointing a finger or a camera at it; order must be discovered and, in a deep sense, it must be created.

Science and art are equally activities of the creative mind, for the discoveries of the former and the works of the latter are explorations of the likenesses hidden under the appearances of nature.

Of his supporting illustrations three may be mentioned. The crux of the story of Newton and the apple was not that he attempted to explain the fall of the apple but that he explored a hidden likeness between the fall of the apple and the movement of the moon. In the words of Dr. Bronowski,

the apple in the summer garden and the grave moon overhead are surely as unlike in their movements as two things can be. Newton traced in them two expressions of a single concept, gravitation: and the concept (and the unity) are in that sense his free creation.

We need not concern ourselves with the adequacy or inadequacy of gravitation as a concept in terms of which we can explain the happenings in nature. What is significant is that the human mind should seek a unity in what the senses tell us are utterly different things, and is never defeated in that search.

The other two illustrations selected are concerned with poetry. Dr. Bronowski asks: “What is a poetic image but the seizing and the exploration of a hidden likeness, in holding together two parts of a comparison which are to give depth each to the other?” And he then quotes this line from *Romeo and Juliet*, spoken by Romeo when he finds Juliet in the tomb and thinks her dead:—

Death, that hath suck’d the honey of thy breath.

Instead of using the poetic image the artist may reach direct into

human experience and rearrange two contrasting aspects in such a way as to invest both with a new meaning. Thus Yeats in his lines

No man has ever lived that had enough
Of children's gratitude or woman's love

taken from the poem "Vacillation," is contrasting two opposing philosophies of living.

Turn now to the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*. This gives the basic conceptions on which the Secret Doctrine or the Wisdom-Religion itself rests. We can state these in a form relevant to our subject, as follows:—

1. Kosmos in eternity, the Eternal and Infinite All or the Omnipresent Unity.
2. The germ within the Divine Unity, which, being latent and active, periodically and by turns, expands itself into the manifested universe and withdraws it once more.
3. The illusory nature of separative existence in the manifested universe, "a chaos to the sense, a kosmos to the reason."
4. The possibility of knowledge of the concealed Unity.

If Dr. Bronowski's understanding of the essential nature of scientific discoveries and works of art is correct, then the scientist and the artist seek, each in his own way, that concealed unity.

It is such an important point, this possibility of finding hidden likenesses under appearances completely unlike, that an illustration is attempted below at some length.

A giant radio transmitting station, a weight hanging from a spiral spring and a circle drawn on a piece of paper — what could be more unlike than these? But the human mind can trace a hidden likeness. Pull the weight down and then release it. The spring will vibrate up and down at a certain frequency, *i.e.*, it will complete a certain number of up and down movements, say every minute. Three factors determine the value of this frequency: the stiffness of the spring; the inertia of the hanging weight and any kind of frictional resistance which the moving parts might encounter, such as the friction with the air or with any surface which they might touch.

As the weight moves down it extends the spring, but the spring resists this extension and ultimately brings the weight to rest. As the weight moves up, pulled by the spring as it tries to return to its equilibrium condition, it moves too far and begins to compress the spring. Equally the spring resists this compression, brings the weight to rest and ultimately pushes it down again. The stiffness of the spring measures its ability to control the cyclic motion in this way.

The weight does not move with uniform speed: sometimes it is slowing down; sometimes it is speeding up. Its inertia is that property which resists equally the slowing down and the speeding up and tries to maintain whatever motion may prevail at any instant. By analogy a large organization could be said to possess inertia which, while it

may oppose the influence of new ideas, will also tend to keep the organization going with its original motion, should it fall into the hands of incompetent administrators.

At the heart of the enormous complexity of a radio transmitting station lies a simple electrical circuit of three components called resistance, capacitance and inductance. In this circuit an electrical oscillation occurs, conceived as a to and from movement of minute electrical entities called electrons, exactly analogous to the up and down movement of the hanging weight and expressible by a number called the frequency. The three components exert a controlling influence on the value of this frequency, which is also exactly analogous to the control exerted by friction, stiffness and inertia, although there is nothing in the physical appearance of the circuit remotely resembling the weight on the spring. One component, for example, consists of two metal plates separated by a sheet of insulating material.

Finally, it is possible to develop an algebraic equation expressing the frequency in terms of the three controlling factors, which takes a form for the vibrating spring exactly similar to that for the transmitting station and which introduces the value of pi, the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter.

This hidden likeness is not to be seen, felt, touched, tasted or smelt. It is apparent only in terms of mental concepts such as mass, inertia, etc., which are creations of the human mind although they may be suggested by the facts of human experience.

Difficult as it is for us sometimes to grasp the essential oneness of nature on which *The Secret Doctrine* insists, these explorations of unsuspected likenesses are significant and instructive. Nevertheless, an as yet unbridged gap remains between the physical sciences and Occult Science, the nature of which it is important to understand. Reflect first upon what William Q. Judge has to say on the difference between the two in his article "The Synthesis of Occult Science."

It [Occult Science] regards Nature as one complete whole, and so the student of occultism may stand at either point of observation. He may from the standpoint of Nature's wholeness and completeness follow the process of segregation and differentiation to the minutest atom conditioned in space and time; or, from the phenomenal display of the atom, he may reach forward and upward till the atom becomes an integral part of the cosmos, involved in the universal harmony of creation. The modern scientist may do this incidentally or empirically, but the occultist does it systematically and habitually, and hence philosophically. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 3*, pp. 9-10)

The concepts of science unify parts, here and there, of nature. There are none which unify the whole. To different men at different times the same facts might suggest different concepts. Perhaps different facts out of the countless to be observed might force themselves upon the atten-

tion of men.

Consider, also, this passage from *The Secret Doctrine*:—

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. (I. 477)

The word "primal" is not used here in the sense of the first of a chain of causes in space and time, such as the lack of the proverbial nail which led to the loss of the shoe, the horse, the rider, the letter, the battle and the kingdom. This chain was but one of many which might find its origin in the primal cause, lack of appreciation of the importance of present duty, however trivial. Similarly a high ideal of human freedom held in the heart of a great patriot could be a primal cause of many chains of causes running through politics, social relationships and international affairs.

The world of primal causes is the "superior nature" of Krishna by which the universe is sustained, from which the whole of creation springs as from a womb, on which all things hang as precious gems upon a string.

The methods of science can no more penetrate this world than observation, questioning and theorizing can penetrate the secret heart of a human being. Only he who understands that perfect love is perfect knowledge and that perfect knowledge is perfect love can penetrate the heart. Similarly, no one can penetrate the secret heart of nature who is not filled with a sense of reverence and love for life in all its forms, even the lowliest — a reverence which, while it will let a man cut flowers to beautify a room, will not let him strike at a weed wantonly; a reverence which would not let a team of scientists take lightly "pot-shots" at the moon; a reverence which would not let anyone degrade any creature, satisfy an intellectual curiosity or evade the laws of health.

Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.

And she will open wide before thee the portals of her secret chambers, lay bare before thy gaze the treasures hidden in the very depths of her pure virgin bosom.

PLATO'S ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE

In *The Secret Doctrine* we are told that Plato was not merely the greatest philosopher of Greece but also an Adept who belonged psychically, mentally and spiritually to the higher planes of evolution, "Fifth-rounder" in the Fourth Round, immensely higher than is our present humanity. He imparted spiritual truths through myths and allegories as his aim was both to awaken the *Manas* and to arouse the *Buddhi* of his hearers. In the ratiocinative climate of our own age, his myths have been often dismissed as mere poetic fantasies, and some have even suggested that they were employed to cover up deficiencies in his chain of reasoning. As a result his system of philosophy and political thought has not been properly grasped by his critics. The student of Theosophy will, however, find his writings illuminating if studied with the help of the teachings given in *The Secret Doctrine*.

In this article we shall take up one of his most well-known myths, the "quaint parable" with which the Seventh Book of *The Republic* opens. In his allegory of the cave he expounded the Theosophical teaching that there is a truth beyond sense, pertaining to the eternal noumenon underlying earthly phenomena, a deeper realm of reality which cannot be adequately apprehended except by the philosopher who has been initiated into the Mysteries. Even to realize the distinction between the intuitive standpoint of the true seer and the shared delusions of most men is an important step forward from the region of *avidya*, ignorance, to the realm of truth. Our tragedy lies simply in our refusal to recognize that we live in a condition of perpetual imprisonment, clinging tenaciously to the sights and sounds of earthly life, mistaking slavery for freedom and shadows for realities.

The allegory begins with a graphic picture of the pathetic condition of the majority of mankind. We are like chained slaves living in an underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den. Here we have been from our childhood, unable to move or to see beyond, being prevented by the chains from turning round our heads. Above and behind us a fire is blazing at a distance, but between the fire and ourselves there is a low wall like the screen which marionette players have in front of them to foster the illusion necessary for a puppet-show. We are like the strange prisoners in this den who see only their own shadows or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave. To them the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images, and they cannot distinguish the voices of one another from the echoes emanating from the surrounding darkness.

Given this allegory, we might think that if only the prisoners were released from their chains by some external agency, they would cease to mistake shadows for realities and would be automatically disabused of their former errors. The allegory points out that no such simple deli-

erance from illusions is possible. At first, when any of the prisoners is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains. Further, the glare will disturb him and he will be unable to see the realities he formerly identified with their mere shadows. If he is now told that what he saw before was an illusion and that now he is approaching real existence and has a clearer vision, he will be perplexed. He will continue to fancy that the shadows he saw for so long were truer than the objects which are now shown to him.

If he is compelled to look straight at the light, the pain in his eyes will induce him to turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision that have acquired a false but greater reality than the things which are now being shown to him. If he is dragged up a steep ascent and forced into the presence of the sun, his eyes will be dazzled and he will not be able to see anything at all.

The liberated prisoner will obviously require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. He will first see the shadows best, then the reflections of men and objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; and then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars by night. At last he will be able to see the sun. He will come to see that the sun is the guardian of all that is in the visible world and in a certain sense the cause of all that he and his fellows had been accustomed to behold. He would remember his old habitation and the delusions of his fellow prisoners, pity them and felicitate himself on the change in himself and in his position. He would no longer care for the honours conferred upon one another by the ignorant prisoners on the basis of who were the quickest to observe the passing shadows.

The first test that the liberated prisoner has to face is to get accustomed to his new condition and to forsake his long-cherished illusions. The second test is to see the unity of all things. The third is to show compassion towards his fellow prisoners and not merely revel in his own happiness. The fourth is to detach himself completely from the false valuations and hierarchical distinctions made by the men in the den. His fifth and much more difficult test comes if he is then made to re-enter the cave of darkness, for he would appear ridiculous to the prisoners who still cling to their former illusions centred on the shadows. They would say that he had become blind to realities since leaving the cave, that it is better not even to think of ascending, that they would be entitled to put to death anyone who tried to free another and lead him up to the light.

The allegory then explains that the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and the journey upwards is the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world. In the world of knowledge the archetypal idea of Good appears last of all and is seen only with an effort. It is only then inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, the lord of light in this visible world and the im-

mediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual world, the power upon which the eye must be fixed in private and public life in order to act rationally. It is not surprising, we are told, that those who attain to this beatific vision are unwilling to descend to human affairs; for their souls are ever hastening into the upper world where they desire to dwell. Those who do descend from divine contemplations to the underground den will not find it easy to deal with those who have never yet seen Absolute Good or Justice.

The bewilderments of the eyes, the bodily eye as well as the mind's eye, are of two kinds and arise either from coming out of the light or from going into the light. The plight of the soul as soon as it comes from darkness into the light is to be pitied, and there is no reason to laugh at the condition of the soul which has come out of the brighter life and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark. It is wrong to think that we can put sight into blind eyes or knowledge into the soul, which was not there before. The power and capacity of learning exist in the soul already, and just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too it is only by the movement of the whole soul that the instrument of knowledge can be turned from the world of Becoming into that of Being, and can learn by degrees to endure the sight of the good and the true. Whereas the other so-called virtues of the soul can be implanted by habit and exercise, the virtue of wisdom or of spiritual sight contains a divine element which is the identifying property or function of the soul. Sensual pleasures, like leaden weights, drag down the soul and turn its vision upon the things below, but if the soul is released from earthly impediments, the faculty of seeing the truth comes into full play.

Every detail of the allegory of the cave has been mentioned here because everything in it is significant. The entire allegory could be interpreted in several ways — mystically, psychologically or even politically. It was Plato's great genius that he could give us a parable archetypal in meaning and full of occult truth, that is rich in its symbolism and suggestive of several profitable interpretations. His method was to descend from universals to particulars, to use his insight into the process of Becoming or of cosmic evolution to derive lessons for personal and social life. He exemplified the ancient maxim: "As above, so below." Recent interpreters have concentrated on the political moral to be drawn from the parable and some have wrongly regarded it as a poetic rationalization of a particular political outlook designed to make the philosopher acceptable in a *polis*. Plato explicitly states that the founders of the State must compel the best minds to continue to ascend until they arrive at the highest truth or ultimate good and then to make them descend again into the den and partake of honours and labours for which they do not care. They must become the benefactors of the entire community. They are not obliged to share in the toils of politics, but if they were deliberately encouraged in their quest for truth, they must share the fruit

of their vision with their fellow men. Being Just Men, they will comply with the demands made upon them. The State in which the rulers are most reluctant to govern is always the best.

The entire political moral of the parable has a close resemblance to the *Kumaras*, who refuse to create but are induced by cosmic necessity to complete divine Man by incarnating in him. The unwillingness of the sower in the field to heed the voice of his master involves the latter in unearned and unnecessary suffering, but he accepts this burden flowing from his decision to become involved in the process of evolution. The incarnation of the *Kumaras*, which makes cosmic evolution possible, is paralleled by the sacrifice of the *Nirmanakayas* who resolved, even before attaining perfection, to renounce its fruits and re-enter the world of human ignorance and suffering. Similarly, the *Avatar* who descends amidst humanity cheerfully accepts the risk of ridicule and rejection, so that at least a few may be called to the pursuit of spiritual truth and many more aroused out of their state of slavery and illusion. The probationer on the path of the spiritual life has to emulate the example of the *Avatars* and the *Nirmanakayas*. He has both to isolate himself from humanity in his all-absorbing pursuit of pure truth and to heed the voice of suffering humanity, ever ascending on the pathway of the soul and ever preparing himself for the perfect service of humanity.

The parable also contains the mystical truth that, as the soul is initiated into the higher realms of being, it experiences a sense of strangeness, a new birth, until it has become accustomed to the sights and sounds of its higher plane of consciousness and become wholly indifferent to the lower impulses of earthly life. In his ascent the mystic comes to worship the spiritual Sun, which gives sustenance to the whole universe, and to perceive the unity of all life and being. At the same time the mystic who has chosen the path of renunciation and not of liberation has to learn to preserve his vision of the unity of the unseen universe while moving among the shadows of earthly existence, to bring back the soul's memory of its inward ascent and spiritual faculties while also becoming able to cope with the limitations of incarnated existence in a phenomenal world. These truths pertain not merely to the mystic and the Initiate but also to the psychological evolution of our entire humanity. We are so overpowered by the shadowy attractions and images from the Astral Light that we shut ourselves from the archetypal ideas radiating from *Akasha*. Our earth — Plato's den — is only, H.P.B. tell us, "the footstool of man in his ascension to higher regions; the vestibule—

"... to glorious mansions,

Through which a moving crowd for ever press." (*S.D.*, I. 154)

"Kosmos — the NOUMENON — has nought to do with the causal relations of the phenomenal World" (*S.D.*, I. 3). We are told by Shankaracharya that the knowledge of the absolute Spirit, like the effulgence of the sun, or like the heat in the fire, is naught else than the

absolute Essence itself. The Dhyan-Chohans do for the universe what Plato's guardians do for the *polis*. "They are the Intelligent Forces that give to and enact in Nature her 'laws,' while themselves acting according to laws imposed upon them in a similar manner by still higher Powers" (*S.D.*, I. 38). Where the normal eye sees only blackness, the average mystic sees a grey twilight and the spiritual eye of the Initiate sees absolute Light. The One Being is the noumenon of all the noumena which must underlie phenomena and give them whatever shadow of reality they possess, but which we have not the senses or the intellect to cognize at present.

The ascent of the soul is beautifully described in *The Secret Doctrine* and its descent into the world is referred to in *The Voice of the Silence*.

The existences belonging to every plane of being, up to the highest Dhyan-Chohans, are, in degree, of the nature of shadows cast by a magic lantern on a colourless screen; but all things are relatively real, for the cognizer is also a reflection, and the things cognized are therefore as real to him as himself. Whatever reality things possess must be looked for in them before or after they have passed like a flash through the material world; but we cannot cognize any such existence directly, so long as we have sense-instruments which bring only material existence into the field of consciousness. Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached "reality"; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya. (*S.D.*, I. 39-40)

The Secret Doctrine, with its teaching about planes of reality and appropriate states of consciousness, generalizes at a metaphysical level the truth underlying the allegory of the cave. In *The Voice of the Silence* we are given the practical and ethical corollary of this metaphysical truth. We are made to realize the helpless condition of the hosts of souls who will not avail themselves of Alaya, and we are firmly told: "Give up thy life, if thou wouldst live."

Those having lamps will pass them on to others.

—PLATO

THE YOGA APHORISMS OF PATANJALI

VII.—PRACTICES CONDUCTIVE TO CONCENTRATION

Commenting on Patanjali's second proposition that "Concentration, or Yoga, is the hindering of the modifications of the thinking principle" (p. 1), Mr. Judge writes:—

... "concentration" is equivalent... to the obtaining of what the Hindus call "one-pointedness," or the power to apply the mind, at any moment, to the consideration of a single point of thought, to the exclusion of all else.

Training the mind to remain unmoved involves taking a firm position out of regard for the end in view, and adhering to it perseveringly "for a long time without intermission (I. 14). Mr. Judge explains this as applying but to the length of time that has been set apart for the practice of this exercise. There seems to be a sense, however, in which it can be taken as applying also, though sometimes, alas, with varying intensity, to the entire thread of the life's meditation of the earnest aspirant.

Patanjali concedes the value of goodness.

Through the practising of Benevolence, Tenderness, Complacency, and Disregard for objects of happiness, grief, virtue, and vice, the mind becomes purified. (I. 33)

Mr. Judge adds in his note on this verse that the practice of these also brings about "cheerfulness of the mind, which tends to strength and steadiness."

Elsewhere also Patanjali refers to the beneficent results of harmlessness, kindness and disinterestedness. Most striking of all in this connection is his naming of "Forbearance" first among the practices conducive to concentration and explaining that by it he means "not killing, veracity, not stealing, continence and not coveting" (II. 29-30). "Happiness or suffering," he says again, "results, as the fruit of merit and demerit, accordingly as the cause is virtue or vice." (II. 14)

From purification of the mind and body also ensue to the Yogee a complete predominance of the quality of goodness, complacency, intentness, subjugation of the senses, and fitness for contemplation and comprehension of the soul as distinct from nature. (II. 41)

But goodness alone, without control of the mind, will not bring us to the goal. Even the perfect contentment from which "the Yogee acquires superlative felicity" (II. 42) can come only from full resignation to the Law and to the Higher Self. We may equate it with "that tranquillity which only perfection of devotion confers," which Mr. Judge mentions in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*.

Besides "Forbearance," Patanjali enumerates seven "practices which are conducive to concentration." These are "Religious Observances Postures, Suppression of the breath, Restraint, Attention, Contemplation and Meditation." Defining "Religious Observances," Patanjali states that these are not rites and ceremonies, but "purification of both mind and body, contentment, austerity, inaudible mutterings" (with which we may perhaps equate Krishna's "diligence in the reading of the Scriptures" in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, XVII. 15) "and persevering devotion to the Supreme Soul," than which nothing is more important.

Patanjali gives us very practical hints for gaining the mastery of this wandering mind of ours; for example, his reminder, which we should not need, that "concentrated attention to two objects cannot take place simultaneously," or his prescription for excluding questionable things from the mind—the mental calling up of their opposites (II. 33-34). This, promptly and consistently applied, provides the sure safeguard against evil thoughts, the very shadow of which, *The Voice of the Silence* warns us, we should not suffer to approach, lest they overpower us. And experience confirms the value, in moments of vague or confused thinking, of fixing the mind firmly, as he recommends, on an object of sense perception, or on a spiritual subject, or on an ideally pure character. (I. 35-37)

It should be noted that both "Forbearance" and "Religious Observances" precede in the list the remaining six practices. Of the first of these, Postures, which he does not particularize, assuming apparently Hindu students' familiarity with them, Patanjali remarks, "A posture assumed by a Yogee must be steady and pleasant." (II. 46)

Mr. Judge assures us in his note that

the "postures" laid down in various systems of Yoga are not absolutely essential to the successful pursuit of the practice of concentration and attainment of its ultimate fruits.

Certain physiological effects are no doubt produced by particular postures prescribed by certain Hindu writers, but the Theosophical student will do well to remember the words of Damodar K. Mavalankar in his article on "Contemplation":—

Raj Yoga . . . requires no physical postures. It has to deal with the inner man whose sphere lies in the world of thought. To have the highest ideal placed before oneself and strive incessantly to rise up to it, is the only true concentration recognized by Esoteric Philosophy which deals with the inner world of *noumena*, not the outer shell of *phenomena*. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 12*)

The Hatha-Yogic practice of *Pranayama*, all too often taken by aspirants to Yoga in the sense of "suppression of the breath," is strongly warned against in our Teachings as being dangerous to health and even to life. The breath of one in deep meditation is observably different from his rate of breathing in ordinary waking life, but is it not the state of

meditation that produces the quiet, rhythmic breathing, not the other way about? Patanjali in fact says that it is "when the mind has become thoroughly identified with the boundlessness of space" that "there should succeed regulation of the breath, in exhalation, inhalation, and retention," which regulation, he observes, "is further restricted by conditions of time, place, and number," no particulars of which are given. (II. 47, 49-50)

Patanjali mentions also "a special variety of breath regulation," by means of which "the obscuration of the mind resulting from the influence of the body is removed. And thus the mind becomes prepared for acts of attention." (II. 51-53)

Mr. Judge explains that this refers to the governance of the breath by the mind

so as to control its direction to and consequent influence upon certain centres of nerve perception within the human body for the production of physiological, followed by psychical effects.

This seems obviously unsafe for anyone who is not under the direct care and guidance of a living spiritual Teacher. We should, moreover, remember H.P.B.'s warning in the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge* (p. 141): "...beware of taking the exoteric works on Yoga literally. They all require a key."

It may be worth our while to consider in this connection the words of Shankaracharya on *Pranayama*. He has defined it as

the control of all life-forces by realizing naught but Brahman in all things....

The negation of the universe is the outgoing breath. The thought "I am Brahman itself" is called the incoming breath.

The permanence of that thought thereafter is the restrained breath. This is the *pranayama* for the wise, while the pressing of the nose is only for the unknowing. (*Aparokshanubhuti*, Verses 118-120)

He has also written in his *Viveka Chudamani* (Verse 13):—

The knowledge of an object is only gained by perception, by investigation, or by instruction, but not by bathing or giving of alms, or by a hundred retentions of the breath.

Let me again insist upon your trying to realize in yourself that you are a part of the All. That is the constant subject of meditation and will bring the best and most rapid progress.... We should try to realize first intellectually and then transmute the knowledge into ourselves, so that it becomes a part of ourselves. We say we are a part of the All. Well, we must intensely meditate upon that until we begin to realize it and from then we will receive instruction.

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE ANCIENT SOURCE

H.P.B. tells us in *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 636) that

what is claimed is simply the fact that the wisdom imparted by the "Divine Ones" . . . to the adepts of the early Fourth Race, has remained in all its pristine purity in a certain Brotherhood.

Who were these "Divine Ones"? They were those who were "born through the *Kriyasakti* powers of the Third Race before its Fall and Separation into sexes" (*ibid.*). They were also called the "Sons of Will and Yoga" — "the first in whom the 'Sons of wisdom' had incarnated." (*S.D.*, II. 199)

It was these "Sons of Wisdom" who brought the wisdom spoken of above. Says H.P.B.:—

Occult Science has its *changeless* traditions from pre-historic times. It may err in particulars; it can never become guilty of a mistake in questions of Universal laws, simply because that Science, justly referred to by philosophy as the "divine," was born on higher planes and was brought on Earth by beings who were wiser than man will be even in the Seventh Race of his seventh Round. (*S.D.*, I. 516)

We have been given the line of descent of what we now call Theosophy: As seen from the above quotations, in the earlier portion of the existence of the Third Race, the "Sons of Wisdom," who had acquired knowledge during previous cycles of incarnation, incarnated in this Third Race and produced by *Kriyashakti* a progeny called the "Sons of Will and Yoga." This progeny was not a Race, but was at first a wondrous Being, called the "Initiator." It is the Tree from which, in subsequent ages, all the Sages and Hierophants have branched off (*S.D.* I. 207). The knowledge brought over from previous *Manvantara* periods of evolution, was at first passed orally by one race of Adepts to another, and later it was reduced to signs and glyphs. Occult tradition says that the Divine beings dictated their knowledge to the sons of Light at the beginning of this our Fifth Race, and that it was taken down in Senzar, a language known at one time to the Initiates of all lands.

The Secret Doctrine as well as *Isis Unveiled* refer to a "very old book" written in that language, which is the original work from which are derived the many volumes of *Kiu-ti*, the *Siphrah Dzeniouta*, the *Sepher Jezirah*, the book of *Shu-king*, China's primitive Bible, the sacred volumes of the Egyptian Thoth-Hermes, the Puranas in India, the Chaldean *Book of Numbers* and the *Pentateuch*. The old book describes Cosmic Evolution, explains the origin of everything on earth, including man, gives the true history of the races from the First down to the Fifth and stops short at the beginning of the *Kali Yuga*, which started at the death of Krishna about 5,000 years ago.

If we wish for further knowledge about those who had the Wisdom we can turn to *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 281):—

As the "coats of skin" of men thickened, and they fell more and more into physical sin, the intercourse between physical and ethereal *divine* man was stopped. The veil of matter between the two planes became too dense for even the inner man to penetrate. The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, revealed to the Third Race by their celestial teachers in the days of their purity, became a great focus of light, the rays from which became necessarily weakened as they were diffused and shed upon an uncongenial, because too material soil. With the masses they degenerated into Sorcery, taking later on the shape of exoteric religions, of idolatry full of superstitions, and man-, or hero-worship. Alone a handful of primitive men—in whom the spark of divine Wisdom burnt bright, and only strengthened in its intensity as it got dimmer and dimmer with every age in those who turned it to bad purposes—remained the elect custodians of the Mysteries revealed to mankind by the divine Teachers. There were those among them, who remained in their *Kumaric* condition from the beginning; and tradition whispers, what the secret teachings affirm, namely, that these Elect were the germ of a Hierarchy *which never died since that period.*

In every country and in every age there were and there will be people, pure of heart, who, conquering their earthly thoughts and the passions of the flesh, raise their spiritual faculties to such a pitch that the mysteries of being and the laws governing Nature and hidden from the uninitiated, are revealed to them. Let blind men persecute them; let them be burned and hunted from "societies acknowledged by law"; let them be called Magi, Wise Men, Raj Yogis or saints—they have lived and they still live everywhere, recognized or unrecognized. For these people who have illumined themselves during their lifetime, there are no obstacles, there are no bodily ties. They do not know either distance or time. They are alive and active in the body as well as out of it. They *are*, wherever their thought and their will carries them. They are not tied down by anything, either by a place, or by their temporary mortal covering.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

LIFE—ITS MEANING AND MESSAGE

All the great Teachers down the ages have taught man about Life what it is and how to live it, and the ways by which the goal of human evolution can be reached and man can become like one of Them. Time and again They have shown man how to unveil Life's mysteries and indicated the means to break the binding fetters and to become free physically, mentally and morally. The meaning and message of Life are wrapped up in the figure of a meditating Buddha or of a flute-playing Krishna. The first, equipoised in body and mind, points to the way of union with the Divine Life; the second, to the joyous, rhythmic expression of that Divine. All Life is a Song, a Dance, a majestic Drama, a *Leela* where different forms of Life exhibit their various powers; the forms continue to change, but the Essence of Life ever remains the same. Perfected Beings, Embodiments of Light and Law and Love Divine having reached the summit of the Path to the glorious Light Nirvanic stand as Pillars of Peace, inspiring and encouraging the tottering footsteps of mortal pilgrims to scale Their Immortal heights. Having conquered Nature and Nature's forces through Self-Knowledge, They hold Life and Death in Their strong hands. They come out from Their snowy heights to this world of ignorance and illusion, age after age and cycle after cycle, for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked and the establishment of righteousness.

What is Life? How many can answer this question correctly? To most, it is the humdrum existence lived from day to day, from the cradle to the grave, and no more! Now enjoying, now suffering, some through starvation, others through self-indulgence, they care not to inquire into the whence and the why of Life. Hard-worked labourers and wealthy millionaires equally succumb to their fate. One of the best definitions of Life is given by Sri Krishna in the Seventh Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*:—

There is none superior to me, O conqueror of wealth, and all things hang on me as precious gems upon a string. I am the taste in water, O son of Kunti, the light in the sun and moon, the mystic syllable OM in all the *Vedas*, sound in space, the masculine essence in men, the sweet smell in the earth, and the brightness in the fire. In all creatures I am the life, and the power of concentration in those whose minds are on the spirit. Know me, O son of Pritha, as the eternal seed of all creatures. I am the wisdom of the wise and the strength of the strong. And I am the power of the strong who in action are free from desire and longing; in all creatures I am desire regulated by moral fitness.

Who thinks of Life according to Sri Krishna's profound instructions. Sun and moon, water and earth, sound and light, are the common things of Life — too cheaply obtained to give a thought to, much less to meditate upon! And yet Life is the eternal seed of all creatures, to which

nothing is superior. This at once establishes its immortality and permanency in contradistinction to its ever changing expressions, which are tied to it as gems upon a string. How many remember the sanctity of life when tramping the earth or drinking water? How many show their gratitude for the light and the warmth of the sun, or for the silvery radiance of the moon? And how many worship the fire with a true reverential attitude?

So much for the visible manifestations of Life. What about the inner, invisible planes? From the One Life is derived the power of concentration in those whose minds are on the Spirit. People complain about the wandering mind, the dull and barren mind, the ugly and evil mind. If control of the mind is desired, then it becomes necessary to place it constantly on the Spirit. Focusing the mind on that one centre, its direction and quality are changed. It then absorbs the wisdom of the wise and the strength of the strong. Tonics and vitamins are all hidden in that Life to make one strong. The ancient lore can be revived through true devotion to the One Life. Desire regulated by moral fitness is an essential quality of that Life. Just as low and impure desires degrade an individual, so also, when regulated from the moral point of view, they can uplift him. They are the motor force in man which has to be used rightly. It is the desire nature that pushes one forward and onward.

Thus, understanding different forms of Life, different kingdoms of nature, one is able to put oneself in attunement and harmony with the all-pervasive essence of Life. Then Life becomes a song of joy and its meaning is gradually unveiled. "Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance." This is one of the means to understand Nature and to put oneself in tune with its Divine ways and Divine Laws. Madame Blavatsky writes in *Isis Unveiled*:—

The Rosicrucian theory, that the whole universe is a musical instrument, is the Pythagorean doctrine of the music of the spheres. Sounds and colours are all spiritual numerals; as the seven prismatic rays proceed from one spot in heaven, so the seven powers of nature, each of them a number, are the seven radiations of the Unity, the central, spiritual SUN. (I. 514)

So Life can be called the Science of Numbers, mathematically accurate proportions. It is a symphony in sounds and colours. Man needs to acquire knowledge in order to understand Life and to live it in the right way. Madame Blavatsky, quoting a great Master, states in *The Secret Doctrine*: "Lead the life necessary for the acquisition of such knowledge and powers, and Wisdom will come to you naturally." What exactly is the necessary life? In one word, the life of Altruism. It means thinking of the good of others, acting for and as the Self of all creatures. Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child, says *The Voice of the Silence*. Inner illumination arises spontaneously through the deliberate cultivation of Compassion. At present, mankind is victimized by its own pas-

sions of the lower order. The world is plunged into gloom and darkness because man is working in a wrong direction. From passion to compassion is a big step, a long way. One must exercise dispassion to steady one's mind and to clear one's heart; then compassion will unfold. So proceeding from passions of a personal nature, of a selfish nature, to dispassion of discipline and unselfishness, one is ultimately led to selflessness, compassion and altruism. Such an one, instead of being bound down by a hundred chords of desire, becomes free, and therefore engaged only in the performance of duties and necessary actions.

The message of Life is contained in all the great Scriptures of the world, which contain the Teachings given out by the Teachers according to the needs of the cycle in which they appeared. It is contained in the Path of *Ashoi*, Purity, of Zoroaster, based on the trinity of pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds; in the Path of Duty of Sri Krishna, the performance of duties after renouncing the fruit of action; in the Path of Love of Jesus, returning good for evil and loving one's neighbour as oneself; in the Path of Brotherhood of H. P. Blavatsky. "The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims. Each individual can choose the means he will use to tread the Path; the difficulty is in continuing to tread it. The Source from which all have come is one, and it is the same goal towards which every pilgrim-soul is wending his way. The motive from the beginning to the end of the Path should be renunciation of the peace and bliss of *Nirvana* to guide and uplift those whose feet have stuck in this valley of darkness. In the first of her *Five Messages*, H.P.B. describes the transformation to be effected:—

Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man; and when people have learned to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice and generosity will be done spontaneously by all.

All the passing shows of life, whether fraught with disaster or full of fame and glory, are teachers; he who neglects them, neglects opportunities which seldom the gods repeat. And the only way to learn from them is through the heart's resignation; for when we become in heart completely poor, we at once are the treasurers and disbursers of enormous riches.

—W. Q. JUDG

LET US BE HUMANE

Most people yearn to lead a more humane life. This demands reflection. The failure of the many religions of mankind to bring about a definite change of heart in the masses is apparent. There have been successes, and these stand out because they are so rare. They indicate, better than thousands of words spoken on behalf of Truth and Goodness could, that greatness is possible of achievement by man. A man becomes a radiating influence for good, not because of what he says or even does, but because of *what he is* in the inner core of his being. This touches the personality.

The personality is not the man but is an integral part of the whole being we call man. Man thinks with his mind and feels with his *kamic* nature, which has not yet transcended the stage of animality. But there is that which transcends both. The personality is a reflection, though too often a very distorted one, of the Inner Man or Individuality. A study of the nature of both these is necessary.

Now what is the personality? It is twofold. There is that aspect which, as said, is a reflection of the nature of the Inner Ego and that which is gross and made up of the various lives of the lower kingdoms, though these become more refined when cast into human form. Manas, the Thinker, is a bridge between the animal and the spiritual or divine. Within man, therefore, operate the two opposite forces, which, it must be remembered, are one metaphysically.

It is therefore indispensable that we should get intelligent insight into the working of our personalities, and this can only be done by using the Manasic principle in us. Manas is creative. Conception is followed by abortion if the creative forces cease to function; so, too, with the ideas conceived by the mind. Creation involves duality, duality between subject and object, between the perfect Idea or Ideal and its realization into objective form. Thus any single mortal can avail himself of the opportunity of creating deeds, works of art. A work of art is essentially and primarily an original work, and originality means acting from within. Our deeds must be self-generated.

The lives which make up the lower vehicles in man act automatically. The first step is to become aware of that instinctual, self-repeating motion and to check it. The second step is to alter the wrong patterns of behaviour and to make the lower instruments responsive to the intelligent and compassionate self within. There are physical habits, emotional patterns of behaviour and mental lines of thinking peculiar to each individual. The breaking up of the old mould of thoughts, feelings and actions involves travail. Then follows an attempt to perform deliberate, conscious, purposeful actions. Thus within the personality takes birth a new integrated consciousness or true individuality.

Inherent in the process of real creation is Love. All the great works of art are concrete deeds of Love. The self-discipline and self-sacrifice

involved in all creative action are always accompanied by self-surrender and self-denial. The pursuit of truth for its own sake leads the disciple to the precincts of the temple of Charity and Compassion. Truth and Love go together in all creative activity. Let us make of our personalities living temples within which are performed works of sacrifice and beauty and mercy.

Creation is a living process. We cognize life through forms. Life in its real essence and nature eludes us. Life also destroys the forms. If we want to carry out that process of creation and destruction in our own lives, in the right way, it is necessary for us to tap the right source of energy, *i.e.*, Spiritual Will.

The golden key of Charity which opens the door to humane thinking, feeling and activity is fashioned in the workshop of the Personality illumined by the divine Ray of the Inner Self. Let us be humane.

Anthropologists believe today that pottery found in Ecuador was carried, some 5,000 years ago, across the Pacific Ocean from the Far East, rather than by land route, because similar pottery has been found elsewhere on the Pacific coast of Central and North America.

Also supporting a direct connection with the Far East, it is said, are the similarities in decoration and shape of east Asian and Ecuadorian pottery, suggesting first-hand contact. The Ecuadorian pottery was dated by the carbon-14 dating method. The research is reported in *Science* of February 2nd.

It is interesting to read the words of a Master quoted in *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 327) in connection with the ancient links between India and the Americas. It is said that

until the appearance of a map, published at Basle in 1522, wherein the name of America appears for the first time, *the latter was believed to be part of India*. . . . Science also refuses to sanction the *wild* hypothesis that there was a time when the Indian peninsula at one end of the line, and South America at the other, were connected by a belt of islands and continents. The India of the prehistoric ages . . . was doubly connected with the two Americas. The lands of the ancestors of those whom Ammianus Marcellinus calls the "Brahmans of Upper India" stretched from Kashmir far into the (now) deserts of Schamo. A pedestrian from the north might then have reached — hardly wetting his feet — the Alaskan peninsula, through Manchooria, across the *future* Gulf of Tartary, the Kurile and Aleutian islands; while another traveller, furnished with a canoe, and starting from the South, could have walked over from Siam, crossed the Polynesian Islands and straddled into any part of the continent of South America.

ABOUT KILLING ANIMALS

[The following answer by W. Q. Judge is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. VI, p. 397, for March 1892.—Eds.]

A correspondent asks: "Will you kindly explain why, if you think it wrong to kill a water bug, you should consider it right to slay larger animals for food?"

I do not remember having said it was *wrong* to kill a water bug; hence there is no conclusion to be made from that to the question of feeding on animals, so far as I am concerned.

The questions of right and wrong are somewhat mixed on this subject. If one says it is morally wrong to kill a water bug, then it follows that it is wrong to live at all, inasmuch as in the air we breathe and the water imbibed there are many millions of animals in structure more complicated than bugs. Though these are called *infusoria* and *animalculæ*, yet they are living, moving beings as much as are bugs. We draw them in and at once they are destroyed, slain to the last one. Shall we therefore stop living? The whole of life is a battle, a destruction and a compromise as long as we are on this material plane. As human beings we have to keep on living, while in our destructive path millions of beings are hourly put to death. Even by living and earning a living each one of us is preventing someone else from doing the same, who, if we were dead, might step into our shoes. But if we abandoned the fight — were we, indeed, able to do so — then the ends of evolution could be attained. . . .

So the true position seems to me to be this, that in certain environments, at certain stages of evolution, we have to do an amount of injury to others that we cannot avoid. So while we thus live we must eat, some of flesh and others of the vegetable. Neither class is wholly right or wrong. It becomes a wrong when we deliberately without actual need destroy the lives of animals or insects. So the man who was born in a family and generation of meat-eaters and eats the meat of slaughtered animals does less wrong than the woman who, though a vegetarian, wears the feathers of slaughtered birds in her hats, since it was not necessary to her life that such decoration should be indulged in. So the epicure who tickles his palate with many dishes of meats not necessary for sustentation is in the same case as the woman who wears bird's feathers. Again as to shoes, saddles, bridles, pocket-books, and what not, of leather. These are all procured from the skins of slain animals. Shall they be abolished? Are the users of them in the wrong? Anyone can answer. Or did we live near the North Pole we would be compelled to live on bears' and wolves' meat and fat. Man, like all material beings, lives at the expense of some others. . . .

But the real man is a spirit-mind, not destructible nor destroying; and the kingdom of heaven is not of meat nor of drink: it cometh not from eating nor refraining — it cometh of itself.

THE PATH OF THE MASTERS

III.—THE TESTS

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vol. III, p. 43, for April 1933.—EDS.]

Our fitness or otherwise to enter the Occult World and maintain our position therein is tested definitely at an early stage of our Inner Life. The test comes from the Great Law, Sifter of man's Dharma, on the Path of Woe. The significance of this process can be understood by a correct reading of a few verses in the Gospel of St. Luke (Chapter 9). To different types of aspirants Jesus gives different answers. He rejects one eager to "follow thee withersoever thou goest" by a diplomatic answer that "the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." To a second he advises, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." To the third he says, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Here are three definite situations and all of us should enquire if we belong to any of them. Are we only lip-professors, and is our earnestness rooted in selfishness or egotism, and our devotion energized by personal ends and personal motives? For us, then, there is no place in the Occult World. Or are we half-hearted, yet desirous of trafficking in the shades of the shadow world of the dead? Have we very definitely come out from among them? Or do we belong to the third type—having abandoned earthly possessions, we regret our step and yet are attracted by the Ideal, possess a desire to be like Them, so that we might help Them?

This test has to be passed.

Occultism speaks of the neophyte passing the tests of the elements of earth, water, air, fire, when he enters the world of the Spirit. The correct understanding of this mystery emblem is naturally beyond most of us. But let us try to understand as best we can what it implies.

In the composition of our beings are the four elemental forces which, on their material side, are spoken of by the Ancients as Elements of Earth, Water, Air, Fire. The four temperaments, phlegmatic, sanguine, choleric and melancholic; the four types of Nature-spirits, gnomes, undines, sylphs and salamanders; and several other quartets are related to and correspond with each other. For the purposes of our study, it will suffice for us to honestly ask and find answers in full and stern justice to the questions: Are we of the earth earthy, so full of worldly belongings that we are thrown out by ourselves from the Occult World? Are we like unto that young man who "went away sorrowful" (note, he was not sent away) "for he had great possessions"? Or are we watery people, sentimental, goody-goody, wishy-washy, desirous of observing the customs and manners of the world of the dead? Or are we self-opinionated folk who must *air* our views in season and out of season and tell the world what we are doing or going to do, what we think and feel, and who, like un-

the third aspirant of Jesus, "first go to bid them farewell, which are at home, at my house," and incidentally tell them what we are going to do, righteously and virtuously follow the Lord, and air our views on the subject, and other matters besides? Or are we the fiery type — who can burn up earth and dry up water, and whose only enemy is the gale of fury which sometimes overpowers the weak flame and the young fire?

There are fires which cannot be extinguished and there is the Spiritual Fire, which so subdues the breeze and gale of *Ahamkara*, that it burns steady and bright. This Fire is the controller; it, too, is the manifest and expresser of its nature.

Young aspirants sometimes forget that self-control and self-expression are not two processes but two phases of but one process. The co-ordination of these two has to be achieved. To eliminate the earthy-rigidity of the senses, the watery-mobility of the emotions, the airy-velocity of the thoughts by proper, adequate and all-round control, and to use them as channels of the Fiery Soul which is our real Self, so that it can express itself in its true grandeur and glory, is the double work of every aspirant. To make our body of senses and limbs the stately mansion which puts forth the majesty and tenderness of Mother Earth; to make our emotions start from the spring of Love, glide forth in the river of gentleness and empty themselves in the Ocean of Compassion; to make our thoughts harbingers of good-will which like birds rise in the Æther of Space, singing their songs — joyous and clear and fresh; to transform ourselves into the steady-burning Flame of Nachiketas's Fire — symbol of the Disciple; that is the task that lies before us.

Self-made is the Path, Self-determined is the effort to tread it. Treading the Path, we realize the Self. In Self-realization we become the Path. Thus the Truth, the Way, and the Life are one.

There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech.

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit.

The principle which gives life dwells in us and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen, or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

These truths, which are as great as life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.

—*The Idyll of the White Lotus*

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

You are right — Compassion is the mother of the *Paramitas* and we have in our higher nature the Creative Power which everywhere produces the mighty magic of *Prakriti*. You have it in your soul and with its help you must make *Vairagya* your first-born child in the present personality. Also in you is Wisdom, the other side of Compassion. Each one of us is *Purusha*, Wisdom; and also each is the Feminine Power Nature, *Shakti*; these two as parents produce the first-born, who brings to us the new Life rooted in *Vairagya*. Think along this line and the Great *Vairagis*, the Blessed Holy Ones, will bless you with the gift of more than vision, the touch of *Vairagya* in your consciousness.

Turning to your remark about compassion: you will please study carefully the definition and description of compassion given on pp. 75-76 of *The Voice of the Silence*. Note that compassion is described in very precise terms. We cannot develop it by intellectual study only. We have to take into account the study of what are called the Divine Virtues or *Paramitas*. What Logos, Verbum or Word is to metaphysical knowledge that compassion is to ethical science. It has seven great aspects which are called the seven *Paramitas*. These *Paramitas*, like the metaphysical pairs of Simon Magus, go two by two. Please consult *The Voice of the Silence* and put down your *Paramitas* like the seven globes of the planetary chain. You will thus find that *Dana* and *Prajna* make a pair; *Shilpa* and *Dhyana* make another pair; *Kshanti* and *Virya* make the third pair. Remains the middle *Paramita* — *Vairagya*, desirelessness, dispassion, detachment, but which is also the higher desire and the spiritual attachment to the parent and the source of all seven *Paramitas*, namely, Compassion Absolute. This again is a matter of practice. We will not be able to develop these divine qualities or virtues without trying to live in terms of these virtues, not in their lower, but in their higher or divine aspect.

Yes, *Vairagya* is the starting *Paramita*. The *Gita* speaks of *Dana*, *Tapas*, *Yagna* later, but the very second discourse on *Buddhi Yoga* demands detachment — not caring for the results or fruits of actions. We must act; we must not be inactive, but be detached from consideration of the fruits of deeds. All men possess charity as all men possess *Buddhi* but it is, in most cases, *tamasic* or *rajasic*. The inner spiritual life cannot truly commence without a base, a foundation of *Vairagya*.

The light of daring, of *Virya*, follows *Vairagya* — dispassion. We become fearless because we develop desirelessness. With a simultaneous unfoldment of patience, daring becomes *sattvic*. The order of the *Paramitas* is: *Vairagya* first and then *Kshanti* and *Virya* as a pair. This should be understood and deliberately practised. Begin with daring and

patience as mental-moral qualities. Action on the outer plane will *follow* naturally. That is always the principle of inner application — mind-feeling the cause, speech-action the effect. The reverse is what is ordinarily called *Hatha-Yoga*. The next pair is *Shila* and *Dhyana*, and the final one is *Dana* and *Prajna*. The ordinary kindness, charity, etc., of the good need to be handled deliberately, according to plan, to become spiritual.

Remember that real detachment or *Vairagya* comes from and through attachments and we have to use those very attachments to loosen the fetters of personal Karma by the right performance of duties. Look upon your present circumstances as very suitable avenues to unfold real and universal understanding, true and impersonal sympathy and affection.

High aiming is a protection against egotism. We grow, have to, humbly looking at what remains to be achieved. For earnest students who aspire and also sincerely apply the principles it soon becomes necessary to acquire something of the starting *Paramita*, *Vairagya*. But for the worldly-minded *good* man the starting *Paramita* has to be *Dana*. Knowledge makes the difference in the very formulation of our aim and ideal — high or low. Once a Master wrote words to the effect that negative goodness will not do for chelaship. So, without knowledge, men and women cannot become good.

He obtains happiness who renounces desire, that fatal disease, hard to be forsaken by the evil-minded, unconsumed when even life decays.

—*The Mahabharata, Adiparva*, lxxxv. 14

Those who are free from anger are superior to those who are angry, so are also the patient to the impatient. The humane are superior to the inhuman, the wise to the unwise.

Being reviled one should not revile; provoked, one should be patient. Good Karma comes to him who is not wrathful, wrath burns away the good Karma of him who is wrathful. A foe should not be subdued by the infliction of cruel pain nor by cruel speech, nor by evil thought. One should never use wicked, cutting speeches that wound. He who uses sharp, cruel, wounding speech, tormenting men as with thorns, is unprosperous, carrying destruction in his mouth.

Stricken by the arrows of speech a man grieves day and night; they strike the vital parts of the adversary. A wise man never hurls them at a foe.

Nothing in the three worlds is a more effectual mode of worship than forgiveness, friendliness, liberality and sweet speech among all.

Therefore always utter gentle words and never harsh ones. Reverencing what is worthy of reverence, give but never beg.

—*Ibid.*, lxxxvii. 6-13

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

An interesting account of a clairvoyant dream appears in *The Times of India* of April 13th. Shri I. J. Johar, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, who was in charge of the Madhya Pradesh armed forces and had gone to Nagaland on an inspection tour of his units posted there, died on the night of April 5th when his camp at Bocha, 24 miles from Kohima, accidentally caught fire. On that fateful night, Shri Johar's wife, 1,500 miles away from the scene of the accident, was awakened from her sleep by "a terrible dream concerning her husband." Shaken and feeling restless, she telephoned the Inspector-General of Police. The next day the tragic news came.

An explanation of a clairvoyant dream such as Mrs. Johar's is provided by the teaching of the *mayavi rupa*, the "illusive form" or the "phantom," which may appear at the instant of death or the moment after a person's death to one dearest to him. The *rationale* governing the appearance is given by H.P.B. in "Dialogues Between the Two Editors":—

It [the appearance] is unconscious to the extent that the dying man does not generally do it knowingly; nor is he aware that he so appears. What happens is this. If he thinks very intently at the moment of death of the person he either is very anxious to see, or loves best, he may appear to that person. The thought becomes objective; the double, or shadow of a man, being nothing but the faithful reproduction of him, like a reflection in a mirror, that which the man does, even in thought, that the double repeats. This is why the phantoms are often seen in such cases in the clothes they wear at the particular moment, and the *image* reproduces even the expression on the dying man's face.... The cause for the apparition may be also reversed; *i.e.*, the dying man may or may not be thinking at all of the particular person his image appears to, but it is that person who is sensitive.... The "Double" cannot act, unless the keynote of this action was struck in the brain of the man to whom the "Double" belongs, be that man just dead, or alive, in good or in bad health. If he paused on the thought a second, long enough to give it form, before he passed on to other mental pictures, this one second is as sufficient for the *objectivization* of his personality on the astral waves, as for your face to impress itself on the sensitized plate of a photographic apparatus. (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, second ed., pp. 167-69)

By some such process as this, the "image" of Shri Johar, trapped in the fire, was carried on the astral waves and seen in her dream by his wife.

Shri Johar's Alsatian dog, too, is said to have displayed "an uncanny sixth sense." He repeatedly prevented his master from embarking on the fateful journey, and it was with great difficulty that Shri Johar parted

company with him. Animals are well known to be psychically sensitive. According to Paracelsus,

certain animals have inherited instincts that cause them to act in a certain manner, which will indicate other future events than a change in the weather. The peculiar cry of a peacock or the unusual howling of a dog indicates the approach of a death in the house to which they are attached, for every being is a product of the universal principle of life, and each contains the light of Nature.

A seminar on Peace Building conducted by the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi Tatvaprachar Centre was held in Bangalore early in March. Inaugurating the seminar, Shri R. R. Diwakar emphasized the value of love, "that is, the sense of identity and, therefore, the awareness that all life is one," to combat poverty, disease, ignorance and all that keeps man at his present level. Arousing the positive forces of love, he declared, and their constant use for the elevation of man in all respects has to be the end and aim of the peace we want.

At the close of the discussions the seminar adopted a statement which reads in part (as reported in *Bhoodan* for March 31st):—

Peace is neither absence of strife or isolation nor an escape from conflicts. It is something more dynamic. Peace is a positive condition of individual and social consciousness which is conducive to healthy, joyful and progressive activities leading to a life which is more and more human and less and less beastly and to the establishment of the law of truth and non-violence as the basis of life.

To arouse these positive forces of love and non-violence for building up a peaceful society, education has to aim at the transformation of man from a fractional being into a perfect and integrated personality. It has also to be love-oriented, wholly communitarian and work-centred. Coercion, regimentation and military training can never build the peace which man wants. It has to prosper on persuasion and a synthesis of individual and social interests. . . .

Economics of greed and acquisitiveness should be replaced by service-economy where freedom from fear and exploitation is guaranteed. . . .

Peace, as we envisage it, can come only after a long and intense striving for a total change, change in our ideas of culture, change of social institutions and of man himself; in other words, a change from the law of violence and competition to the law of non-violence and mutual aid. It is a change necessary for the prevention and solution of conflicts in future and the establishment of a new creative order where the good of all and not the greatest good of the greatest number will be the goal.

Students of Theosophy were attacked in H.P.B.'s time, as they are now, for their neglect of social-uplift activities. H.P.B. printed the charge and an answer to it in the article "Let Every Man Prove His Own Work" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 31*). It offers some important Theosophical principles of permanent value and points out that the ignorant doing of good works by one who does not possess either knowledge or inner purity can be vitally injurious.

Some of the ideas in H.P.B.'s article have found favour among experienced social workers. That the doing of good works is not sufficient in itself is now realized by many. Some of the views expressed by Dr. Zakir Husain in the article "Essentials of Social Service" (*Bhoodan*, March 24th) are worthy of note. "Doing good," he states,

is, indeed, not bad; it can be good, sometimes very good, but, so it seems to me, never enough. It is essential and decisive also to *be* good. If you look round in life, it should not be difficult to see a host of people engaged in doing some sort of good and aiming at some kind of evil, their hypocritical good actions being just the diplomatic tribute that vice pays to virtue; and it should be patently clear that this is not a morally sound position. . . .

To be able properly to serve — which is a legitimate ambition — to be worthy worshippers at the Shrine of Life, we have to work hard and work incessantly to develop to their fullest extent the capacities with which nature has endowed each one of us. To be able to serve effectively and well, we have to become good instruments of service. We have to hammer ourselves into shape for it by constant, vigilant, prayerful endeavour. We have to strengthen our will, to educate our judgment and broaden our vision. We have to learn to be true to ourselves, to be ourselves, an original and not just a copy. Yes, there is a great deal to be done on oneself in order to make of one a worthy instrument of unselfish social service. In the hurly-burly of life we sometimes tend to lose sight of this central point. . . .

I must make myself clear. This attachment to higher values involves a total involvement. It is not a piecemeal process — here business, there morality; here undeserved gain, there ostentatious sacrifice; here heartless ruthlessness, there fulsome mercy; here unchecked greed, there publicized philanthropy; here competence unrelated to values, there values unassisted by competence. And what is important to remember, this total involvement can result from our relationship to the society in which we live and move. This silver link, this silken tie between the individual and his society is the guiding thread through the labyrinth of life. It presupposes a readiness to realize that the individual we have so far been considering cannot grow to his fullest possibilities without a corresponding advance of the collective social existence.
