

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE ANCIENT STOREHOUSE OF THE ORIENT

Put into written form correct information upon the various ancient philosophies, traditions, and legends, and disseminate the same in such practicable ways as the translation and publication of original works of value, and extracts from and commentaries upon the same, or the oral instructions of persons learned in their respective departments.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE GREAT CONTRIBUTION made by the Theosophical Movement towards the revival of genuine interest in the literature of the ancient religions of the Orient has been acknowledged on all hands. Gems of ancient learning, entombed and forgotten, were brought to light for the benefit of modern civilization by H.P.B., assisted by H. S. Olcott. Not only this, but H.P.B.'s own writings provide the key to the correct and profound understanding of the Brahmanical, Zoroastrian, Hebraic and other scriptures, philosophies, traditions, legends. A fact not widely known is the important part played by W. Q. Judge in presenting Eastern lore to the vast American public. Not only did he render the *Gita* and Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* into English, but more—he organized a scheme, and worked it successfully, of gathering suitable material from Theosophists acquainted with Oriental lore, and publishing it in his *Oriental Department Papers*. Those were the days of small beginnings; but what a vision was his—William Quan Judge's!

It was this work of Mr. Judge and his colleagues that contributed greatly to the holding of the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893, where Vivekananda made his mark by his oratory and knowledge.

Reprinted below is a noble appeal made by Mr. Judge just after inaugurating the Oriental Department. It is addressed to Theosophists

in India and was first printed in the *Supplement to The Theosophist* for March 1891 (Vol. XII, p. xxx). In seeking co-operation from Indian brothers he strikes an important note — India and America labouring together for the greater glory of ancient culture and for making its message useful to the whole world. Mr. Judge wrote:

“The Theosophical Society is now fifteen years old, but those years, just passed away, have not witnessed as much co-operative work as should have been accomplished by the combined efforts of the ancient East and the newer West.

“The moment has now arrived, however, when a joint effort can be made which, if entered into heartily by you, our brothers of ancient Aryavarta, will have results of incalculable value, not only to the people of our section, but also to yours. I refer to a systematic and determined carrying out of the second object of our Society, *the study and investigation of ancient religions and sciences, and the demonstration of their importance*. This second object has only been attempted to be carried out through the sporadic articles and translations which have appeared in our magazines; but no wide-spread effort reaching to and affecting every member in the Society has been made.

“In India there has always been universally held an assured belief in those foundation stones of Theosophy — Unity of all spiritual beings, Karma and Reincarnation, and so ingrained in the national mind that all ancient spiritual literature presupposes their acceptance. The object of these writings, therefore, in your country, is not to prove these doctrines, but to show their full nature and their manifold bearings on life and duty. Similarly with a large class of other ancient works dealing with other branches of psychical and spiritual law governing the sensuous and supersensuous realms. The facts having already full credence, these works expound their consequences along various lines. Now, with the exception of some few books translated with more or less accuracy and for mainly literary purposes by Western linguists, and a few by Hindus, very little of the literature referred to has been rendered into English, as the Western scholars have, on the one hand, been desirous of making such selections as suited them and their preconceived notions, and, on the other, all such works have not been accessible to them. And the financial resources of the Indian Theosophists have been inadequate to such an undertaking as that of furnishing translations free of cost or of having them printed and distributed in

that form *gratis*. It has also been impossible for Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott to organize such an effort, as she has been overwhelmed with labour in the preparation of such monumental works as the volumes of *The Secret Doctrine*, which are destined for centuries to enlighten the Western Hemisphere, and he, in his field of administration and personal labour among the Hindu, Ceylonese, and other peoples for the sake of our Society, has been ceaselessly occupied.

“In brief, then, the Indian Section has in its power to furnish a mass of valuable translations from old works as well as their own national inherited thoughts upon Theosophical topics, and also accumulations of very valuable folklore, and correct information about your daily life and habits. The American Section has the need for these and the means to diffuse them to that part of the world which it may naturally influence. Here is the complementary relation they sustain in this common work.

“Before passing to the details of my proposition, a word as to your duty and our duty in the matter. We believe in a Universal Brotherhood. If any members of that great family possess information all require, it is their obligation as well as their privilege to share it with the rest. What is true of food or clothing or temporal relief must be far more true of those verities concerning spiritual interests which are essential to right thought, right action, and right life. Truths as to the nature of man and his destiny are not a private possession to be hoarded and kept under lock and key, but a trust to be expended wherever a hungry spirit demands food, or a national need invokes supply. It was a perception of this which led the inspirers of Madame Blavatsky to sanction and supervise the outpouring of recent years, and which now sustains her in her constant effort to lighten the darkness of the present age. Furthermore, the progress of the cycles demands it. The West needs the use of the spiritual inheritance, which is increased by its free expenditure and lost by being hoarded. A perception of this should lead Indian brethren to give forth from the abundance of spiritual and metaphysical works left by the Rishis and their commentators, and American brethren to supply the means by which it may be widely diffused. This wide diffusion will not only fill the needs of all Theosophists in that regard, but will do much towards increasing respect among Westerners for Indian metaphysics, science, and life, and wholly counteract the false notions now prevalent.

“There are among you many, very many, to whom Sanskrit and the

vernaculars of India are abundantly familiar, and who are entirely competent to translate therefrom a selection of such works, treatises, *bhashyas*, excerpts, commentaries, etc., as would be instructive, edifying, and a really valuable contribution to theosophical literature.

“Of special value would be treatises upon the various questions connected with Karma, Reincarnation, Devachan, Kama-loka, the path to liberation, and other matters practical as well as philosophical. There are also vast stores of folklore upon any and every subject, all of which, while often overloaded with fantastical accumulations, nevertheless is founded upon some fact in nature or the life of man.

“There are, again, treatises and smaller works upon the training of the individual in spiritual life. I do not mean practical yoga, but the pure spiritual life, and I exclude necessarily such books as Patanjali’s Yoga Philosophy, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and others which have already appeared in English. These and many others I cannot enumerate, but which your thoughtful consideration will disclose, would enrich the libraries of every Branch in India and America, and correspondingly benefit our members and your own. You can also correctly inform us about national habits, customs and life in all departments, for, as I know personally, the religion of the true Hindu enters into all his acts.

“If these translations and papers are made and furnished to me, I will cause them to be well printed in pamphlet form of a regular shape, every month or oftener as occasion may require, and in quantity sufficient to distribute them freely to all our American members, and to send back to India enough to meet the needs there. My plan, further, is to make this a distinct department of the American work, giving, however, to the Indian Section, by means of a prominent heading to each paper, uniform throughout the series, full credit for the matter printed.

“My desire among others is to give to the world the impression that this work is the united work of the entire Society.

“Please bear in mind that I do not want to get papers of a laboured character, or in any way written to show learning, or with any untranslated Sanskrit words in them, but plain, straightforward matter which is done in sincerity and not for mere show.”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT will reprint, from time to time, articles and translations of Eastern lore from the *Oriental Department Papers*. One such article appears in this issue on page 266.

THE LEDGER OF LIFE

KNOWLEDGE is not a commodity which can be poured from one container into another. In fact, unless the conditions of receptivity are all there in the pupil, the efforts of the teacher can bear no fruit. The dullard of the class-room, the man thrust against his inclination into a profession, the prisoner who after years of imbibing reform-education goes back to his warped ways of thought, are but a few examples which show that each human mind is an entity distinct from any other and defies all efforts at regimentation. Our great academies of knowledge have yet to find out how best they can ascertain the right type of knowledge to be presented to any particular human intelligence, as also the right time when it would have the chance of acceptance with the least possible reluctance. The parable of pouring new wine in old bottles is as true today as it was in the days of Jesus.

When from a consideration of educating people in mundane things we pass on to that of imparting ethics and metaphysics to the common run of men, the problem becomes all the more complex. Habits and inclinations manifesting in the present life may have been the result of indulgence over a series of incarnations. Lust, anger and greed may have gone unchecked in previous lives — may even have been allowed to run riot. These tendencies from the past may show themselves in larger or smaller measure in the form of avarice, selfishness, sex-indulgence, drug addiction, a fierce desire to retain a place and position, outbursts of unrestrained anger, laziness, debauchery and a complete disregard of the good of others. With all these as a heritage from a spoliated past, can such an one be assured of a rapid transformation into a higher and richer spiritual life which demands the development of a will strong enough to enforce the treading of the toilsome paths of virtue, sacrifice, austerity and *sanyas*?

With the overwhelming handicaps imposed by a 20th-century existence, the gulf to be bridged is too wide to promise an early success. But just because there is the desire for quick results, the aspirant opens himself up for exploitation by self-styled gurus: In the last century, Madame Blavatsky had to warn against schools established to make money out of persons who were gullible enough to think that spirituality could be acquired at the cost price of a book. The last century saw others still who borrowed their teachings from old books on mysticism, without themselves understanding the hidden meaning, and who

veiled their ignorance under a jargon of kabalistic words and phrases. There were still others who undertook to give personal tuitions and promised salvation by what they termed an accelerated course in mysticism, yoga, spirituality, etc. Our 20th century is experiencing a new outgrowth of the same type of pseudo-teachers. Revolting against the absence of contentment even after the accomplishment of their desires, there are many who yearn for liberation from the round of craving and surfeit. It is these who fall easy prey to charlatans and frauds. Coming in contact with one of these, the deluded student seems at first to make some progress; his own urge for improvement assures that much advance. But the memories of past misdeeds, the force of a mortal craving too deeply sunk for easy eradication, drive him away from a life of austerity. The spurious teaching cannot give him the corrective for his condition, and this leaves him lone and forlorn amid the wreck and debris of his dreams. When he sees the hollowness of the promises for redemption by which he was lured, he may turn his face away from the light, and, abandoning the strenuous paths of virtue, seek his solace on the road which is high and wide but which leads to destruction. The karma of him who by premature revelation and hasty promises brings about the degradation of a soul is very heavy indeed!

If there exists no royal highway to spirituality, what can a soul which is caught up in the mire of sins and failings expect? For those who really desire to reform themselves and who are prepared to take the iron bit in their own mouths, Theosophy has a definite system to offer. Only, instead of the mock-up of a Guru, it presents rules and practices which at the beginner's level replace the Guru till such time as progress justifies a direct contact with the Teacher to whose bidding he will ultimately have to dedicate his life. Sitting for meditation is a practice very dangerous indeed for the average man who is a mixture of virtue and vice, tolerance and bigotry; philanthropy and avarice. Theosophy does not say that a person who has these conflicting qualities is barred for life. In sober fact, Theosophy exists for such as he, so that he may read and learn, practise and reform. Theosophy is for the artist and the trader, the poet and the politician. The farmer, the priest, the renegade and the man deficient in morals, the judge and the prisoner, the butcher and the soldier — all without exception can quench their thirst at this fountain, and in the measure of their aspirations will be the measure of their opportunity. The sacrifice by means of knowledge must serve all, and the sweat and the toil stand rewarded a hundredfold if even one erring soul turns his steps homewards. The return of the

prodigal soul to the bosom of his Father is always a moment of rejoicing.

It is a truism that vice fattens by what it feeds upon. Therefore, in all ages, the Teachers have advocated the eschewing of vice and the adopting of virtue. He who is in the toils of vice knows this, but the knowledge brings him no freedom. Seemingly against his will and with a catch in his throat he succumbs to the foul and now the nauseating embrace. Even to such who resolve and fail and move from the crest of success to the dark gloom of failure and depression the philosophy offers a remedy. The medicine offered is potent, but like all medicines has to be administered; while the intervals between doses have to be scrupulously observed lest a setback supervene. The rules on the observance of which a transformation can be achieved are not the handiwork of any one person or school. They have come to us from a remote past and have been tried out and proved among civilizations which no longer exist. The dust of centuries has buried their cities and treasures and some lie beneath the silt of ages. Yet, the essence of their experience has never been lost and is now a part of the tradition which has come to be called the Wisdom-Religion or the Perennial Philosophy. The rules which are there for anyone to follow are found scattered over Theosophical literature. Some of these are treated of in this article.

The modern athlete confines his practice to things physical. He is in fact trying to bring the animal-man to a pitch of perfection along a particular line of effort. He is doing to himself what the circus trainer does to his performing lions when he trains them to jump through hoops of fire. The lion does not have faith in the efficacy of the training. The faith lies in the trainer. So, too, the faith of the neophyte is not to be placed on any other thing save his rules, which for him take the position of a trainer. The man desiring to shine in athletics enters upon a rigid course of discipline which embraces set hours, wholesome food, a deliberate avoiding of all worries, and practice, practice, and still more practice. The aspirant to the higher life has to undertake all this and in addition has to observe strictly the principles of ethics for the purification of his mind. He has to be a fanatic (if such a word can have any application to him) and practise, practise, practise.

Now, although in general any soul-practice must sooner or later be continuous for the waking hours of the man (something different from physical exercises which, through excess of effort, may build up stresses and strains), he has to set apart two periods of time which must remain sacrosanct and which no circumstance should be allowed to alter, modify,

postpone or abandon. One such period should be set aside so that the student can review at the closing of his day all that he has done, thought, spoken, felt or reacted to, during his waking hours. The other period should precede the hours of waking activity and be spent in planning the actions and the control, the taking and the letting go of the offerings of the day. This second exercise is really the projection of the soul-vision upon the man's immediate futurity.

It is difficult to sit in judgment on an event in which one has a stake of one's own; for, to do justice, the scales have to be held by a steady hand. It becomes doubly difficult when one has become personally involved. Our prejudices are not easily removed and often misguide us by assuming pleasant and harmless appearances. To be able to judge his own daily walk in life, the man has to shed his own personal inclinations at least for the time during which he mounts the judgment seat. He has to maintain a condition of equanimity which, for the time at least, can remain unaffected by the panorama of earthly oscillations. In short, he has to be above himself — in all senses of that term. Before he can call upon the pageant of the day which is now past to appear before him for a critical review, he has to free his consciousness from all attachments and ally himself, for however short a time, with the highest that he is capable of reaching. It is only from this vantage point that a dispassionate survey becomes possible.

It is true that to reach this stage is not easy — that, in fact, it requires a sustained effort over the months and years. But the effort has to be made. There are no short cuts for attaining this stage of human equilibrium. The encouraging fact is that, if persisted in, the longed-for result is sure to manifest. This exercise has to be undergone tenaciously at the beginning and the close of each day. Its regularity cannot be broken lest considerable time be wasted in regaining lost ground. Even in the early stages of effort, there does come a moment when the self stands detached and views its own struggles in the coils of desire with the calmness which comes from detachment. Once that this stage is reached, the man has added fact to faith and pushes on more diligently to expand that moment into minutes and hours.

But, during the time that this consummation is awaited, how should the man plan his review if he finds that, despite his best endeavours, even for the hour or half-hour chosen, he remains imprisoned in a sheathing of desires? In such case — and this phase may last a long, long time during which the voices of flesh may suddenly intrude on

the effort and drown all other sounds—the trainee has to fall back, both in his review and his planning periods, on the *Paramitas* given in *The Voice of the Silence*. If to understand the *Paramitas* it takes a long time, then the toiling student can still fall back upon the norms provided in the ten Virtues which the divine Manu makes incumbent as a duty. These are: “Resignation; the act of rendering good for evil; temperance; probity; purity; repression of the physical senses; knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; that of the Superior Soul (Spirit); worship of truth; abstinence from anger.” The student must so familiarize himself with these that their practice becomes automatic and almost instantaneous. When this is achieved, the review which closes the day and the progress chart which opens it can be planned, not mechanistically, but with enthusiasm.

At the end of each day, the man who has toiled to make or mar that day has to seclude himself from all contacts. He has to try to withdraw within himself by the adoration of That within him which is the highest. In its presence he stands exalted. In this state, desires touch him not. Emotions run not through his system. He stands aloof. He is for the moment higher than his own puny self. He is the arbiter of his own actions, and therefore in the act of judging brings joy or punishment to himself. He stands as a king, unshaken, just, honourable, who calls for the report of deeds done by his ambassador (his lesser self) during the last waking period. And so he sits sifting the chaff from the corn. He becomes the judge, the admonisher, the friend. In his company the lower self is not frightened by lapses, is not alarmed at failures. After the review, the little self is serene; it basks in the sublimity of its Higher Self. And so, removed from earthly taints, it enters the sleep that enriches and rewards the just.

Till the close proximity with the highest can, however, be achieved at will by the questing soul, the lesser exercise, the putting of the act in juxtaposition with the virtue applicable to the event, has to be practised. It is at this initial stage of endeavour that the greatest caution has to be exercised. If during the review the man gets lost in his memories and allows his desires, emotions and passions to be rekindled at their smouldering embers, then the exercise has failed for the time being and must be stopped on the instant. It is, however, well to remember that just as a craving spreads over the man, takes possession of his citadel and forces him to obey its bidding, so too can calmness be invited to enter and take over possession, thus driving out the money-changers and the brooders of vice from inside the tabernacle. Once

the equanimity is established, each word, deed and thought must be invited to make its obeisance to the dispassionate soul, must be picked up, scrutinized and laid aside. The pageant of the day thus passes in review — the debasement and the glory, the stumblings and the steadfastness — and the reviewer, calm, compassionate, and with all understanding, casts up credits and debits on the ledger pages for the day. When this exercise has been kept up over the months and years, the man begins to have some idea of his own strength and weakness. He begins to know himself. This review is, however, only half of the work done. The more important work follows upon it immediately. Suppose the man were given the privilege to live the day over again — how would he act with the knowledge now his? Can he import into the day a more benign and therefore a more potent force for good? None but he can answer the question.

The retrospective review at the close of the day is followed by the prospective review on waking up. Here, the man projects his vision upon the future and uses to some considerable extent the plastic potency of his imagination. Unconsciously, he is using one or the other of the great *shaktis*, but the realization of this will come much later when he sees that he is in fact moulding events according as his Highest has shaped them during the prospective vision. Here, too, the man has to ally himself to the highest within him, and if he cannot do this within a certain length of time, he has to fall back upon the *Paramitas* or Virtues, making them for the time being energies which can replace the guidance of his own true self. The beginner has to understand that sentient nature is moving ever consciously to its predetermined goal, while Karma works increasingly to restore broken harmony. Both nature in its variegated aspects and Karma act in a manner which violates no *Paramita* nor any virtue. The man presiding over the review has to know this and be alert enough to seize the lesson which the visitations of Karma provide for him. Thus, when, because of Karma, painful effects have supervened, the review will show how the message of that pain proclaims the deficiency of a virtue either in the past or in the present. Since Karma is the agent which restores equilibrium, the review and the preview must be deep enough to devise ways by which the restoration can be quickened. The man has to learn to take his own medicine. It is especially through the prospective vision which opens the day that the ideas of morality, virtue and philanthropy can be woven into the fabric of coming events. There has to be a willed deliberation, a planned flowing of the selective energy which would come

into operation automatically and smoothly at the time already foreseen and in the circumstances which were fashioned and created in the benign mind of the aspirant. It is a pre-selection of powers and forces; it is a transmutation of energy into spiritual dynamics effected under the best conditions possible. It is also a training of these powers on definite objectives. The force thus generated and kept in reserve comes into operation on the arising of the eventuality which has already been envisaged, and since the force was generated in a laboratory higher than the physical brain, it is by that fact increased a hundredfold.

No aspirant to the Higher Wisdom, no neophyte in the struggle between the living and the dead can escape these steps. Without these rungs, the ladder cannot be climbed. Have our seekers after spiritual exaltation the strength to adopt these exercises and make them an inalienable part of their lives? If they have, then more will be given to them. When the pupil is ready, the teacher is ready also. To him that has, more shall be given.

IN SOCRATES' VIEW, the reasoned and candid examination of ourselves was the supreme condition of spiritual health, the way in which a man had to tend or care for his soul. For him the thinking part of us was the governing and constitutive part. Its function is to think, and it is healthy, useful, and for that matter successful, precisely in proportion as it performs its function well. The health of the thinking principle within us is, in other words, the same thing as sanity; and sanity is of all goods the first and chief. In short, by choosing the highest ground Socrates also chose the firmest, and there is no psychology more practical than his. We have to know ourselves precisely because self-knowledge is the condition of sanity, stability and health in a thinking creature, and we may not slacken in the effort except at the price of mental flabbiness and spiritual decay. Since the task is hard, we need not expect rapid results, and since communal advance depends upon the self-knowledge of each, we need not expect our own improvement to be of greater moment than our own tiny place in the social whole. We cannot be more than ourselves but we may keep our minds sane and sweet; and although nothing human is infallible, there is no other or easier way to attain genuine efficiency, or true content, than the way of the examined life.

—JOHN LAIRD

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT IN THE RENAISSANCE

I

It is the Master's work to preserve the true philosophy, but the help of the companions is needed to rediscover and promulgate it.

—*The Ocean of Theosophy*

NO MOVEMENT suddenly springs into existence, and this is particularly true of such a movement as the Renaissance (*re*, again; *naître*, to be born). Its beginnings can be traced to the seeds planted many centuries earlier by Plato, who was an "Initiate into the Mysteries and the greatest Greek philosopher," as H.P.B. called him, besides being an "ardent disciple of Pythagoras." There are few creative periods in the history of Europe to equal the intellectual, artistic, scientific and philosophical flowering that took place during the Renaissance. The only other ancient civilization in Europe that it can be compared with was the Golden Age of Greece, which lasted from the seventh to the fourth century B.C. Those were the days of the great Initiates of the Mysteries, of Pythagoras (c. 582–c. 507 B.C.) and Plato (427–347 B.C.); of the great Mystery plays of Æschylus, who was himself an Initiate and the first of the great Greek dramatists; of Sophocles and Euripides. It also saw the flowering of music and education. This Golden Age lasted three hundred years, but it was during those three hundred years that the foundation stone of Western civilization and the seeds for the reawakening of Europe were planted. It is worthy of note that, roughly speaking, the Renaissance also lasted three hundred years.

To place the Renaissance historically, we have to take into consideration the condition of Europe in the era immediately preceding it. Freedom of thought and of learning was practically non-existent. The study of philosophy was a state crime, and anyone caught with a philosophical book in his house was accused of magic and put to death. The steadfast persecution of scholars by the Christian Church had gradually driven most of the students of science and philosophy out of Europe. The Church had become all powerful and had acquired lands and wealth by forcing people to pay taxes to Rome. It had its own prisons, and courts which might sentence offenders for life. The Church of those days was also the State, and inspired fear in the heart of every man.

An event occurred, however, in the early part of the 14th century which was destined to change not only the history of Tibet, but of Europe as well. It was at this time that the great Adept, Tsong-kha-pa, was born. He came not only to reform Lamaism by forbidding the necromancy which was then being practised by the *Dugpas*, and to establish the order of the *Gelukpas* ("Yellow Caps") and the mystic Brotherhood connected with its Chiefs. He also summoned all the Adepts in the world to a conference in Tibet. It was decided at this conference that the time was ripe for the *open* work of the Theosophical Movement to begin in Europe. Ever since that time, during the last quarter of every century an effort has been made to bring the work of the Theosophical Movement before the public. This was the inner Theosophical reason for the new spirit which the history of Europe reveals from the 14th century onward.

The Renaissance was the whole process whereby Europe passed from a medieval to a modern civilization. It sprang in essence from a new approach to the natural world and ultimately involved every kind of human activity. It raised the standard of the arts, and revolutionized religious, scientific, social and political ideas. The spirit of inquiry and intellectual activity helped the revival of learning. A happy "coincidence" it was that the new learning and the printing press, the new way of propagating learning, came to Europe almost at the same time. A century earlier, the Italians had learned from the Moors to make paper, and the first printing press in Europe was set up at Mentz in Germany, in 1440. Printing made the spread of knowledge so much easier and swifter.

The success of any movement depends not only on the individuals openly taking part in it, but even more on the work behind the scenes and the silent influencing of men by Those who work always for the good of mankind. Therefore it was that in the 14th century individuals here and there were already beginning their work.

In England, there was Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1340-1400). Little is really known of his life, but what is found relates almost entirely to his official career. He was frequently employed on diplomatic missions to the Continent, and one such took him to Italy where he came under the influence of Dante, Boccaccio, and, more particularly, Petrarch. He was the father of English poetry, and established the capacity of English as a great literary language. Chaucer paved the way, and the English Renaissance achieved its greatest triumphs in

Elizabethan literature, in the poetry of Spenser and the plays of Shakespeare.

It is interesting to note that Chaucer fell under the influence of Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374), the great Italian poet and humanist. He was one of the first to realize that Platonic thought and the study of Greek would provide a new cultural framework. He had a wide correspondence, and helped spread this idea through his letters. He was, in reality, the inaugurator of the Renaissance in Italy. He was one of the first to collect libraries and to advocate the preservation of manuscripts. For him the authors of the Greek and Latin world were living men — more real, in fact, than those with whom he corresponded. His influence was not confined to Italy; all the poets of Europe came under the spell of his sonnets.

Still another who led in this pioneering work of the revival of learning was Georgius Gemistus Pletho (*c.* 1355–1450), a Greek Platonic philosopher and scholar. It was through him that Plato was re-introduced to the Western world. It was Pletho who led Cosimo de' Medici to found a Platonic Academy in Florence, and who inspired the enthusiastic study of Plato that characterized the Italian Renaissance. It was through Pletho's efforts that the almost exclusive domination Aristotle had exercised over Europe for centuries was brought to an end. The most important of his published works are treatises on the distinction between Platonic and Aristotelian thought.

It was their love of Greek thought and of Plato that moved both Petrarch and Pletho to try and influence as many people as possible. Chaucer in England, and Cosimo de' Medici in Italy, were two of those who were so influenced. The Medici, the ruling family in Florence, stand out above all others as patrons of learning and the arts. They utilized the wealth acquired by trade, especially banking, to subsidize and encourage scholars, painters, sculptors and architects.

Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464) used his wealth to encourage, among other things, the translation of Plato's works into Latin. For this work he selected Marsilio Ficino and provided for his education in Greek philosophy. Ficino translated not only Plato, but the Neoplatonic writers as well, including Plotinus, Iamblichus and Synesius. He also translated the Theogony of Hesiod, the Hymns of Proclus, Orpheus and Homer, and all of the works of Hermes Trismegistus that could be found. This was his contribution to the Renaissance and to the work of the Theosophical Movement.

Cosimo de' Medici also participated in the great search for rare manuscripts of classical authors, sending agents to various parts of Europe and the Near East to look for them. These became the nucleus of the famous Medicean Library. He employed many distinguished architects and sculptors, such as Donatello, for the construction of palaces and buildings, and painters like Fra Angelico.

The 15th century saw the full flowering of the Renaissance in Italy. When we see the almost breathtaking array of people who lived and worked during that time, we can see the reason for this.

It was during this century that Cosimo de' Medici's grandson Lorenzo "the Magnificent" (1449-1492) raised the Platonic Academy to a high standard of excellence. He founded a great University in Pisa, and established public libraries. His palace was the school and resort of illustrious men. Himself a poet and scholar, he actively participated in the intellectual labours that he promoted. Under Lorenzo, the Italian Renaissance may be said to have reached its apogee.

A valuable addition to the Platonic Academy was Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), a young Italian nobleman. "A celebrated Kabbalist and Alchemist... he defied Rome and Europe in his attempt to prove divine Christian truth in the *Zohar*" (*The Theosophical Glossary*). It is said that at a young age he was proficient in 22 languages. He published a series of 900 questions addressed to the Church and invited scholars from all over Europe to be present at the debate. But the Church decided that some of his statements were heretical and the Pope issued a bull against him. It was then that Pico left Rome and came to Florence. The revival of Neoplatonism owes much to his efforts. H.P.B. says that he was one of those Western men "whose temperamental affinity to the celestial science more or less forced the distant Adepts to come into personal relations with them, and enabled them to get such small (or large) proportion of the whole truth as was possible under their social surroundings." (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, pp. 1-2)

One of the greatest philosophers of the Italian Renaissance was Giordano Bruno (1548-1600). He was acquainted with the Neoplatonic philosophy and confessed that the source of his information was Pythagoras. While Copernicus' system was heliocentric, Bruno's was theocentric. For him God was "the inner principle of all movement, the one Identity which fills the all and enlightens the universe." He regarded Nature as "a living unity of living units, in each of which the power of the whole is present." He was to become a martyr for these and

other views, for the Inquisition had him burned at the stake. Today a monument stands on the spot where he met his fate, but more imperishable than any visible tribute is the invisible monument to Truth erected by Bruno himself, that willing martyr to the Cause of Those whose agent and representative he was.

With the weakening of the rigid conventions of the Middle Ages came changes in the scientific and religious fields, as also in the sphere of art.

With the discoveries that were made in the sphere of science, the influence of the Church began to decline. As a result of explorations, the boundaries of the world were suddenly enlarged, and for the first time in many centuries the earth was recognized as a globe. In 1488 Diaz reached the Cape of Good Hope. In 1492 Columbus rediscovered America. In 1497 Vasco de Gama opened up the sea route to India, and a year later Cabot reached Labrador. In 1500 Brazil was discovered, and in 1522 Magellan made possible the first circumnavigation of the globe.

In other respects also the concept of the universe underwent a change. Up to the time when Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543), the Polish astronomer, put forward his heliocentric theory of the universe the dominant theory had been the Ptolemaic, or geocentric theory which supposed the earth to be the fixed centre of the universe, about which the sun and stars revolved. The Copernican theory declared the sun to be the central body round which the earth and the rest of the planets revolved. It was not to be supposed, however, that so revolutionary a theory would not arouse immediate opposition. A favourite text often quoted in support of the geocentric theory was the first verse of Psalm 93: "The world is stablished, that it cannot be moved." The Church, in officially denouncing the new theory, declared that it was heretical for anyone to express anything contrary to Holy Scripture. Copernicus' book was put on the Index of prohibited books where it remained for a century and a half.

Another scientist whose discoveries strengthened the Copernican theory was the Italian physicist, astronomer and experimental philosopher, Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). He accepted the Copernican theory because it explained phenomena which could not be explained in any other way. Having heard reports of a simple magnifying instrument put together by a spectacle maker in Holland, he constructed the first complete astronomical telescope and improved it until the magnifying

power brought an object 30 times nearer. While it was crude compared to our instruments today, yet he was able to discover that the sun turns on its axis, and to make researches which supported the Copernican theory. Galileo was summoned to Rome and was warned by Church officials to desist from any further work, but he quietly persisted. He was finally tried by the Inquisition and compelled to make an abjuration of all beliefs and writings that hold the sun to be the central body and the earth a moving body revolving with the other planets about it.

H.P.B. points out in *Isis Unveiled*:

The world is always ungrateful to its great men. Florence has built a statue to Galileo, but hardly ever mentions Pythagoras...neither Galileo nor modern astronomy discovered the emplacement of planetary bodies. Thousands of ages before, it was taught by the sages of Middle Asia, and brought thence by Pythagoras, not as a speculation, but as a demonstrated science.

The year Galileo died, Isaac Newton was born (1642–1727). Newton's discoveries in mathematics and science helped to give certitude to the system of Copernicus, which, as we see from the above quotation, was taught much earlier by Pythagoras. Newton is also credited with the discovery of the law of gravitation. We would, however, do well to bear in mind what H.P.B. wrote in *The Secret Doctrine* in regard to his discovery:

Newton, whose profound mind read easily between the lines, and fathomed the spiritual thought of the great Seer in its mystic rendering, owes his great discovery to Jacob Boehme, the nursling of the genii (Nirmanakayas) who watched over and guided him.

Though not generally regarded as a scientist, we must not forget Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), Italian painter, sculptor, architect, musician, natural philosopher and scientist. In him was revealed an unparalleled genius for both art and science. His studies led him to almost all fields of science, including botany, anatomy and physics, to name a few. It has been said of him that as a scientist "he was the first among modern men to set himself most of those problems which unnumbered researchers of later generations have laboured severally or in concert to solve." To Leonardo the arts which he practised were only part of a ceaseless study of all natural phenomena. He worked as an engineer, an irrigation expert and a town planner, and designed many things, including flying machines. Such an attitude left no definable frontier between art and science, and led inevitably to a revival and

complete reform of scientific study.

In the sphere of art, there was a continuous succession of great names. Lorenzo de' Medici has already been mentioned. He patronized some of the greatest artists of the time, among them Botticelli (1444–1510), the Florentine painter. He is said to be the most intensely personal of all the Renaissance painters. Leonardo was another of the artists who enjoyed the favour of Lorenzo. To him, painting and mathematics were intimately associated. For him even the exact representation of the human figure according to mathematical principles was not enough, because painting, to be good, must be an outer expression of the inner mental state.

Michelangelo (1475–1564), like Leonardo, was more than just a sculptor and painter. He was also an architect, an engineer and a poet. He was admitted to the academy established by Lorenzo in the Medici gardens at San Marcos, and there he listened to discourses on Platonism and steeped himself in the doctrines of the philosophy. He became the friend of Marsilio Ficino, who was doing such a magnificent piece of work with his translation of Plato and other philosophers. Michelangelo always regarded himself as more of a sculptor than a painter, though some of his greatest work is done in the field of painting.

Another great painter of the Renaissance during its height was Raphael Santi (1483–1520). He did not spread his energies over many fields, but concentrated his attention on painting. He was more remarkable in his ability to assimilate the best qualities of other painters. He learned much from Michelangelo, watching him painting the Sistine Chapel.

Any movement which flourishes has its dark and its light side. On the one hand we see the influence of the Theosophical Movement in the struggle for freedom of thought and expression; on the other hand the Inquisition was continuing its persecution of "heretics." These persecutions, in which Tomás de Torquemada (1420–1498), the first inquisitor-general of Spain, played a leading role, are a great blot upon the history of Spain and of the Roman Catholic Church.

The name of Torquemada stands for all that is intolerant and narrow, despotic and cruel. He was no real statesman or minister of the Gospel, but a blind fanatic, who failed to see that faith ... cannot be imposed on any conscience by force. (*The Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed.)

In 1490, the Inquisition caused all the Hebrew Bibles to be burned

and Torquemada alone destroyed 6,000 volumes at Salamanca. In *Isis Unveiled*, H.P.B. says that during the 14 years he was inquisitor-general, he burned over 10,000 persons and sentenced to the torture 30,000 more.

Not all those connected with the Church, however, were opposed to the liberalizing effect the Renaissance was having on the minds of the people. Several of the Popes — Nicholas V, pope from 1447–1455, Julius II, pope from 1503–1513, and Leo X, from 1513–1522 — all helped the cause of the Renaissance. Nicholas V had a deep love of the classics and paid highly for translations of Homer and Plato into Latin. His collection of manuscripts, numbering from three to five thousand at his death, formed the basis for the Vatican Library. Julius II was a great patron of literature and art, and Raphael, Michelangelo and Bramante enjoyed his favour. He, too, was a collector of manuscripts, and since by that time printing had also come to Europe, he added books to his collection. But the most outstanding patron of art and literature was Leo X, second son of Lorenzo de' Medici. He had his family's love of art and literature and was the friend of all who were interested in the extension of knowledge. It is said that he gave his attention to the advancement of art and letters rather than to the furtherance of the Church.

(To be concluded)

THOUSANDS of men and women who belong to no church, sect or society, who are neither Theosophists nor Spiritualists, are yet virtually members of that Silent Brotherhood the units of which often do not know each other, belonging as they do to nations far and wide apart, yet each of whom carries on his brow the mark of the mysterious Karmic seal — the seal that makes of him or her a member of the Brotherhood of the Elect of Thought. Having failed to satisfy their aspirations in their respective orthodox faiths, they have severed themselves from their Churches in soul when not in body, and are devoting the rest of their lives to the worship of loftier and purer ideals than any intellectual speculation can give them. . . . Carrying in the silent shrine of their soul the same grand ideals as all mystics do, they are in truth Theosophists *de facto* if not *de jure*.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

KAMA-LOKA AND THE BEARINGS OF THE ESOTERIC DOCTRINE ON SPIRITUALISM

[In a paper read by A. P. Sinnett before the London Lodge of The Theosophical Society and printed in *The Theosophist* for February 1885, there occurred the following sentence: "A struggle . . . takes place in the sphere or state of existence immediately adjacent to our physical state — in Kama-loka . . . ending in the rupture of the fifth principle or human Ego. . . ." To this H.P.B. appended the following note.—EDS.]

THE WORD "RUPTURE" seems an unhappy expression, as it suggests the idea of a separate entity, whereas only a principle is under discussion. The "higher attributes" of the fifth principle are evolved in it, during the lifetime of the Personality, by its more or less close assimilation with the *sixth*, by the development, or rather the spiritualization by the *Buddhi*, of the intellectual capacities which have their seat in the *Manas* (the fifth). During the struggle spoken of and when the spiritual monad striving to enter the Devachanic state is being subjected to the process of purification, what happens is this: the personal consciousness, which alone constitutes the personal Ego, has to rid itself of every earthly speck of grossly material taint before it becomes capable of living "in spirit" and as a spirit. Therefore, while the upper consciousness with all its noblest higher feelings — such as undying love, goodness, and all the attributes of divinity in man, even in their latent state — is drawn by affinity towards, follows and merges into the monad, thus endowing it — which is part and parcel of universal consciousness and has therefore no consciousness of its own — with a personal self-consciousness, the dross of our earthly thoughts and cares, "the material tastes, emotions and proclivities," are left to lurk behind in the shell. It is, so to say, the pure incense, the spirit of the flame, disengaging itself from the ashes and cinders of the burnt-up fire. The word "rupture," therefore, is a misleading one.

The "Soul when laden with unsatisfied desires" will remain "earthbound" and suffer. If the desire is on a purely earthly plane, the separation may take place notwithstanding, and the shell alone be left wandering; if it were some act of justice and beneficence, such as the redress of a wrong, it can be accomplished only through visions and dreams, the spirit of the impressed person being drawn within the spirit of the Devachanee, and by assimilation with it, first instructed and the

ed by Karma to redress the wrong. But in *no* case is it a good or meritorious action for "living friends" to encourage the simulacra, whether shells or entities, to communicate. For, instead of "smoothing the path of its spiritual progress," they impede it. In days of old, it was the *initiated* hierophant under whose guidance the mediums of the *adyta*, the *pybils*, the oracles and the seers acted. In our days there are no initiated priests or adepts at hand to guide the blind instincts of the mediums, themselves the slaves of yet blinder influences. The ancients knew more about those matters than we do. There must be some good reason why every old religion prohibits intercourse with the dead as a crime. Let the Hindus always bear in mind what the *Atharva Veda* says to that effect, and the Christians the prohibition of Moses. Subjective, purely spiritual "Mediumship" is the only harmless kind, and is often an elevating gift that might be cultivated by everyone.

Question — Do earthly friends recognize one another during their passage through Kama-Loka? If so, who or what is the recognizer?

Answer — Kama-Loka being a state and not a place, there is no "passage" through it. No doubt in some cases, if two beings are in the Kama-Loka state at the same time, and for similar reasons, and with the same magnetic currents, they may recognize each other. But as Kama-Loka is the state in which the Soul is freeing itself from the astral body and the passions and desires, it cannot with ease be concerned with any other process than that one; and hence, in the sense of the question as put, there is no recognition, although the being has what it may suppose to be a recognition of friends and enemies. In Kama-Loka all its old thoughts take shape, and torment the soul if the life has been evil, or merely temporarily detain it if the opposite has been the case.

—*The Theosophical Forum*, September 1892

INTEGRATED CHARACTER

IN EVERY COUNTRY in the world, in every nation and race in the human family, we see today lack of integrity and of true morals in daily life. Every human heart is in conflict with the head; thought and speech are hardly in harmony; and this inner disintegration manifests itself in wrong types of outward actions, in low standards of morality and selfish interests on the physical plane. Theosophy stresses the importance of a change in the inner life and being, in the causal aspect of all our activities, so that the effects produced may be harmonious and beneficial to all. *The Voice of the Silence* instructs: "Teach to eschew all causes; the ripple of effect, as the great tidal wave, thou shalt let run its course." The effect will turn out right only if right causes are set in motion. The divine virtue of *Shila*, harmony in word and act, can restore the needed equilibrium only if it is practised daily, and then, instead of being disintegrated, the character will become integrated.

Humata-Hukhta-Hvarshta, the trinity of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, is the basic principle behind Lord Zoroaster's teachings, which, if applied in daily life, would keep one free from all antagonism and conflicts, individually and collectively. Thoughts are the seeds of all actions, and if the right beginning is made on the plane of the mind, the first step is taken towards self-purification. So what the world needs today for its moral order is not abundance of wealth and material possessions for which there is so much craving, not even scientific knowledge which has advanced out of proportion to the practice of ethical precepts, but a right basis for living the life. Theosophy, the ancient Wisdom-Religion, was reproclaimed to awaken the Buddhist faculty in man. The Divine Parent, Atma-Buddhi, is immortal on its own plane, but it is the self-conscious thinker, the reincarnating ego, who has to acquire immortality by becoming a pure channel of the divine Avalokiteshwara. In this important task, moral disintegration is a very great obstruction.

Sri Krishna says in the Ninth Discourse of the *Gita*: "I am the cause unseen and the visible effect." Herein lies the clue to understanding all the chaos and confusion in the world. The majority of human beings entirely disregard the *cause* and form their opinions, utter words or perform deeds on the basis of effects and from a personal point of view. So there is greater need to begin to think rightly on the basis of truth and the right principles given to us by all the great teachers. This

would enable us to make beneficent use of our power of speech, and when our deeds would be performed in a disinterested manner, for the good of all. Again in the Ninth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita* Sri Krishna states: "I am the origin and the dissolution, the receptacle, the storehouse, and the eternal seed." A quiet reflection on this would help us to understand the correct concept of the source of all life and the unity of life. Then it would not be possible to think of injuring a brother, killing an animal or bird, destroying a shrub, lest we prevent the tiniest creature from moving onward and forward in its evolutionary march. It is because the unity of the One Life is not understood that the harmony of the One Divine Law cannot be preserved. Once the harmony is disturbed, the price needs must be paid through suffering and sorrow, and thus disintegration on all planes follows. If the seeds of pure thoughts are sown in the well-prepared, clean and clear soil of the mind, if they are sown with a pure and unselfish motive, for the good of all, and nourished with the life-giving waters of wisdom, then the impetus is given in the right direction in terms of the Law, and all works naturally end in harmony and integration. The objective, physical aspect, whether of the universe or of man, is considered so important that most people are not even aware of the invisible aspects. An individual may not really care about smoking or drinking alcohol, but to conform to the social habits of the day he indulges in one or another or both. He has not the moral power of remaining true to his own convictions, but succumbs to the temptations thoughtlessly, without realizing the consequences.

It is only the second divine *Paramita* — *Shila*, the key of Harmony in word and act — that, when practised, would restore peace and contentment in the world. Integrated character is only the result of right thinking. It is this key which counterbalances the cause and the effect, and leaves no further room for Karmic action. The law which is just brings about the necessary adjustment, and slowly, as right causes are generated and altruism is practised to greater and greater extent, one wins one's freedom from the bondage of life and death.

The method of becoming integrated is also prescribed in *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 39):

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

The last, the gaining of Siddhis, is the natural outcome of the daily practice of the first four steps. What is meant by following the wheel of life? The life and the law move in a rotatory motion, in a circular motion; therefore we are asked to work in harmony with the law of cycles. Just as it is wrong to swim against the tide, so also it is necessary to watch the movement of the wheel of life. Human beings must learn to give up their wrong habits and inclinations, and to understand the stage of life they have reached. Vice and wickedness are abnormal at this stage of our evolution. We are on the upward arc of the circle and must act in a manner befitting our manasic condition — in communion with our Divine Parent. If the wheel of life is moving upward and human beings choose to take a downward course, then naturally disintegration is the result. In the scheme of evolution we must take the right course.

The next step is to follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe. How are we going to do this? By purifying ourselves of the race tendencies and elevating ourselves to a higher level. Though haste and hurry and restlessness are among the common race tendencies we can try to be calm and mentally balanced. Though ceaseless chase after evanescent and perishable things is another wrong trait, such passions can be subdued. We have inherited the wrong traits belonging to our particular family, community, nation and race. Once we begin to get rid of them, begin to think and live on a higher level, we shall be following the wheel of duty to our fellow beings. By conquering our hatred and following the path of love we shall have no foes, but all alike will be our fellow pilgrims. This wheel of duty is to be followed without any self-interest.

Next, we are asked to close our mind to pleasures as to pain. That in other words, implies equal-mindedness. The mind should be equipoised at all times, and not swayed by the pairs of opposites — pleasure and pain, success and failure, fame and ignominy, etc. Under the influence of any of them, the mind cannot be steady, but fluctuates one way or another. An unsteady mind cannot bring about integration of character; it cannot help us. It is this lower mind that is the slayer of the Real, and so we are asked to slay the slayer. This can only be done by keeping the mind busy at a higher level. It must begin to think less and less of the self of matter and more and more of the life of the Spirit, of the Self of the Spirit. Once that firm position is assumed, the direction being changed, integration of character will be the result. It is attachment to pleasure or pain that is the obstructive factor. When the

Attachment is removed and detachment is practised in daily life, one becomes indifferent to one's own pleasure or pain, and begins to conquer his own illusions. Thus, the disintegrating factor being removed, peace and contentment and inner joy can be established within oneself. Each individual, as he becomes integrated, expresses truth and non-violence, unity and harmony and self-reliance, all of which are needed so much in the world today. Pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds have no barriers. Anyone, at any time, in any place, under any circumstance, can practise this divine trinity, leading to integration of character. Falsehood, dishonesty, selfishness, will all disappear as the light of truth shines forth through every thought, word and deed.

You can solidify your character by attending to small things. By attacking small faults, and on every small occasion, one by one. This will arouse the inner attitude of attention and caution. The small faults and small occasions being conquered, the character grows strong. Feelings and desires are not wholly of the body. If the *mind* is deliberately taken off such subjects and placed on other and better ones, then the whole body will follow the mind and grow tractable. This struggle must be kept up, and after a while it will be easier. Old age only makes this difference — the machine of body is less strong; for in old age the thoughts are the same if we let them grow without pruning.

—W. Q. JUDGE

TALES FROM THE UPANISHADS

[Reprinted from the *Oriental Department Paper* for June 1893.—EDS.]

IT IS WELL KNOWN that the Upanishads form the most important compendium of the metaphysics of Vedic religion. The doctrine of one essence taught therein is the key to many a Vedic *sukta* and Puranic *katha*, and reveals the true nature of the whole of the Aryan religion, nay even of the so-called heathenism of the Hindus. Apart from the very important nature of the whole teaching, it is interesting to note in what homely and popularly simple manner these sublime truths are taught by the ancient sages. A few tales have been selected from the Upanishads with a view to enabling the general reader to obtain an idea of the principal truths taught in those sacred relics of antiquity. The tale selected for this paper is from the *Chandogya Upanishad* of the *Samaveda*. It relates to the studentship of Indra, the lord of the Gods, and Virochana, the chief of the Asuras — demons — under Prajapati whom they take for their guru. The following is a free translation of the text.

INDRA AND VIROCHANA

That Atman which is beyond decay and death, free from sorrow, not open to hunger and thirst, of unflinching thought and desire, should be known, should be realized. That man has access to all the worlds, and has all his desires fulfilled, who, having known this Atman, fully realizes it. So said Prajapati. This reached the ears of the gods and demons, who pondered, each according to his own order, on the power that gains access to all the worlds and fulfils all desires, and resolved that such an opportunity should on no account be missed. Accordingly Indra from among the gods, and Virochana from among the Asuras went up to Prajapati. Jealous of each other, they approached the guru with holy grass in their hands and lived with him as Brahmacharins. Prajapati asked them after the lapse of thirty-two years what was the object of their residence with him. They said: "We have heard that your Lordship knows 'that Atman which is beyond decay and death, free from sorrow, not open to hunger and thirst, of unflinching thought and desire which when looked for and known up to full realization, gives access to all the worlds, and places within reach the fulfilment of all desires,' and we want to know this Atman; hence our residence in this place." Praja-

Prajapati replied, "The Purusha in the eye is Atman," and added, "it is the immortal, the fearless, it is Brahman." Hereupon the pupils asked, "Oh Lord! which is that Purusha — is it not that which is seen in a looking-glass, or in water?" To which the teacher replied, "Verily it is the same; it is found everywhere"; but he took care to add, "If after looking into a cup full of water you should not find Atman, return and ask me again."

They accordingly looked into a cup full of water, and being asked by the guru what they saw, replied: "Oh Lord! we see the whole of this our Atman (self, *i.e.*, the body), a full reflection of it up to the very hair on our head, and the nails on our fingers." The teacher asked them to remove the hair and the nails and put on fresh clothes and ornaments, and look again into the cup. When they looked again into the water, after shaving and after change of dress and ornaments, Prajapati asked them what they saw. They replied: "Oh Lord! we see ourselves (Atman) as they are, all shaved, decorated and dressed as we are." The guru remarked, "This is Atman, this is the immortal, the fearless, this is Brahman." The pupils hearing this went away in great joy. After their departure Prajapati observed, "Whoever of these two thus returning to their homes, without having properly known and realized Atman, takes his wrong impression to be the real Upanishad (*i.e.*, Brahman, Atman), be he god or demon, will simply destroy himself and all who put faith in his teaching."

The Asura, Virochana, went entirely satisfied to his people, and taught them the Upanishad he had learnt. He declared, "It is only one's self (the body) that deserves all worship; it should be carefully served; he who worships and serves the body gains access to all the worlds, this as well as the next (the mastery whereof being obtained, it goes without saying that all desires are easily fulfilled)." Hence even to this day it is usual to call him an Asura who does not put faith in anything beyond *direct* perception, who observes no religion. This, alas! is the Upanishad of the Asuras. They attend simply to this dead¹ carcass, feeding it with sweet viands and bedecking it with fine clothes and ornaments, believing all the while that only thus access is obtained to the next world.

¹ Dead in the sense of "dead matter"; for Atman being nothing but the body, all matter and no thought, is from the Upanishadic point of view a dead carcass as understood by the Asuras. The phrase adequately brings out the impossibility of thought or feeling in mere matter without thought (Atman).

But the god Indra, before returning to the gods, saw a difficulty, and said to himself: "This Atman (meaning the reflection seen in the water, *viz.*, the body) appears well dressed, well adorned, well refined, upon the body's being well dressed, adorned, or refined. But even so must it appear blind, one-eyed, or without hand or foot, upon the body's becoming blind, one-eyed, or without hand or foot; and should moreover perish with the body. I for one see no fruit from the realization of such Atman." Whereupon he came back, with the holy grass in his hand, to Prajapati, who, seeing him, asked why he having gone away in all satisfaction in company with Virochana, returned to that place. Indra replied, "This Atman appears well dressed, well adorned, well refined. But even so it must appear blind, one-eyed, or without hand or foot, upon the body's becoming blind, one-eyed, or without hand or foot, and should moreover perish with the body. I for one see no fruit from the realization of such Atman." The teacher remarked: "Verily what you say is but too true, oh Indra! I shall explain it to you yet further; wait here for another thirty-two years." Indra lived with his master for the period prescribed, at the end whereof Prajapati said: "The subject of all that is seen in dream is Atman; it is the immortal, the fearless, it is Brahman."

Indra went away satisfied with this answer, but again encountered a difficulty before reaching home. He observed: "True it is that this Atman remains unaffected by the blindness or one-eyedness of the body; it is not touched by any of its accidents, nor does it perish with it; but it appears to suffer like the body, to pale under sorrow, to despair under difficulty, and even to weep on occasion. I see no fruit of the realization of such Atman." Whereupon he went back to Prajapati with the holy grass in his hand. The sage, on seeing him, asked why he returned after having gone away in satisfaction. Indra replied: "True it is that this Atman remains unaffected by the blindness or one-eyedness of the body; it is not touched by any of its accidents, nor does it perish with it; but it appears to suffer like the body, to pale under sorrow, to despair under difficulty, and even to weep on occasion. I see no fruit of the realization of such Atman." The master said to his pupil: "What thou sayest is but too true; I shall explain it to thee again; stay here another thirty-two years." At the expiration of the prescribed period Prajapati said to Indra: "That which being in deep sleep, immersed in its native bliss, sees no dream is Atman; it is the immortal, the fearless, it is Brahman."

Indra went away fully satisfied, but even before he reached the gods doubt again cropped up in his mind: "The Atman in deep sleep is not conscious of its existence, and knows not 'this is myself,' nor does it know the things of the universe. It can, therefore, be none other than pure extinction or annihilation. I see no fruit of the realization of such Atman." Whereupon he traced his way back to his guru, with the holy grass in his hand, and being asked why after going away in full satisfaction he came again, replied: "The Atman in deep sleep is not conscious of its existence, and knows not 'this is myself,' nor does it know the things of the universe. It can therefore be none other than pure extinction or annihilation. I see no fruit of the realization of such Atman." The master remarked: "What thou sayest, Indra, is very true; I shall explain to thee the truth over again, for it (Atman) is none other than that described to thee before. Stay with me only for another five years and I shall make the matter plain to thee." He stayed another five years and completed a hundred, often referred to as the period spent by Indra in Brahmacharya, under Prajapati.

The master said at last to his pupil: "O Indra! this body is mortal, always subject to death; it is only the abode, so to speak, of the bodiless Atman (which thus circumstanced is called *Jiva*) which being thus with body partakes of pleasure and pain, for pleasure and pain do not leave one with body, it being the bodiless alone that is ever free from them. The air, ether, lightning, clouds, all bodiless in themselves, appear as with body²) in the sky, and rebecome themselves — the highest light. In the same manner this All-Bliss manifesting itself as the body (called then *Jiva*) merges in the highest light, and rebecomes itself. This indeed is the greatest *Purusha*. It appears to take on itself a variety of forms, sometimes engrossed in enjoyments of the senses, sometimes all playfulness and joy, sometimes indulging itself in the company of women, or in the pleasure of horses, carriages, etc., or in the affection of friends and relatives — never remembering, or identifying itself with the body, its tenement governed by *Prana*, joined to it after the manner of a horse to a vehicle. The *Purusha* in the eye is the *Akasa* found therein; it is only its way out to the objective. That is Atman which is implied in the ego of the experience 'I smell,' it being the very being of the sense of smell. It is that which is conscious of the experience 'I speak,' being in itself the very essence of speech. It is that which is conscious of the experience 'I hear,' being the very thing that hears. And lastly

² That is, the body of manifestation.

it is that which is conscious of the subjective experience 'I think,' being the very being of the mind. The mind is its divine eye whereby it calls into being the various objects of experience and plays with them. As the gods in heaven devote themselves to their Atman, they have all the worlds within their control and all their desires are always fulfilled. He therefore who knows Atman and realizes it in himself everywhere gains access to all the worlds, and has all his desires fulfilled." This is what said Prajapati, indeed Prajapati, to his pupil.

NOTE. — Any explanation is hardly necessary to lay bare the important moral of this simple tale. It sets forth in very vivid colours the Upanishad (creed) of the materialist of today, in the person of Virochana, bound to the physical as the only plane of knowledge and truth. The opposite view is happily represented in the attitude of Indra, the disciple submitting himself to reason (Buddhi) and willing to be guided by it. It may be seen in what reverence the guru is held even by such potentates as Indra, the god of gods, and Virochana, the proud lord of the Asuras. The period of probation extending over a hundred years in the case of Indra, the true disciple who at last gets the truth, is worthy of the attentive consideration of Western candidates for the truth, the whole truth of Theosophy. The light cannot reflect itself in a mirror soiled with terrestrial mud, the removal whereof must necessarily be the work of time, patience, and intelligent perseverance.

The teacher at first points out the *Purusha* in the eye as Atman thought, meaning thereby the cognizer of and through whom the eye is the eye, and is able to perceive things and receive impressions. The pupils, through not understanding the real truth, understood it only after the persuasion of their proud intelligence, and did not, out of sheer vanity, say plainly that they had failed to grasp the real meaning. This mistake has been repeated even by the better pupil more than once; and in our age of individualism and selfish pride, how many daily recur to the same and debar themselves from the path of eternal wisdom. The Master out of kindness suggested that the pupils should look into a cup full of water, and return to him if they failed to find Atman therein. The self-sufficient lord of gods and the proud chief of demons tried the experiment and appeared to be satisfied at the sight of their own reflection in the water. The guru thereupon tried another innocent stratagem and asked them to change their dress and ornaments, and remove the hair on their heads and the nails on their fingers, and look again into the water. This ought to have been sufficient, for it was the

mainly indicated that Atman, the truth, is always as unalterably one as the body which remains the same though appearing to take on different forms under different conditions, and moreover that the Atman cannot be the reflection of the body which waxes and wanes with additions to and subtractions from the body. But the ignorance of the pupils would not allow them an insight into the real meaning of the experiment. They therefore went away in full satisfaction, taking the body to be the soul they were in quest of. The Asura got confirmed in his belief and taught that the body was the thing that was all in all, and everything that conduced to the ease and comfort of that combination of material elements was the surest way to the satisfaction of all desires and to the supreme happiness of absolution even here. But the god proved more intelligent and wise. And this explains also what makes a god a god, and an Asura an Asura. Indra looked within himself and saw that the reflection of the body could not be the real essence which has been declared by the guru to be immortal and beyond decay, death, or change. He returns and enters another term of studentship which brings him more knowledge. In all that the guru tells him every time he returns, the substance is none other than the truth conveyed to him even at the first moment; and the teacher is not open to the charge of having held back the truth, for it is laid down: "Hold the torch before him only who can bear its light." Atman is that something through which the eye and all the external senses, *i.e.*, the phenomena of waking experience; and the mind, *i.e.*, the panorama of dreams, imagination, fancies; and lastly the blank experience of sleep — are all rendered possible. In other words: It is that something which is implied in the very existence of experience; for nothing can exist prior to thought. And Atman is that which is not any one of the three conditions, and is yet ever all and everything.

SEERSHIP is of the Self; actorship, of the powers. For, as the great King, even without being engaged himself, becomes the warrior, through his army as instrument, simply through sending them, by his command, so the steadfast Spirit, through seeing and other powers, becomes the beholder, the speaker, the willer, and takes on other powers like these, by being near only, by unison, by sending them forth, by a strong attraction, like that of the iron-loving lodestone, strong without exertion.

—*Sankhya Aphorisms of Kapila*, II. 29

THOUGHTS ON “THROUGH THE GATES OF GOLD”

II

IN THE SECOND CHAPTER of this book we are given again simple examples from life as we know it to make us understand the path that lies immediately before us.

If we start to follow the line of action given to us we have to face a well-known fact, namely, that our cup of life is always full, and that if we wish to add to it we must first take out something of what is already there. We have to be our own schoolmasters, must recognize that we need wisdom, and must be ready “to practise any austerities, to use the birch-rod unhesitatingly” against ourselves, to gain our end.

We are reminded of what is the first necessity before we start on the journey — something so very different from our “normal” outlook. We are told that

only a man who has the potentialities in him both of the voluptuary and the stoic has any chance of entering the Golden Gates. He must be capable of testing and valuing to its most delicate fraction every joy existence has to give; and he must be capable of denying himself all pleasure, and that without suffering from the denial.

This is absolutely necessary before we can begin to sift our pleasures and reject all those that belong to the material man. Next we have to deal with the more refined pleasures, those pertaining to our emotions and sensations. The immaterial has always tried to overpower the material; the unseen, the seen. Hence we must begin to educate ourselves to perceive that which is beyond matter in the same way as we struggle to understand what is in matter. We must learn how to adjust ourselves to life, to the senses and sense-organs. Otherwise we shall move away from the immaterial and, through indolence, shall refuse to leave the world of matter that we already know and have experienced.

We are reminded that all this needs strength and will-power, and as in all cases, these are acquired by use and exercise. We cannot be born into any condition which has not been earned by us; there is no heredity except from our own past.

So we are brought to Nature’s great law of reincarnation. We are told

The Indian knows it, as the Western knows that the day he

is living through is but one of many days which make up the span of a man's life. This certainty which is possessed by the Eastern with regard to natural laws that control the great sweep of the soul's existence is simply acquired by habits of thought. The mind of many is fixed on subjects which in the West are considered unthinkable. Thus it is that the East has produced the great flowers of the spiritual growth of humanity. On the mental steps of a million men Buddha passed through the Gates of Gold; and because a great crowd pressed about the threshold he was able to leave behind him words which prove that those Gates will open.

The following chapter deals with the initial effort to be made in order to pass through the Gates of Gold. These Gates "do not admit to any special place; what they do is to open for egress from a special place." That which enables us to pass through is the casting off of our limitations. At what point we shall burst through the shell that holds us in darkness we do not know, but generally this point will be where we least expect to find it. Many have tried to find a way of escape, and have hoped to pass through by way of religion, but by their limited and fixed ideas have only got themselves into a rut from which they find it almost impossible to get out. They have only succeeded in making their task harder. Others have tried to find a way by the aid of pure intellect; still others, by their own special standard of morality and virtue. Whereas these are good and necessary, they are not finalities in themselves. By the practice of virtue as we understand it we may, in fact, fetter ourselves into one groove, one changeless fashion of life in matter.

Once the threshold is reached, only the strong and absolutely positive man can lift the latch and pass through. This positiveness must have been his in life as he fought his way on with "unconquerable resolution," freeing himself from prejudice and not allowing himself to be caught in any treadmill of thought, or in any deep rut of life. How can a man do this and free himself of all prejudice, all limitations, all crystallized thought or feeling, yet develop in himself a positive will? It is a difficult task indeed, for, ordinarily, positive will is associated with crystallized ideas. But we are reminded of an important fact: "All the past shows us that difficulty is no excuse for dejection, much less for despair."

The secret of success at this stage of the journey lies in "fastening the interest on that which is unseen." This should not be difficult, for

it has been done by the inventor and the poet. The inventor always sees ahead of what he is doing; "he can always perceive some other thing to be done which he cannot express in words because as yet he has not drawn it into our present world of objects." The poet senses that which he cannot express "until he has touched it with some part of that consciousness which he shares with other men." He sees a "greater universe . . . breathes in the vaster air, beholds a wider earth and sky." This is the state of consciousness we all have to reach out to, but it can only be found by those great of soul.

We should not be despondent at this, for when we think about life we know that greatness can only be attained by growth — and nothing stops us from growing. Our first need now is to lift up our eyes and see the magnificent promise that the universe holds for us, instead of being content with what lies immediately within our reach. In this way we develop our inner senses, and it is only by the development and growth of the inner man that we begin to perceive the Gates of God and beyond. We cannot reach this state if we are content with what we have already. "Decay follows the condition of inaction, whether it be mental, psychic, or physical."

How shall we begin to be interested in that which is unseen? First we must recognize that to be interested in another form of life or sensation we must take our interest away from the objects in which we have hitherto been interested, and realize that there are more subtle forms of life in the vast universe. We have already glimpsed that we are part of that universe, that it is a coherent whole. Therefore we can, in time, touch all parts of that Wholeness. This is our heritage; we lose our sense of separateness and find that the whole is contained in ourselves. Then, linking ourselves with this, we begin to find "the great waters of real living."

In our present life we have but the shadow of the substance. No man loves without satiety, no man drinks wine without return of thirst. Hunger and longing darken the sky and make the earth unfriendly. What we need is an earth that will bear living fruit, a sky that will be always full of light. Needing this positively, we shall surely find it.

Let us pause on that last sentence and keep it constantly before us. In that lies victory.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The youth of today clamour for "freedom," but where are the new freedoms taking us? One disturbing phenomenon is the "torrent of sexuality that is raining down on nearly every American town." In its issue of April 14, *Newsweek* publishes a cover story entitled "Sex and the Arts: Explosive Scene," which concerns itself with the "anarchic increase" in sexual permissiveness in the arts and in the fabric of society itself. "There are more explicitly erotic films, more blunt-spoken novels, more nudity on stage, more appeals to the libido in advertising than ever before. . . . The mass media have just caught up, and with them, the general public."

As permissiveness in the media spreads, says *Newsweek*,

it indeed becomes apparent that the generational factor is a strong element in its growth. Increasingly, the market for the wares of the new candor is among young people, for whom sexual explicitness in the arts goes hand-in-hand with openness in dress and behaviour, and for whom the new candor is part of the "existential" nature of their life style and politics. . . .

Even more than their radicalism, it is probably the pure unleashed energy of the young generation, with its disdain for eroded moral systems and archaic taboos, that is responsible for a great deal of the outspokenness in the media and arts. The media have given the young an image of themselves, and they like what they see. . . .

The old ways are dead. However exaggerated, this is probably true enough to be at least disconcerting — and at most dangerous. And the area of danger will most likely be that segment of the population least able to protect itself against psychic damage — children. . . .

Almost everyone agrees that children are indeed vulnerable to trauma in an exploded atmosphere of explicit images, language and behaviour, although even here psychiatrists disagree on details and degree of danger. But children aside, the history of culture, although it seems to move in cycles and epicycles rather than in a simple curve, is the history of the absorption of more and more areas of experience into openness and expression. Cases may be won and cases lost, but there seems small doubt that after the hue and cry there will be left a more or less permanent residue of expanded frankness, candor, explicitness and permissiveness in mankind's various media of expression.

Newsweek states that mere repression will not work, and refers to the difficulties of taking legislative action and erecting legal barriers against what is happening. Even the legal definitions of and accepted standards for obscenity, pornography and their like are in a state of total confusion. The legal confusion has made the local community the current battle centre in which the entire permissiveness struggle is being waged. "More than ever," *Newsweek* concludes, "we need direction from mature leaders who see the forward energies of their age clearly and can enter into a rational and life-enhancing social covenant with those who will inherit the society."

Were not the seeds of the present excesses and vulgarities sown when sex was degraded from its holy place as the pathway of souls into material life, to the status of self-indulgence? *The Secret Doctrine* tells us that during the Atlantean or fourth great Race human beings sinned against Nature "by turning the holy mystery of procreation into animal gratification; hence the law of Karma 'bruised the heel' of the Atlantean race, by gradually changing physiologically, morally, physically, and mentally, the whole nature of the Fourth Race of mankind. . . ." (*S.D.* II. 411)

Long centuries of self-indulgence have at last, in a descending cycle brought us to the present explosive state. It will take ages for the mass of men to recover from this perversion. But the cure of a vice cannot be inaugurated by its deification.

The ninth of the Ten Items of *Isis Unveiled* (II. 588) refers to the voluntary and conscious withdrawal of the inner man (astral form) from the outer man (physical body). In the cases of some mediums withdrawal occurs, but it is unconscious and involuntary. With the latter the body is more or less cataleptic at such times; but with the adept the absence of the astral form would not be noticed, for the physical senses are alert, and the individual appears only as though in a fit of abstraction — "a brown study," as some call it.

Several "out-of-the-body," or what psychical researchers call "ecstasies," experiences have been collected and published by Miss C. Green, of the Institute of Psychophysical Research at Oxford. Her work is on the basis of 1,000 cases, reported by 400 people in response to a voluntary survey begun two years ago. The people concerned had

at least once, and sometimes often, been able to watch themselves from a distance, as though completely detached from their own bodies. (*The Sunday Standard*, April 6)

Most of the cases reported occurred involuntarily. Some said that they had many experiences during childhood and lost the ability as they grew older. Some were able to "drift" at will for considerable distances, but most subjects found themselves at no great distance from their bodies, and able to look at their physical forms in distinct detail.

A number of reported cases are those of persons who have been through a serious illness. Others, such as mountaineers or explorers, have seen themselves falling down a rock-face, and watched the event in detached leisure." Such experiences are said to be induced by stress. Also those who have been involved in motorcycle or car accidents reported seeing their own bodies skidding along the road or being picked up by onlookers.

In a large proportion of cases the subjects felt that they merely occupied a "point of view" and not a visible form. A few reported finding themselves in a sort of "spirit double" which duplicated the clothing their physical self was wearing at the time. A small minority reported "travelling" to a landscape which did not resemble part of the world of normal experience. In a number of cases, subjects were able to obtain information which was not previously known to them and which they could not have obtained by normal means.

Says *Isis Unveiled* (II. 589):

Arcane science teaches that the abandonment of the living body by the soul frequently occurs, and that we encounter every day, in every condition of life, such living corpses. Various causes, among them overpowering fright, grief, despair, a violent attack of sickness, or excessive sensuality may bring this about.

The voluntary use of this power is also noted by H.P.B.:

Some persons have the natural and some the acquired power of withdrawing the *inner* from the *outer* body, at will, and causing it to perform long journeys, and be seen by those whom it visits. Numerous are the instances recorded by unimpeachable witnesses of the "doubles" of persons having been seen and conversed with, hundreds of miles from the places where the persons themselves were known to be. (*Isis*, I. 476)

Under the title "Is There a Right to Kill?" Charles Curran, Director-General of B.B.C., writes on the latest attempt to legalize euthanasia in Great Britain, and its consequences (*The Sunday Telegraph*, March 30). The voluntary Euthanasia Bill introduced by Lord Raglan in the British House of Lords in March, and firmly rejected in a free vote, sought to legalize this method of bringing one's life to an end. The Bill provided that anyone suffering from a painful or incurable illness could ask to be put to death by a registered medical practitioner. The doctor could do so, or he could tell a nurse to do so. But he would not be guilty of any offence; nor would she.

The Bill defined euthanasia as "the painless inducement of death." To qualify for it, an applicant had to make a declaration in these words:

I declare . . . that if I should at any time suffer from a serious physical illness or impairment reasonably thought in my case to be incurable and expected to cause me severe distress or render me incapable of rational existence, I request the administration of euthanasia at a time or in circumstances to be indicated or specified by me, or, if it is apparent that I have become incapable of giving directions, at the discretion of the physician in charge of my case.

The applicant had to sign this in the presence of two witnesses. Mr. Curran rightly calls this "death warrant" a "singular document." He examines some of the grim possibilities it contains, and concludes:

If we legalize euthanasia, we make a revolution in medicine as well as in the law. We turn the doctor into a smiler with a syringe, and the nurse into an angel of death.

Why should we do it? What good reason is there for degrading doctors and nurses, for telling them to kill sick people in cold blood? Once we start doing that, where do we stop? If we are to kill sick people because they ask us to do so, should we also kill sick people who are unable to ask?

From the standpoint of Theosophy, euthanasia is highly objectionable, quite aside from the obvious abuses to which this scheme is open despite the proposed safeguards. The soul of a person suffering from an incurable illness needs that particular body which is his—needs also that state of chronic invalidism and pain, to learn some lesson, to discharge some debt. It is not for the personality to declare the soul's tenancy at an end. The experience of natural death and its final lesson, necessary though bitter, ought not to be denied to the reincarnating ego.

As stated in an Editor's Note in *Theosophist* for November 1882 (Vol. IV, p. 32):

No man, we repeat, has a right to put an end to his existence simply because it is useless. As well argue the necessity of inciting to suicide all the incurable invalids and cripples who are a constant source of misery to their families.

The Vaccination Inquirer and Health Review for January-February-March 1969 cites some "striking admissions" made in the *Lancet* on the "Limitations of the Germ Theory," by G. T. Stewart, M.D., B.Sc. Glasg., F.C.Path., Professor of Epidemiology and Pathology, Schools of Public Health and Medicine, University of North Carolina, U.S.A.

Dogmas, says the doctor, are comfortable things, like favourite arm-chairs, and increase in appeal as time passes. The germ theory of disease is a dogma in so far as it asserts unconditionally that infectious diseases are primarily caused by micro-organisms which are transmissible from one host to another. In the section on social and economic considerations, Dr. Stewart says that

in those countries which publish reliable statistics, major communicable diseases are always more prevalent in what are euphemistically described as the under-privileged or lower socio-economic groups — *i.e.*, in ghettos, slums, areas of low employment and of poverty or of persecution and of warfare.

Correspondingly, the few countries which have evaded or minimized these ways of living have a uniformly low prevalence of major communicable diseases though, for reasons stated above, they have not necessarily overcome the iatrogenic and other problems connected with infection. If the statistics are translated into terms of human suffering and inefficiency, the importance of crowding, poverty and concomitant factors as determinants of the volume and severity of infection in most countries becomes enormous.

Dr. Stewart points out that the figures published by the U.S. Public Health Service show clearly that the fall in the incidence of poliomyelitis, which was attributed to the introduction of the Salk vaccine, had, in fact, begun earlier. Health problems, he says, take a turn for the better when attention is paid to them, and "the improvements which follow immunization against enteric infections, diphtheria and tuberculosis occurred in each case at a time when amelioration in social and

hygienic conditions contributed to a parallel diminution in these and other diseases. A similar situation might even at present be contributing to the success of the newer vaccines."

The Vaccination Inquirer adds that Dr. Stewart's admissions agree with the findings published by the National Anti-Vaccination League. There is a good deal of evidence indicating that the practice of immunization is at least questionable.

Medical science is still in the dark about the cause and cure of the common cold. The theory that our own mental state and not viruses may cause colds has been suggested to the American Psychoanalytical Association by Dr. Merl M. Jackel, senior lecturer in the division of psychoanalytic education at New York's downstate Medical Centre. His study of patients over a three-year period revealed that colds were almost always preceded by states of depression. Although patients were depressed at times when they did not get colds, the colds did not develop unless they were depressed. (*Fate*, March 1969)

Dr. Jackel emphasized that purely medical attempts to explain colds have not been successful. Nor is the common cold as contagious as it is believed to be. Perhaps the feelings of depression are as contagious as the colds that accompany them.

Once it is admitted that no man can "catch" anything for which the seeds are not in his body, the secondary nature of all so-called virus infections will not be difficult to perceive. That mind and body are interactive and interdependent is well known to the intelligent medical practitioner. Several apparently physical ailments are known to be rooted in the human *psyche*, or primarily caused by emotional disturbance.

As to the common cold, sometimes an individual in good general health will contract it in mild weather for no apparent reason. At other times he may be tired and run down and be exposed to severe weather yet no cold will develop. But a strong emotion like fear may reduce resistance to a cold virus just as much as getting caught without an overcoat in a heavy shower.

Theosophists who know of the astral body as the thought-sensitive matter or medium through which emotional disturbances reach the plane of physical manifestation are in a better position to understand the cause of some of the "mysterious" diseases which baffle medical science.
