

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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DESIRE OF COMFORT

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“Men are not made into steel by comfort.”—W. Q. JUDGE

is the way of mankind to seek comfort in failures through moral weaknesses. This is natural, perhaps, but gives no permanent satisfaction. Theosophical discipline recognizes that *real* comfort comes only with clear perception and understanding of the mistake made. Therefore when we are feeling miserable after a blunder it is best not to seek personal comfort from friend or co-student or even an experienced elder; go to the personal philosophy and allow it to shed its light on our mood and our mistake. People are as prone to give as to seek personal comfort. A long conversation is like an anaesthetic and puts the soul to sleep. A person feels satisfied when in response to his repentant confession he is told, “Well, you have learnt and you will not do it again”; and then his awakening conscience goes back into the sleep of solace. The result is that in a short while the mistake is made again. Better far to follow the example of Job who refused to be comforted by pious platitudes when he was seeking for explanation and illumination.

A quiet passing through any unpleasant experience which comes to us as an effect produces a dual good: we pay the debt and close the account; we learn from it and so unfold a new capacity or virtue, or strengthen old ones. We often talk of paying our Karmic debts, overlooking the method by which they are discharged. What is the method? Passing through the experience in calmness, with mind attentive to observe and learn. The debt is not paid when we are thrown off our balance by Karmic processes; we often add to the sum-total of our debt by newly made Karmas. Thus Karma grows—out of one effect

several new causes spring. Attend in quietude to the effect and soon we perceive the root-cause; we learn the lesson of the experience; the necessity of learning that particular lesson has ceased. This brings real comfort and what is more we transform our heart of iron and our mind of lead into steel.

Honoré de Balzac speaks of "a heart that was steeled but not of steel." A man of steel has a heart that is neither hard nor soft but one in which perception has unfolded. That perception is of the universal which is hidden by the *maya* of the personal. That heart is able to distinguish between cries of pain which are real and cries of wounded pride, of hurt egotism, of unfulfilled desires — in short, of the personal self. The cry of real pain is the cry of the Soul, which longs to be free from the tyranny of the personal self. Many a student mistakes the cry of his personal self for the cry of the soul. The true soul-cry has never gone unanswered, for the all-hearing ears of the Lords of Compassion are ever open to that cry. They can and do give comfort to the aspirant who has deserved comfort by crushing the personality. The comfort They give is the power to comfort in their turn others who cry from that agony that belongs to the Soul.

WHEN the Great Principle is realized, the world will belong to all. The virtuous and the able will be chosen into office. Mutual confidence and friendliness will prevail. In consequence, not only will everyone love his parents and his children, but the aged will have adequate care; the able-bodied will have occupation; the young will be properly reared. The widowers, the widows, the orphans, the disabled, and the sick will be provided for. Each man will have a wife; each woman a home. Natural wealth will not be left untouched underground, nor will it be exploited for the benefit of individuals. Everyone will work to the best of his ability, but not necessarily for himself. There will be neither intrigue nor conspiracy, neither theft nor treason; one may live with his door open. This is the idea of the Great Community.

—CONFUCIUS

THE SUBJECTIVE AND THE OBJECTIVE

A LESSON FROM THE CAVE OF PLATO — REPUBLIC, BOOK I

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“AFTER this, I said, imagine the enlightenment and ignorance of our nature in a figure: Behold! human beings living in a sort of underground den, which has a mouth opening towards the light, and reaching all across the den; they have been here from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them; for the chains are arranged in such a manner as to prevent them from turning round their heads. At a distance above and behind them the light of a fire is blazing, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have before them, over which they show the puppets.

“I see, he said.

“And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall, carrying vessels which appear over the wall; and some of the passengers, as you would expect, are talking, and some of them are silent?

“That is a strange image, he said, and they are strange prisoners.

“Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

“True, he said, how could they see anything but the shadows, if they were never allowed to move their heads?

“And of the objects which were being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

“Yes, he said.

“And if they were able to talk with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

“Very true.

“And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy that the voice which they heard was the voice of a passing shade?

“No question, he said.

“There can be no question, that the truth would be to them just

nothing but the shadows of the images.”

The term *consciousness* is used by writers connected with the Theosophical movement with a very wide range of meaning. Atoms are invisible lives, says H.P.B.; and there is no such thing as inorganic, in the sense of dead or lifeless matter. Every variety or kind of existence is conscious on its own plane or according to its own condition or state; the molecules of granite as well and as truly, though not in the same way, as the mind of man. Every molecule in the brain has its own consciousness, according to its state or plane of existence; and the sum of the consciousness of its molecules is the consciousness of the brain in its totality, considered as a merely physical, visible organ.

But the astral man, which we may take to be coextensive with the physical man, and to correspond with it, if not to coincide with it, organ for organ and molecule for molecule, is the real seat of sensation; and in the brain the sensations are registered and interpreted. The astral brain, the organ of Kama Manas, or of the lower or personal mind, furnishes the connecting link between the thinker and the object of thought; and here is bridged the chasm which has been recognized by philosophers, in Western lands at least, as utterly impassable. Says President Bascom:

Facts must exist either in space as physical or in consciousness, as mental; there is no third state. Mental and physical phenomena are cut broadly and deeply apart, by the fact that the one class transpires exclusively in consciousness, and the other as exclusively out of consciousness (in space).

Again he says:

There is no *a priori* impossibility discoverable by us, making the transfer of influence from mind to matter, from matter to mind, an absurdity. Our last traces of physical force in the movement inward are found in the brain; our first traces in the movement outward are also met with at the same point. Thus far only can the eye trace material changes; here is it first able to pick them up. How the last nervous impulse is linked to the play of consciousness . . . we cannot imagine. . . . We are profoundly ignorant of any connection between the two.

Now the scheme of Theosophy recognizes a continuous gradation of powers, faculties, states, principles — call them what you will — from the highest or most spiritual to the lowest or most material. In this whole gamut of states or conditions no chasm is found; there is nothing

o bridge; consciousness is the necessary substratum and presupposition of the most material, and consciousness is the noumenon or essential reality of the most spiritual.

We know of nothing more material or external than the physical, material, visible body — the world of matter, so called; and here is the inner wall (reversing the figure from outward to inward) of the cave which Socrates describes in Plato's dialogue; the wall upon which fall the shadows supposed by the prisoners to be the only realities. Indeed, the "wall" may be taken as merely the drop-curtain of the theatre, and the shadows themselves as representing the physical substance known to ourselves and our fellow prisoners. Hence there can be on this lowest plane (the plane of the shadows) really no consciousness as we know it; consciousness only looks on what is below, and cannot for its chains turn its face upward to the light. It is said, indeed, that the atom is the Atma or seventh principle of the molecule; but the molecule is infinitesimal and invisible, and what consciousness it may have in itself — what is the nature of consciousness on that plane — we cannot profitably guess even, much less know.

The astral or kamic man is within, or above, or superior to the physical man; and its apprehension of external or physical nature, which we term sensation, is the lowest form of consciousness recognized by us. But mere sensation is not intelligent. As the astral or emotional man exists within (in the symbolical meaning of "within") the physical man, and by its power of sense takes hold of the latter, so there exists within the astral or emotional the logical faculty or principle, whose office is to sort out sensations and refer each to its source or cause in the outer world. This logical faculty (the lower mind or Kama Manas) is, as related to the planes below it, the faculty that perceives; and its action in taking hold of and interpreting the sensations is called perception.

Now suppose we consider the real Ego, the enduring entity that we mean when we say "man," to be one of the prisoners represented by Plato as confined in a den or cave; and external, physical, visible and tangible matter as the shadows on the wall of the cave. The Ego, in its descent from spirit into matter, goes deeper and deeper into the cave until it reaches the wall and is stopped. It can go no farther; and it must, impelled by the universal and all-embracing law of action and reaction, retrace its course toward spirit. Its progress downward or outward (from spirit — inward as to the cave) has been without consciousness in any sense that we can comprehend. When it strikes the wall of

its dungeon and strives to go still farther, it cannot do so; its limit is reached. This develops unintelligent consciousness — a consciousness wholly spiritual, and in no sense manasic. As it recedes backward in involution, still facing the wall, the reflected light of Manas thrown back from the wall enables it to interpret in a manner these sensations — to distinguish them from each other and to group them — but not at first to relate them to itself. Here is the beginning of the lowest mind, known in Mr. Sinnett's classification as Kama Rupa or the Animal Soul. To reach this degree of development immeasurable ages were required. The first dawn of sensation begins when the physical development has proceeded far enough to furnish a suitable vehicle for the astral body. The astral development goes on, and moulds the physical world to its purpose, until it in its turn has become — or until the two together have become — a suitable vehicle for the emotional and perceptive faculties. These steps are easy to name, but they have been taken with slow and toilsome tread through the first, second and third rounds of our chain of globes; and were repeated in briefer but immensely long periods in the first races of this our fourth round.

To the stone belongs molecular consciousness, not consciousness as we know it, but only so called by analogy; to the plant belongs astral consciousness, or the dawn of sensation; to the animal belongs emotional consciousness, or the dawn of perception. As this faculty or principle becomes more and more fully developed and active, a new faculty begins to act — the human intellect, the lower manas, begins to awake and exercise its functions. The prisoner has retreated far enough from the wall of his cave, has evolved far enough toward spiritual perception, to be able to recognize his lower principles as himself — to relate the experience, the sensations, the perceptions of these lower principles to his own identity; to distinguish between the "I" and the "not-I." This is self-consciousness; and here the human stage is reached in the return of the monad from its journey to the confines of matter.

In *Discussions of Philosophy and Literature*, Sir William Hamilton, one of the foremost philosophers of modern times, states:

In the philosophy of mind, *subjective* denotes what is to be referred to the thinking subject, the Ego; *objective*, what belongs to the object of thought, the Non-Ego. . . . These correlative terms correspond to the first and most important distinction in philosophy; they embody the original antithesis in consciousness of self and not-self — a distinction which in fact involves the whole science

of mind; for psychology is nothing more than a determination of the subjective and the objective, in themselves, and in their reciprocal relations.

Hamilton was not only a profound thinker and an erudite scholar; he was also a master in the English language, and capable of expressing his thoughts clearly and tersely. The definition above quoted certainly gives the right use of these terms; and for those who, with President Ascom, hold that a gulf that cannot be bridged cuts broadly apart the facts which transpire in consciousness and the facts which transpire in space, it would seem to need no further elucidation. But when they are used in Theosophical discussions, the further consideration must not be overlooked, that the Ego, the Non-Ego, and the bond between the two (the thinker, the object of thought, and the thought) are all one. This gives emphasis to the fact that the line between the subject and object is purely imaginary; the distinction is logical and not metaphysical. Thus the terms subjective and objective are seen to be wholly correlative, and what is subjective in one relation is objective in another, and *vice versa*. This correlative feature has always been recognized; but it becomes more significant and takes on new phases when viewed in the light of the septenary constitution of man.

Philosophers who have thought most deeply, and who have explored most fully the nature of man, and the various problems of ontology, show by their postulates and their reasoning that they implicitly apprehend, if they do not explicitly recognize, several of the distinctions presented by the septenary classification of principles. Dr. James March, President of the University of Vermont at the time of his death about fifty years ago, discussed in an essay the changes wrought by the supervening of higher faculties in the course of evolution. He spoke of the force by which a crystal is built up by accretion, by regular additions from without; of the force by which a vegetable germ develops from within; of the powers of perception and locomotion which distinguish the animal, to some species of which he conceded the logical faculty of ratiocination; and of the faculty of intuition, or perception of intellectual and spiritual truths and axioms, which distinguishes man from the lower forms of animal life. Here, in the classification of existence as amorphous, crystalline, vegetable, animal and human, each higher including all lower but superadding a new faculty, power, principle of growth, there is foreshadowed the method upon which our teaching of the septenary constitution of nature and of man is developed.

As the subjective is that which is within, and the objective is that which is without, the relation first emerges upon the evolution of the astral principle, or Linga Sharira; for the merely physical entity is so thoroughly one in nature that its different forms can hardly be considered as bearing this relation to each other. (Yet there is probably a septenary in physical nature below the astral, as witness earth, water, air, fire, etc.; and earth may be in truth objective to air.) The distinctions that are so obvious, organic, inorganic, etc., are really differing manifestations of the informing higher principles. But upon the development of the astral principle the relation appears; this is subjective as to the physical body, and the latter is objective as to the former. So when the kamic principle develops, or evolves from potentiality to potency, from a latent state to activity, this in turn becomes subjective, and to it the lower principles are objective. When the Lower Manas in its turn becomes active and subjective, it takes intelligent cognizance of the lower principles as objective, and recognizes their identity with itself, and then self-consciousness appears. And when, by evolution or training, the Higher Manas becomes active, then will the entire quaternary, or lower Ego, become in relation to this added faculty, objective.

This is very well expressed in an article in *Lucifer* for September 1891 (Vol. IX, p. 23) as follows:

This expansion of consciousness includes a development of the subtile senses which open up to the inner man new worlds, peopled with their inhabitants, and interdependent the one with the other. The subjective becomes the objective, with a still more subtile subjectivity beyond, which can become again objective as a still more spiritual consciousness is attained by the striver.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 189, H.P.B. says:

It stands to reason that there must be an enormous difference in such terms as "objectivity" and "subjectivity," "materiality and "spirituality," when the same terms are applied to different planes of being and perception.

This paper is intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive; and I shall have accomplished my purpose if I have set the relation of subjective to objective in a clearer light, and pointed out the direction in which to look for a better understanding of the philosophical side of our literature.

THE ORIGINS OF KNOWLEDGE

What I do believe in is (1) the unbroken oral teachings revealed by living *divine* men during the infancy of mankind to the elect among men; (2) that it has reached us *unaltered*; and (3) that the MASTERS are thoroughly versed in the science based on such uninterrupted teaching.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THERE IS still a persistent belief among scientists and their followers that in the beginning when man first came upon this earth he had no knowledge or guidance and that he lived his life as did the animals of his time, in a state of barbaric savagery. This belief is not only wrong but also mischievous. At no time from his first appearance on earth was man without friends, guides and instructors. The fathering of man's present failings on his barbaric ancestry is a pernicious doctrine abhorrent to truth and repugnant to morals. The presence of bestiality and brutality even today can be traced to this ignorance or rather superstition which has been elevated to a dogma by the pundits of modern science.

Theosophy maintains that when men first appeared on the earth they were not of a uniform degree of intellect. Man was definitely not a new creation but was a descent from far-off fields and areas of evolution, so that each man, like the child of today, brought with him his assets and his liabilities as well as his larger or lesser touch with things of light. But he was then in his period of infancy and the long days of innocence did not yet reflect the strains and tensions which would be his when his youth dissolved into manhood's prime. To help his footsteps upon the evolutionary path, there incarnated with him divine beings who had perfected themselves in other systems of worlds long before this little earth of ours was born. So they came, these shining ones who were the living repositories of the Wisdom of the Ages. These divine beings became the founders of the School of Earth. They who represented the Universal Wisdom of Mahat brought with them that knowledge which in the course of time the pupils of Earth School would require in physics and metaphysics, art and architecture, agriculture and astronomy, ethics and alchemy and divine Magic. In those far-off times the human intelligence was plastic enough to retain and carry that knowledge in the book volume of the brain with more truth and accuracy than in any written record. And so this divine Wisdom was transmitted

by oral tradition from one early Race to another in uninterrupted succession, and remained pure and unadulterated in the safe custody of the elect among men.¹

As one age passed into another and Race succeeded Race in the onward sweep of evolution, this oral tradition was checked and tested by the corroborative visions of seers separated by long periods of time. They could do so because by long training they had acquired the power to reach behind the visible forms to the reality which lay hidden deep in the kernel of matter. This vast record which took millennia to prepare was later marshalled, set down and explained by countless generations of seers and prophets who had the qualifications and the wisdom to enter upon such a task. This voluminous record had thereafter to be condensed into reasonable proportions and preserved from harm as an heirloom for future generations of men. The mystery language of glyphs and symbols was best suited for this, while geometrical signs were used to record cosmogenesis and the other recondite processes of evolution which were already mirrored in the configuration of the stars and the zodiac.

The third and fourth Races of man produced civilizations high in virtue and knowledge, and wise and holy beings walked the earth with men. But as the fourth Race ran towards its close, pride and ambition and selfishness captured the minds of men. The Atlanteans fell into sorcery and the divine knowledge became defiled by misuse. The great waters came. Large masses of land were submerged, and thus perished the once fair land and civilization of Atlantis. The cataclysm was global: the continents shifted and new masses of land appeared where once there was water. Nature reached her climacteric in the process of evolution. From the wreckage of the past, there were saved and rescued the "Wise Men" of the new, the fifth Race. The imperishable record now passed into their keeping and custody.

Now ensued an effort which has its parallel only in far earlier ages. The expertise of Adepts who had perfected themselves in their physical, mental, psychic and spiritual organizations was made to bear upon the Record. Theirs was a perfection which in all senses was perfect. They checked and tested and verified this Record; and in order to secure the greatest degree of certitude, no findings of one Adept were accepted unless these were themselves confirmed by the findings of Adepts

¹ S.D., I. 272.

separated from each other by centuries. The accuracy of the Record was being thus verified for all times and eras. The resulting Code though it went through the long and arduous process of verification remained in unadulterated condition and unbroken continuity with the Wisdom that had been brought by the exalted beings who had appeared on earth along with infant humanity. This Code came to be known as the *Sanatana Dharma*, the Eternal Wisdom, or the Wisdom-Religion.

Since the time of the submerging of the great continent of Atlantis, great civilizations have appeared on earth and having risen to their full splendour have faded away, and our historians have no evidence that they ever existed, their very names and culture lost to us in the darkness that hides the achievements of the past. Yet, these civilizations, during their glorious epochs, had their Hierophants and Initiates, their Chelas and aspiring souls, and had touched in greater or lesser measure portions of the great Ancient Tradition.

It would be appropriate at this stage to glimpse what Theosophy means by the language of glyph and symbol. Madame Blavatsky writes:

... the comprehension of the Occult Doctrine is based on that of the seven sciences; which sciences find their expression in the seven different applications of the secret records to the exoteric texts. Thus we have to deal with modes of thought on seven entirely different planes of Ideality. Every text relates to, and has to be rendered from, one of the following standpoints —

1. The Realistic plane of thought;
2. The Idealistic;
3. The purely Divine or Spiritual.

... There is no purely *mythical* element in any of the ancient religious texts; but the mode of thought in which they were originally written has to be found out and closely adhered to during the process of interpretation. For, it is either symbolical (archaic mode of thought), emblematical (a later though very ancient mode of thought), parabolical (allegory), hieroglyphical, or again *logogrammatical* — the most difficult method of all, as every letter, as in the Chinese language, represents a whole word. Thus, almost every proper name, whether in the Vedas, the "Book of the Dead," or the Bible (to a degree), is composed of such logograms. No one who is not initiated into the mystery of the occult religious logography can presume to know what a name in any ancient fragment means, before he has mastered the meaning of every letter that composes it. How is it to be expected

that the merely profane thinker, however great his erudition in *orthodox* symbolism, so to say — *i.e.*, in that symbolism which can never get out of the old grooves of Solar-myth and sexual-worship — shall penetrate into the arcana behind the veil. . . .

Thus Vaivasvata, Xisuthrus, Deukalion, Noah, etc., etc. — all the head-figures of the world-deluges, universal and partial, astronomical or geological — all furnish in their very names the records of the causes and effects which led to the event, if one can but read them fully.²

If the great Record still exists, are there students of it, high in development at such a time as ours when darkness and ignorance hold sway over the minds of men and nations? Says Madame Blavatsky:

There are, scattered throughout the world, a handful of thoughtful and solitary students, who pass their lives in obscurity, far from the rumours of the world, studying the great problems of the physical and spiritual universes. They have their secret records in which are preserved the fruits of the scholastic labours of the long line of recluses whose successors they are. The knowledge of their early ancestors, the sages of India, Babylonia, Nineveh, and the imperial Thebes; the legends and traditions commented upon by the masters of Solon, Pythagoras, and Plato, in the marble halls of Heliopolis and Saïs; traditions which, in their days, already seemed to hardly glimmer from behind the foggy curtain of the past — all this, and much more, is recorded on indestructible parchment, and passed with jealous care from one adept to another.³

Study of the origin and root of all knowledge and its preservation in its pristine state through the ages was undertaken by the very few during several centuries that preceded the nineteenth. Why, then, did H.P.B. acting as the accredited messenger of the Wise Ones, give it out publicly for some to scoff, for others to gape at and for others still to give a new orientation to their ideas and a new impetus to their researches? This is what she wrote in her first public exposition in writing on this important subject:

And now we will try to give a clear insight into one of the chief objects of this work. What we desire to prove is, that underlying every ancient popular religion was the same ancient wisdom-doctrine, one and identical, professed and practised by

² *S.D.*, II. 335.

³ *Isis Unveiled*, I. 557–58.

the initiates of every country, who alone were aware of its existence and importance. To ascertain its origin, and the precise age in which it was matured, is now beyond human possibility. A single glance, however, is enough to assure one that it could not have attained the marvellous perfection in which we find it pictured to us in the relics of the various esoteric systems, except after a succession of ages. A philosophy so profound, a moral code so ennobling, and practical results so conclusive and so uniformly demonstrable is not the growth of a generation, or even a single epoch. Fact must have been piled upon fact, deduction upon deduction, science have begotten science, and myriads of the brightest human intellects have reflected upon the laws of nature, before this ancient doctrine had taken concrete shape. The proofs of this identity of fundamental doctrine in the old religions are found in the prevalence of a system of initiation; in the secret sacerdotal castes who had the guardianship of mystical words of power, and a public display of a phenomenal control over natural forces, indicating association with preterhuman beings. Every approach to the Mysteries of all these nations was guarded with the same jealous care, and in all, the penalty of death was inflicted upon initiates of any degree who divulged the secrets entrusted to them. We have seen that such was the case in the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries, among the Chaldean Magi, and the Egyptian hierophants; while with the Hindus, from whom they were all derived, the same rule has prevailed from time immemorial.

The ages old injunction about the Ancient Wisdom is given by Sri Krishna in these words:

Forsake every other religion and take refuge alone with me; grieve not, for I shall deliver thee from all transgressions. Thou must never reveal this to one who doth not practise mortification, who is without devotion, who careth not to hear it, nor unto him who despiseth me. He who expoundeth this supreme mystery to my worshippers shall come to me if he performs the highest worship of me; and there shall not be among men anyone who will better serve me than he, and he shall be dearest unto me of all on earth.⁵

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 98-100.

⁵ *Bhagavad-Gita*, XVIII, 66-69.

WHAT IS SOUL?

THESE days everyone seems to believe in and talk about the soul. Like so many other important terms, the name "soul" is pressed into service by physicists, psychologists, philosophers and others, as well as by theologians. Each understands it in his own way. Has not the time come to define the term, so that all may know what each signifies when he uses the word "soul"? Church theology, especially in Protestant countries, inclines towards what is loosely regarded as the scientific concept of soul. Modern science has not defined with any exactitude the nature of the reflective consciousness or self-consciousness of the human being, though it holds that self-consciousness is born of sense and brain activities. Soul is generally regarded as the product of body, and such different terms as "life," "spirit," "mind," are used as its synonyms.

In eastern countries, even in India, confusion exists, arising from this babel of thoughts. This need not be, if propositions of Asiatic, especially Aryan, psychology are properly tabulated. The six schools of philosophy (*shat darshani*) and the six limbs of science (*shat angani*) present but different views of the same truth. Some Indians, however, prefer to be tutored by western psychologists and even by pseudo-psychologists than become devotees of their own Wise Gurus. Hence all suffer, and the light of the East is not made properly available to the West.

The pressure of the moral atmosphere on the entire globe is such that millions of men yearn for some discipline of life. The existence of soul is an intuitive faith with almost all men. The breakdown of materialism, and the moral shaking humanity has received through wars and their aftermath, are proportionate to the insistence of the demand for some life-discipline.

People desire to live the soul-life, and most try to do so in terms of one book or another. Charlatans make money out of private lessons and courses. The disillusioned victim grows sadder but not always wiser, for he turns to sample other lessons and teachings, hoping against hope that the true way has been found. This confusion becomes a pernicious difficulty in the way of educated humanity, in spite of the fact that true knowledge of the Ancient Way of Life exists and may be found. It is not sought because "men of science," "leaders of thought," "those who know," etc., are themselves experimenting, debating, shifting ground, and will not take pains to study the old-world teachings. The masses follow the "leaders" of scientific thought, all the time

fancying that they have freed themselves from the fetters of blind belief and dogmatism. The craze for "new and up-to-date knowledge" blinds people, who talk of soul, spiritual life, culture of concentration, etc., without defining what is the difference between spirit and soul, and how both are or can be distinct from the mind, and what concentration really is.

It is of the utmost importance that definite words be used for definite things. We are not advocating a brushing away of differing schools of thought, representing definite points of view, but recommending that terms used by each be simply and adequately defined. Answer must first be found to the question "What is Soul?" before soul-life is undertaken. The ancient Wisdom-Religion, repeated in modern Theosophy, gives very exact instruction, and below we give a table from H.P.B.'s *Key to Theosophy* which, we believe, will go a long way towards clearing the existing confusion about Spirit-Soul-Mind-Self-Ego.

THE HIGHER SELF is	{ Atma, the inseparable ray of the Universal and ONE SELF. It is the God <i>above</i> , more than within, us. Happy the man who succeeds in saturating his <i>inner Ego</i> with it!
THE SPIRITUAL <i>divine</i> EGO, is	{ the Spiritual soul or <i>Buddhi</i> , in close union with <i>Manas</i> , the mind-principle, without which it is no EGO at all, but only the <i>Atmic Vehicle</i> .
THE INNER, or HIGHER "EGO" is	{ <i>Manas</i> , the "Fifth" Principle, so called, independently of <i>Buddhi</i> . The Mind-Principle is only the Spiritual Ego when merged <i>into one</i> with <i>Buddhi</i> —no materialist being supposed to have in him <i>such</i> an Ego, however great his intellectual capacities. It is the permanent <i>Individuality</i> or the "Reincarnating Ego."
THE LOWER, or PERSONAL "EGO" is	{ the physical man in conjunction with his <i>lower Self</i> , <i>i.e.</i> , animal instincts, passions, desires, etc. It is called the "false personality," and consists of the <i>lower Manas</i> combined with <i>Kama-rupa</i> , and operating through the Physical body and its phantom or "double."

VOLUNTARY POVERTY

I

The Self of Matter and the SELF of Spirit can never meet.
One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for both.

Kill out desire. . . . Desire nothing.

THE ABOVE PRECEPTS from *The Voice of the Silence* offer age-old guidelines for the spiritual life. One who looks at them superficially and from a mundane viewpoint might be led into believing that they are negative in content. They should, however, be taken as warnings by one who strives for the higher life.

Viewed from the spiritual angle, it is possible to discover the positive value of the precepts. Lives of the great teachers of mankind can well illustrate the worth of these teachings, so scrupulously practised by them. The Buddha, who gave up the sovereignty of a kingdom, which was his birthright, is a shining example of the choice of a life of spirit in preference to the life of matter. So did Bahubali, whose monolithic statue at Shravanabelagola in Karnataka stands as a silent witness to a total rejection of worldly glory.

The story of King Midas points to the futility of so-called precious possessions. Saint-singer Purandaradasa is yet another instance of one who suffered frustration in the enjoyment of riches; and later experienced the joy of freedom in the life of a minstrel.

The man who sought from Jesus the means of attaining to eternal life, assured the master that he had followed all the commandments. On being advised by Jesus to sell his possessions, to distribute the proceeds to the poor, and to "take up the cross," the man went away sorrowing, "for he had great possessions." Thereupon Jesus said to his disciples, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."

One of the manifestations of the dark side of this dark age is that people by and large set overwhelming value to wealth, struggle hard to get rich quick, to amass more and more — all at the cost of upsetting social harmony, sometimes using unfair means deliberately, and depriving their fellowmen of what might have been their due. Economic exploitation is rampant; competition fierce; corruption raging far and wide.

Why this mad quest after riches? The obvious answer is — greed and ignorance. There is much ignorance about the operation of the Law of

Karma: that it inexorably brings home consequences which must eventually siphon off into a natural vortex all that was not merited in the fitness of things, is often overlooked. Greed appears to be a phenomenon peculiar to man. To hanker after what is more than one's need is manifestly useless. Common sense points to the fact that needs being limited by nature — such as intake of food being limited by the capacity of the stomach — the attempt to grab more and more is absolutely unnecessary. Yet people devise diverse methods and means to amass wealth, overlooking that they cannot consume all, that death will cut short their lives, that loss and waste are the outcome of all excess, and that anxiety and fear of losing one's possessions cause much unhappiness.

Count Leo Tolstoy has graphically described the tragedy of what greed can do in his story "How Much Land Does a Man Need?"

The opening verse in *Ishavasya Upanishad* asserts that everything belongs to Ishwara. One receives just what he merits. If perchance he gets more, he has to renounce and enjoy. He should never covet the wealth of another. In the spirit of the above, each man becomes a trustee of what comes to him by way of Nature's bounty; as a trustee he must "render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's."

Christ gave his disciples the parable of the rich man who set up greater barns to store his plentiful harvest and his goods, and foolishly dreamt of laying up for many years so as to eat, drink and be merry, little realizing that when death claimed him he would have to leave behind all his material goods.

The ideal of trusteeship denotes sharing with others appropriately to their needs, and at the proper time and in the proper manner. Says *The Light of Asia*:

Give freely and receive, but take from none
By greed, or force, or fraud, what is his own.

According to a Sanskrit *sloka*, failure to give freely entails the following consequences:

By not giving, he suffers penury in life,
Lacking wherewithal, he commits sin,
Because of sinful acts, he inexorably goes to hell,
Reborn, he again suffers penury and becomes sinner again.

(To be concluded)

HAZY NOTIONS

[This article by H.P.B. is reprinted from *The Theosophist*, December 1881.—EDS.]

Enter Ghost.

Hamlet:

Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: . . .

THE *Sunday Mirror* honours us with a direct notice. The Calcutta organ of piety, generally so contemptuous and reserved, actually begins to show signs of interest for its humble contemporary and — speaks to it. Our star is evidently in its ascendancy. Let not pride overwhelm our better feelings, but may our prayers reach Saraswati, the sweet goddess of wisdom, to inspire us in the answers we shall have to give to our stern cross-examining critic.

Our notions about the Theosophists are so hazy that we feel a diffidence in pronouncing upon the merits of the system which they have come to preach,

we read in the *Mirror* of November 20. To feel “a diffidence in pronouncing upon the merits” of a system, with notions about it confessedly “hazy,” shows wisdom and betokens prudence. Nevertheless, the *mirror* “notes” two facts about us. They believe — it says — (meaning the Theosophical culprits) —

They believe in the Hindu *yoga*, and they proclaim themselves to be Buddhists. It is related that they gave themselves out as such before the Madras people who had mistaken them for Hindus.

Oh, foolish Madrassesees! However, the Theosophists, who do “believe” in *Yoga* “must surely be ubiquitous.” To give one’s self out as one thing or the other, in a place where one has never been, is a feat of which even the Theosophists might well be proud. Let it be understood that when we say — “Theosophists,” we but answer the secret thought of the estimable *Mirror* painting to itself under that generic name the two humble founders of the Society, but for reasons best known to itself, avoiding

to specify them by name. Well, if so, neither Colonel Olcott nor Madame Blavatsky ever graced yet by their presence Madras, the former having gone no further than Tinnevely, and the latter having trod the shores of the Southern Coast for the last time some twenty-three years back. There might have been in Madras hundreds of Theosophists for all we know, who "proclaimed" themselves — but what they were: natural-born Buddhists from Ceylon or Burma. So much the worse for Dravidian perspicacity if they were "mistaken for Hindus." We are inclined though to regard the accusation as a wicked slur upon the Madrassesees' mental capacities, because, perhaps, of our Southern Brothers showing themselves rather slow in the appreciation of the New Dispensation missionaries.

However it may be, further on the *Sunday Mirror* is more explicit and even becomes authoritative.

Now what we wish to know about them is this [it declares] — What is the creed which they profess? Buddhism is accepted in various ways by scholars. Its morality is admired by many, while its directly godless character is commended by agnostics. We contemplate the founder of Buddhism as the revealer of a particular idea to his countrymen, and in that way include him in the rolls of the world's great prophets. Now if the Theosophists are Buddhists in what sense are they such? They cannot be simply contented with the morality of Sakya-Muni, since the very same morality they have in the religion of their own countries.¹ Nor are they probably inclined to view him in the way the New Dispensation does!² Are they then agnostics in an old Buddhistic dress?³ The Theological position of Buddhism is not yet clearly ascertained.⁴ Mr. Rhys Davids assigns, we think, in one of his latest works, a purely atheistic conception to the system. Do the theosophists belong to that class of thinkers?

A direct plainly-put question demands as direct and plain an answer. Unfortunately, with all our good will and sincere desire to satisfy our esteemed contemporary's curiosity (and very laudable it is) we are placed in a very awkward position. It is that of an inhabitant of the earth who would find himself suddenly apostrophized by — say a citizen of the moon meteorically fallen from that luminary. "Oh, child of a strange

¹ Not quite "the very same" (morality).

² Oh, heavens—no!

³ No; but some of us may be "agnostics in a new Theosophical dress."

⁴ Alas! as little ascertained and as "hazy" as the *Sunday Mirror's* notions about Theosophy.

planet," might say the latter to the former, "a learned astronomer from our satellite tells us that there are living animals on your earth, which, notwithstanding their great variety, are all called men and who deny an atmosphere to our planet. Do the like of you belong to that class of beings?" What could man answer to such a question? There would be no more use denying his being a "living animal" called *man*, than there is of our being "Theosophists"; while his ideas might be as diametrically opposed to those of his fellow beings who deny an atmosphere to fair Luna, as the views and creeds of some Theosophists are opposed to the views and creeds of other Theosophists. The members of our Society may be reckoned by thousands and their respective religions, sects and various philosophies, by hundreds. When, therefore, any one desires to learn to what religion or system belongs this or that one of our Brotherhood, the least he could do would be to specify that particular individual by his or her name.

To afford, however, some slight consolation to our Calcutta contemporary we will take it into our confidence, and unbosom ourselves of a great secret. Colonel Olcott is a thorough-going, genuine Buddhist — though not of the "prayer-wheel turning" kind; while his humble Corresponding Secretary, Madame Blavatsky, is — what she is: her religious — or if the *Mirror* so prefers it — irreligious views forming part of her private property, with which the public has not the slightest concern. As to the Society in general, or rather its members, they are bound to respect the religion of everybody; never to attack any system *per se*, nor yet any religionist who keeps his faith sacredly locked up within his own heart, abstaining from waving it into the public's face like a red rag before a bull, or flinging it into the teeth of all those he meets with; at the same time, it is our bounden duty and pleasure to oppose harsh-voiced bigotry, religious intolerance, sectarian prejudice and arrogance whenever and in whatever religion we find it; from the oldest "Dispensation" — downward.

ONCE you have become a master in a thing, you should become a pupil in something new.

—GERHART HAUPTMANN

THEOSOPHY THE ALEMBIC

HOW RIGHT at all times is H.P.B.'s choice of words! She uses the English language with a mastery and sensitivity truly amazing in one who was Russian born. In an apt and beautiful metaphor she tells us that, "viewed as a philosophy, Theosophy in its practical work is the alembic of the Mediaeval alchemist. It transmutes the apparently base metal of every ritualistic and dogmatic creed (Christianity included) into the gold of fact and truth, and thus truly produces a universal panacea for the ills of mankind."¹

The comparison is perfect. Theosophy neither destroys, supplants, nor filches away the gold, though, mention its name to a pious Christian, and it is promptly suspected of doing so. What it does do is to reveal the true worth of what may never before have been fully understood and appreciated. Souls, naturally devout, that have wearied of coping with unpalatable man-made dogmas, that have fainted by the way and resolved to abandon the quest for Truth, find new hope when Theosophy reveals the inner meaning of old threadbare words, a fact which H.P.B. confirms when she asserts that, though "it may sound odd and paradoxical, it is true to say that, hitherto, the most apt workers in practical Theosophy, its most devoted members, were those recruited from the ranks of agnostics and even materialists." Doubtless they were some who had striven in the past with dogmas which they found impossible to accept. Now the hidden gold had become visible through the alembic of Theosophy.

H.P.B. wrote the article where this metaphor occurs as her opening Editorial in *Lucifer* for November 1888, barely three years before she passed from earthly life, so we students may regard her words as a precious legacy to draw upon whenever we feel in need of the pure gold of Theosophy. For it is the sad case of some who have been reared in Christian homes to face mental and spiritual confusion later when they find through their reading and studies that there are many weaknesses in orthodox Christianity, especially since the discovery in the spring of 1947 of the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls pertaining to the community of the Essenes at Qumran, some of which predate, almost word for word, the later teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and even reveal the presence of a Master in many ways similar to Him,

¹ Except where otherwise stated, all quotations are from H.P.B.'s article "Is Theosophy a Religion?" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 1*).

known to the community as the Teacher of Righteousness.

Let us not become involved, however, with the Scrolls, which are mentioned only to show how precarious is a faith dependent solely on *facts*, since these can be altered or overturned in the course of history if later ones chance to be brought to light. Turn, rather, to the alembic of Theosophy and see Jesus the Nazarene not as the *only* Son of God, still less as God Himself become incarnate, but as H.P.B. depicts Him in *Isis Unveiled* (II. 150): "As an incarnated God there is no single record of him on this earth capable of withstanding the critical examination of science; as one of the greatest reformers, an inveterate enemy of every theological dogmatism, a persecutor of bigotry, a teacher of one of the most sublime codes of ethics, Jesus is one of the grandest and most clearly defined figures on the panorama of human history."

With such a picture imprinted on their minds, not of Deity in the flesh but of a great Teacher delivering his message in full accord with his predecessors, seekers of a later day might never have been faced with what H.P.B. calls the "multi-coloured dogmas of the churches" and "the thousand and one 'philosophies' so-called" that confuse the mind and starve the spirit. More, the discoveries of science, which perturb so many, if passed through the same alembic can also yield their moiety of gold, for Theosophy claims, says H.P.B., to be the "essence" of both Religion and Science — "the two divine abstractions," she calls them in one of her telling phrases — each so deadening as they can be superficially, but vitalizing as the light of day when transmuted in the Theosophic crucible.

The horrific truth of this spiritual deadening was brought home only recently by a radio report coming direct from what is perhaps the best-known Institute for Animal Research, which, rightly interpreted, means animal torture. That several thousand harmless creatures perish there fortnightly was stated with professional calm by the medical scientist being interviewed. "We kill —" said he blandly, as who might say "We buy, or sell, or perform any other act of normal business." When do the Churches raise their voice against such practices? Are they so preoccupied with their own concerns as never to be able to spare a word? Well might H.P.B. see the Society founded by her as "the volunteer *scavenger* of both orthodox religion and modern science"! Both, indeed, require cleansing, even more today than then, the former for acquiescing in the many vile methods of the latter which involve not only the agony and death of innumerable creatures, but are now concentrating increasingly

on abnormal means of human reproduction. How desperately does the mass mind today need to pass through the alembic of Theosophy if the gold of reverence for life is to be salvaged before it is too late!

At the time when H.P.B. wrote her article Science had not, of course, developed thus far, yet she saw it as already degraded by "the hideous excrescence of modern materialism and atheism." Strong counter measures were called for if these evils were not to prevail, and the Church was aware of this, already seeing Science as a menace to its doctrines and authority. It, however, carried but little weight, and, of course, saw Theosophy as merely another enemy. "The crust of error is thick," wrote H.P.B., "and because we *personally* have tried to remove some of it, the effort became the standing reproach against all Theosophical writers and even the Society." At the time of writing her Editorial she could look back on "twelve years of incessant labour and struggle with enemies from the four quarters of the globe," but at the same time was able to affirm that "on the other hand, Theosophy has brought back from Materialism and blank despair to belief (based on logic and evidence) in man's *divine* Self, and the immortality of the latter, more than one of those whom the Church has lost through dogma, exaction of faith and tyranny." Theosophy, the alembic, was unmistakably in operation!

In reading anything from H.P.B.'s superbly gifted pen, we never feel that she has deliberately *chosen* some particular illustration or sought around for this or that metaphor or simile. So the imagery of the Alchemist, earnest in his endeavour to evolve pure gold from his crucible, is immediately acceptable, for not only is gold the thing most precious to acquire but in its substance it pertains to light. For example, she quotes in *Isis* (I. 511) from an old Rosicrucian book: "The Hermetic gold is the outflow of the sunbeam, or of light suffused invisibly and magically into the body of the world." Even so is Truth, it may be said, the outflow of Theosophy, functioning precisely as does gold, for, to quote further from the ancient book, "Gold draws inferior natures in the metals, and intensifying and multiplying, converts into itself." That a similar transmutation through the alembic of Theosophy may be granted us should be the constant prayer of every earnest student of Theosophy.

The Alchemist pursued his task in solitude, H.P.B. hers in the glare of publicity, accused of heading a "sect of impostors and lunatics" who were spreading "a farrago of insane beliefs." She writes: "It is no exaggeration to say there never was — during the present century, at

any rate — a movement, social or religious, so terribly, nay, so absurdly misunderstood, or more blundered about than THEOSOPHY — whether regarded theoretically as a code of ethics, or practically, in its objective expression, *i.e.*, the Society known by that name.”

The West, and particularly the Victorian England of that period, was indeed an unpromising milieu in which to promulgate the ancient Eastern teachings. A weaker woman might well have been tempted to compromise, adjusting certain points to secure either the religionists or the scientists as supporters. Instead, she stated openly that “the very *raison d'être* of the Theosophical Society was, from its beginning, to utter a loud protest and lead an open warfare against dogma or any belief based upon blind faith.”

What was her own view regarding its future? She says frankly that when the Movement's original founders are gone, “their respective merits and demerits, their good and bad acts and deeds, and their Theosophical work will have to be weighed in the Balance of Posterity.”

We, today's students, are that Posterity. What do we see as we look around? More or less what H.P.B. saw ninety-two years ago — perhaps fewer “blind fanatics and interested churchmen,” certainly more “intelligent materialists rightly kicking against absurd human dogmas.” But alas, we see also the selfishness, inhumanity and evil that result from a distorted, a debased sense of values which is well subserved and pandered to by the achievements of Science.

H.P.B., having pointed out obstacles and opponents, says confidently, “Why, even then, Theosophy will prove itself the saviour of mankind.” As to how this could be we are given a hint in “Conversations on Occultism,” recorded by Mr. Judge. The Sage, when asked by the student (representative of all of us), “Of what use is it to try, like the alchemists, to make gold?” answers the question literally in due course, but it is his first words only that concern us at the moment. “The transmutation spoken of by the real alchemists was the alteration of the base alloy in man's nature.” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 139)

To effect such an alteration was the motive that inspired H.P.B.'s devoted work. Her time, her pen, her life were dedicated to the task. Great indeed is our debt to her. We can measure it only by reflecting on what might have been lost to us if she had not replaced theology by Theosophy. Two words very similar, yet one is equivalent to bondage, the other to freedom of mind and spirit. Well might Mr. Judge, in March

1888, three years before the close of her earthly life, write in his magazine *The Path*, "Since 1875 she has stood as the champion and helper of every Theosophist; each member of the Society has to thank her for the store of knowledge and spiritual help that has lifted so many of us from doubt to certainty of where and how Truth might be found." (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 14*, p. 11)

If we today feel the same deep sense of gratitude, let us prove it by transmitting to others what we have learnt from her, in so far as we are able.

What value has gold if it is not made use of, that especially which comes from the alembic of Theosophy?

WE have seen that Plotinus conceives the universe as a living chain of being, an unbroken series of ascending or descending values and existences. The whole constitutes a "harmony"; each inferior grade is "in" the next above; each existence is vitally connected with all others. But those grades which are inferior in value are also imperfectly real, so long as we look at them in disconnexion. They are characterized by impermanence and inner discord, until we set them in their true relations to the whole. Then we perceive them to be integral parts of the eternal systole and diastole in which the life of the universe consists, a life in which there is nothing arbitrary or irregular, seeing that all is ordered by the necessity that eternal principles should act in accordance with their own nature. The perfect and unchangeable life of the Divine Spirit overflows in an incessant stream of creative activity, which spends itself only when it has reached the lowest confines of being, so that every possible manifestation of Divine energy, every hue of the Divine radiance, every variety in degree as well as in kind, is realized somewhere and somehow. And by the side of this outward flow of creative energy there is another current which carries all the creatures back toward the source of their being. It is this centripetal movement that directs the active life of all creatures endowed with Soul. They were created and sent into the world that they might be moulded a little nearer to the Divine image by yearning for the home which they have left. This aspiration, which slumbers even in unconscious beings, is the mainspring of the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic life of mankind.

—W. R. INGE

THE ARTIST AND THE ASHRAM

AN ARTIST renowned for his "abstract" paintings, Hasta loitered by his studio window, disconsolate. A wasted morning, he thought bitterly. His brushes lay idle and, had he not turned his back on it, a large blank canvas would have confronted him on his easel. "What has happened to me?" he thought fretfully. "I gave my friends at the Ashram a definite assurance that it would be ready. It is a great occasion for them, this first anniversary of their founding. But why ask *me* to portray it symbolically? They know perfectly well that I am a rank materialist."

Hasta's mind was a fertile one. When asked by his friends, for whom he felt much affection, though not sharing their spiritual beliefs, he had thought it would be easy to express these, according to their wish, through some appropriate symbolism. Not so! His imaginative power seemed to have withered. And time, as he had told himself frequently, was running out. Now, at this late hour on a fruitless morning, he was on the verge of confessing himself beaten, and wondered what reparation he could make to the young devotees and their Gurus who were confidently awaiting his gift.

"My first failure," he muttered, gazing unseeingly at his quiet garden. Then his lips parted in a faint smile. His young neighbour — a born bookworm, as Hasta often told him teasingly — found the garden a useful short cut when returning from the local library, weighed down, as now, by several heavy volumes.

"Why not a book?" thought Hasta suddenly. Would not a book, appropriately stylized in his own particular manner, open at some passage beloved by his friends, with perhaps a glimpse of the Ashram in the background, be indeed the right symbol of the life of study and devotion lived there?

For some minutes he stood lost in thought, or rather in the act of intangible creation. His young friend waved to him in passing, but Hasta saw him not. He remained motionless, while the wall-clock ticked away the minutes, and a tree shadow moved perceptibly across the floor.

Slowly, slowly, he came back to reality, and in doing so found his gaze had settled on another, even less conspicuous, moving object. Away in the distance, far beyond his garden, a peasant farmer was at work, sowing his wheat. For a little, Hasta watched him indifferently. Then (as he later told his friends) a strange thing happened. He found him-

self repeating words he had forgotten for half a century, words that used to come invariably to his grandfather's lips while the old man was sowing his wheat, as this stranger was doing now, with the small Hasta stumbling along beside him.

Sow kindly acts and thou shalt reap their fruition. Yes, thought Hasta, that was it! He could almost hear his grandfather's voice. And as memory's scroll unrolled further he saw dimly, on the hills above the farmhouse, a strange old building to which his grandfather would go from time to time taking some vegetables from the patch of ground which Hasta was proud to help to cultivate.

Where the words came from Hasta knew not, but he did know what, in a few more minutes, he would begin painting. An outstretched hand scattering grain, and above it the words he had just recalled gleaming golden. . . .

"I should like to trace them," he thought. "Someone at the Ashram may be able to help me. An aphorism of that sort seems to indicate that the book it comes from must be worth reading."

He turned to pick up his brush and palette, unaware that the Voice of the Silence had spoken to him, and that, guided by it, he would in other ways than by his painting serve the Ashram faithfully throughout many years to come.

A HUNDRED TIMES every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depends on the labours of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received.

—EINSTEIN

JAPANESE BUDDHIST SECTS

[Reprinted from *The Path*, November and December 1890.—Eds.]

IN Japan there are twelve principal Buddhist sects, all of them having different names and with different reasons for their inception. The chief priests of these met with Col. Olcott last year in friendly union for the purpose of seeing what could be done in the way of healing the differences which exist between the two great divisions of the church, and a short account of them, it is thought, will be of interest and value to the American theosophists.

I will name them in order and then tell of their different ideas in small space. They are:

The Ku-sha-shu, the Jo-jitsu-shu, the Ris-shu, the Hosso-shu, the San-ron-shu, the Ke-gon-shu, the Tendai-shu, the Shingon-shu, the Jo-do-shu, the Zen-shu, the Shin-shu, the Nichi-ren-shu. Many of these rely upon a certain book or books which give them their names.

The Ku-sha-shu is so called from the Book of the treasury of metaphysics which was composed by Vasubandhu or Se-shin. They have several other books, among which may be mentioned one which it is said was composed by five hundred Arhats or perfect men and is by name Dai-bi-ba-sha-ron. The various divisions of the inner man are given, and among them is a very peculiar property assigned to him and called Mu-hyo-shikin, which means "unapparent form." Though it is said to be formless, yet it is called form, and it means that when an action is done something relating to it is formed in the actor. The analysis of the faculties and other parts of man is very detailed. They say that all things are brought about by Karma except two, which are Space and Nirvana. It is also said that those who wish to be enlightened fully may be so in three births if they are assiduous, but if not, then it will take them sixty kalpas.

The Jo-jitsu-shu has a book entitled *The Perfection of the Truth*. It has explanations of the Tripitaka as preached by Buddha, and is said to have been written by a Hindu who was a disciple of Kumarila Batta. The book is said to unite the best of many other schools of Buddhism. One peculiar view which deserves notice is that the past and future are unreal, but that as to things the present only is real. By meditation on the unreal character of things, even including the person himself, one obtains enlightenment upon the destruction of passion. They

have many books, and of these there is one commentary of 23 volumes and another in two.

The Ris-shu was founded about 617 A.D., it is said, by Do-sen from China. Its basis may be understood from a quotation taken from one of the works of the founder. He says, "If a man does not practise the Dhyana and Samadhi, that is, meditation and contemplation, he cannot understand the truth."

The Hosso-shu divides the whole mass of the doctrines of the Buddha into the following: "existence, emptiness, and the middle path," and they say that the doctrines of the Mahayana school to the number of 80,000 can be put in these divisions. The sect is said to study as to the real nature of things, and its divisions are so very numerous as not to be admitted here. According to them a man has to live for countless kalpas in the right way before he can become a Buddha.

The San-ron-shu is named from their having three shastras or books which cover the whole teachings of Buddha during his life. They think that, as the object of Buddha was to teach people according to their several and different abilities to take the truth, therefore any shastra that will teach them may be preached from. But of course they only use the Buddhist shastras.

Next comes the Ke-gon-shu, and it, like some others, takes its name from a book, the Ke-gon-gyo. They think their sutra was preached by Buddha soon after his enlightenment, and that by right thought on perfect enlightenment a man will reach it. Other rules are those common to all Buddhism. The name of the sect may be also Great-square-wide-Buddha-flower-adornment.

Ten-dai-shu, or the sect founded on the mount of Tendai in China, preaches the doctrine of "completion and suddenness." This of course sounds singular to ears not accustomed to these terms, but it means the completion of enlightenment and the immediacy of that state to all men. They say that if the disciple properly understands the secrets as to form and reason, he will become Buddha in this life even.

Shin-gon-shu sect also teaches that a man may reach to perfect enlightenment even in this life if he follows their doctrine, which is called the secret mantra. This latter is in respect to body, speech, and thought. A very notable method of this sect is this: if the doctrines are read lengthwise from top to bottom as in the writing of that country, then the apparent doctrine is known; but if the table of doctrines be read across the lines of writing, then the secret doctrine becomes known.

This seems to be a very peculiar sort of cipher. This hidden doctrine is communicated to the disciples by the teacher. Lengthwise the gradual improvement of thought is explained, and crosswise the circle of the state of things is fully explained, and this is the secret doctrine. Without going into this it may be said to be a method of teaching very like that of Patanjali, in which the several sorts of thought are classified and directed to be got rid of, one by one, until the state of pure thought is reached. Thus the apparent doctrine drives away the dust of outer thought, and the secret one shows the inner truth. The final object is to know the source and bottom of one's thoughts, and thus to be able to reach the state of Buddha. There are many secret and curious things in the doctrine of this sect which it would be impossible to set down here from their great length.

To continue about the sect of Shin-gon. It would not be possible to fully explain their doctrines in one book, much less in one article. These are merely notes. They speak of three secrets and call them those of "body, speech, and mind," that is, the actions of these. The apparent form of all things is that of the five elements, and that is the secret of body. In the Hindu school of Patanjali we find an aphorism relating to the disappearance of the body, or, more properly, of the power to make another unable to see it, and this comes when one has found out the secret of form.¹ The Shin-gon-shu say that this secret is only understood by a Buddha.

Nichi-ren-shu was founded by Nichi-ren, who gave out for his followers the doctrines found in the *Suddharma-pundarika*. They believe that Buddha taught people gradually by expedients and different methods, although he had all the time but one means or vehicle. They have three great secret laws which have reference to the three great bodies of Buddha, and those are by name, *Dharmakaya*, *Sambhogakaya*, and *Nirmanakaya*.² The chief object of worship is the great Mandala of the ten worlds, and it represents the original Buddha of remote times. The wisdom, virtue, and knowledge of all men and sages of every region are the powers of this Buddha, who dwells in every place, is free from birth and death, and is the Buddha of per-

¹ On page 705 of the second volume of the *Secret Doctrine* is this: "Till our human form came into being, in which all things are comprised and *which contains all forms*," and in the note to it: "This sentence contains a dual sense and a profound mystery in the occult sciences the secret of which *if*, and *when*, known—confers tremendous powers on the Adept to *change his visible form*."—Ed. [*The Path*]

² See *The Voice of the Silence*, where these are explained.—Ed. [*The Path*]

manence. Sakyamuni said he was this original Buddha and also that we ourselves are the same, and thus we are to meditate on this chief object of worship for our salvation.³ A man should remember that his own body is that of the original Buddha, that his dwelling place is the Pure Land of constantly calm light, and his thought the Good law. The weak man may enter on the path by this teaching.⁴

The Shin-shu calls itself the True Sect of the pure Land. The object is to be born in the pure land of Amitabha, a Buddha who in the very remote time made a vow and prayer like this: "If any of the living beings in the ten regions who have believed in me with true thoughts and desire to be born in my land and have even to ten times repeated the thought of my name should not be born there, then may I not obtain the perfect knowledge." With this prayer in view he lived for many kalpas for the purpose of perfecting his merit, so that anyone who made use of his name might be thereby eventually saved. It is held that men in general have not enough power of their own to enable them to reach over death, yet at the same time it is allowed that there are some such men out of whom at last come the Buddhas. The common man who repeats this name will at last be led to virtue, and from that to wisdom and finally perfection.

The Jo-do-shu is also a sect of the pure land, and I cannot perceive much difference between it and the other of the same view, as the differences which exist between them are small. They had a teacher who taught about the belief in Amitabha, and Ryu-ju said that "in the great sea of the law of Buddha faith is the only means to enter."

Zen-shu is the sect of contemplation, and is thought to derive its name from the Sanscrit word Dhyana, or contemplation. They think that besides all the various and great doctrines there is as well another which may be called the secret doctrine, and that comes through one line of transmission and is not dependent on anyone's utterances. This must mean that the truth comes to one as the result of his own thought.

After all this it must be plain to anyone who may read this that there is in fact very little difference between any of the sects of which I have been permitted here to speak, and that their existence is due to the fact that Buddha did, as all know well, teach in many different ways, so that he might make an entry into the many different kinds of minds which men possess. For one man will have a mind that by nature is al-

³ In the *Bhagavad-Gita* the same is said in effect.—Ed. [*The Path*]

⁴ This sect certainly preaches the doctrine of non-separateness.—Ed. [*The Path*]

ways in the state of contemplation, and another will not be able to do more than have great longing for the things of the spirit, and hence this latter sort of man would not be able to understand the abstruse parts of the doctrines of the great Lord. And so in the history of the life of Buddha we find that the time came when he made up his mind that he would tell the disciples that there was really only one way in which to look at the problems of life, although he had taught them in many another way for many years. Then some of the disciples who were not able to understand this rose, and, after saluting him, left the assembly. The learned Buddhist knows that it is Karma which makes these differences, working together with the law of reincarnation, so that one man has only reached to a certain place in his spiritual learning, and is not in any way able to understand those things that relate to a longer practice of right thought in other lives. Other men, however, have gone through all of this and are fitted to clearly grasp even the most abstruse doctrines of the Master. And yet, indeed, there is a great mystery here, and that is that there is no man in any region who may not, if he will, grasp even the most difficult part of the law, but he has to have a faith which is perfect and live a life which is pure in all its parts.

The doctrine of the Pure-land-Sect is one that is meant to help all the common men, for it looks like a way of being freed from sin by the virtue of another being, yet it also is capable of another interpretation, and it is only one of the expedients of the great Lord to make men take advantage by an easy way of their own hidden natural powers. It is quite true that if anyone will call on the name of this Buddha he will be saved, for the act of so calling and aspiring has the effect of bringing to the surface the whole spiritual life and experience of the man from out of the dim and almost forgotten past. So even with this doctrine the man does in fact save himself, which is the true law of the Buddha and the one that underlies his whole teachings. As the years roll by and as the Kali yuga rushes further on, it will be found that the teachings of Buddha are great, wide, square, full of adornment, all comprehending, easy to understand, capable of taking us out of the ocean of rebirth in any of the ten different ways, and that in the course of time the Buddha will come again and will make perfect the imperfect renderings of his law which he alone is able to give to the world in a perfect state.

Let us remember the mystery of body, speech, and thought!

—KYO-RYO-YA-SHA

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Is there a place for coincidence in our lives? The subject has aroused much interest of late and books have been written on it by thinkers like Arthur Koestler and Alan Vaughan. Edward Ziegler's article, "Coincidence: Is It Chance or Destiny?" in the February *Reader's Digest* (Indian ed.) gives some striking instances and outlines the various theories being put forward to explain unpredictable occurrences. He writes:

You look up an unfamiliar word in the dictionary, then encounter the same word several times in the next few days. You write a letter to an old friend you haven't heard from in years, and a note from him crosses in the post. Blind chance, or something else?

Orthodox science considers that coincidences like these are merely chance happenings. And yet coincidence remains a tantalizingly familiar phenomenon — one that could have significance, according to British author Arthur Koestler, who has written extensively on the subject. A recent book by Alan Vaughan, *Incredible Coincidence*, summarizes much of Koestler's argument and lists 152 "cases" of coincidence. . . .

Such happenings have inspired Koestler and others to try to find patterns and causes in coincidentally paired events. The search has yielded few answers, for coincidences leave no laboratory residue that can be measured and analysed, even if they do leave occasional striking memories.

Best-selling author and pilot Richard Bach recounted, in his book *Nothing by Chance*, an incident involving the breakdown of his rare biplane, a 1929 model of which only eight had been built, while travelling with a friend in the American Midwest in 1966. Repair seemed hopeless because of the rarity of a wanted part. Just then, a man came up, offered to help, went to his hangar and brought back the part. Bach concludes:

The odds against our breaking the biplane in a little town that happened to be home to a man with the 40-year-old part to repair it; the odds that he would be on the scene when the event happened; the odds that we'd push the plane right next to his hangar, within three metres of the part we needed — the odds were so high that coincidence was a foolish answer.

Edward Ziegler, who recounts this incident in his article, continues:

Sceptics reject such thinking. As science writer Martin Gardner points out, millions of events, large and trivial, happen to thou-

sands of human beings every day. Therefore, it is inevitable that surprising things occur now and again.

From this viewpoint, coincidence is a mere manifestation of "the law of large numbers" — a law that has puzzled philosophers for centuries, Koestler writes in *Janus*. The great mathematician John von Neumann called the phenomenon "black magic." "The paradox," Koestler notes, "consists of the fact that the theory of probability is able to predict with uncanny precision the overall result of a large number of individual events, each of which is in itself unpredictable. In other words, we are faced with a large number of uncertainties producing a certainty. Paradoxical or not, the law has become an indispensable tool of physics and genetics, of insurance companies, gambling casinos and opinion polls — so much so that we take the black magic for granted."...

Some scientists have flirted with the idea of an unseen force affecting coincidence — some particle as yet undetected.... Another theory cited by Koestler is that set forth by Psychotherapist C. G. Jung, who teamed up with physicist Wolfgang Pauli in a book that used the term "synchronicity" for coincidence....

As Koestler notes, current biological, as well as physical, research strongly points to a fundamental tendency of nature to create order out of disorder; something beyond known influence is at work.

"We are surrounded by phenomena whose existence we ignore," he continues in *The Roots of Coincidence*. "If they cannot be ignored, we dismiss them as superstitions. For centuries, man did not realize that he was surrounded by magnetic forces." So it might be thought that we live immersed in some sort of psycho--magnetic field that influences such things as coincidences.

However coincidence may be summarized, Koestler has his own vivid characterization: "Coincidences," he concludes, "are the puns of destiny."

Nothing is strange in a universe of law, and seeming "coincidences" are manifestations of one of the most important laws in the universe — the immutable principle of ethical causation, known to Theosophists as Karma.

H.P.B. gave the following explanation in an editorial note in *The Theosophist* for June 1881:

... there exist manifestations of the psychic force in man's daily life, which is generally disregarded or erroneously looked upon as a result of simple chance or coincidence, for the only reason that

we are unable to forthwith assign for it a logical and comprehensive cause though the manifestations undoubtedly bear the impress of a scientific character, evidently belonging, as they do, to that class of psycho-physiological phenomena which even men of great scientific attainments and such specialists as Dr. Carpenter are now busying themselves with. . . . Were every person to pay close attention — in an experimental and scientific spirit, of course — to his daily action and watch his thoughts, conversation and resultant acts, and carefully analyse these, omitting no details, trifling as they might appear to him, then would he find for most of these actions and thoughts coinciding *reasons* based upon mutual psychic influence between the embodied intelligences.

Several instances, more or less familiar to everyone through *personal* experience, might be here adduced. We will give but two. Two friends or even simple acquaintances are separated for years. Suddenly one of them — he who remained at home and who may have never thought of the absent person for years, thinks of that individual. He remembers him without any possible cause or reason, and the long-forgotten image sweeping through the silent corridors of MEMORY brings it before his eyes as vividly as if he were there. A few minutes after that, an hour perhaps, that absent person *pays the other an unexpected visit*. Another instance — A lends to B a book. B having read it and laid it aside thinks no more of it, though A requested him to return the work immediately after perusal. Days, perhaps months after that, B's thought occupied with important business, suddenly reverts to the book, and he remembers his neglect. Mechanically he leaves his place and stepping to his library gets it out, thinking to send it back without fail this once. At the same moment, the door opens, A enters, telling that he had come purposely to fetch his book, as he needed it. Coincidence? Not at all. In the first case it was the thought of the traveller, which, as he had decided upon visiting an old friend or acquaintance, *was concentrated upon the other man*, and that thought by its very activity proved energetic enough to overpower the *then passive* thought of the other. The same explanation stands good in the case of A and B.

Violence in Indian films has reached alarming proportions. What is the impact? What is the way out? Or is it already too late? These are the questions discussed by Shakuntala Jagannathan in her article in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* for February 10. Disturbed by the increasing violence around us, she made a random survey by speaking to

sociologists, psychologists and police officers. Almost unanimously they all agreed that, although there are other socio-economic factors, our films are greatly responsible for this spreading of violence. The author writes:

All over the world, audio-visual media are, today, the most powerful means of communication. But this is more so in our society, where our films reach every village and town and are the greatest influence on the masses, who get great joy out of the escapist fare offered. There is no other all-year entertainment available to them which can compete with the power of our films. . . .

The great danger is that the majority of our films show revolvers and pistols in every pocket and bedside drawer, making it appear to a visitor to India that our society is a highly permissive one with gangsters and their molls behind every corner. Amazingly, we are coming close to this situation, thanks to these very films. . . .

All our agitation makes much of cutting out sexy scenes from our films, but scenes of violence are the order of the day. . . . Most of our films teach that all problems, even day-to-day ones, can be solved by violence. In actual fact, such simplistic solutions are unreal, but, to the young, to the illiterate, to those who have more brawn than brain, what a wonderful way out of problems such solutions appear! When the beloved hero and our much-admired film stars are shown using knives and guns at every turn an aura of glamour and a halo of respectability are given to acts of naked violence. Even six-year-olds return from such films and practise *dishum-dishum* on their fathers. What the impact is on the potential criminal is left to your imagination.

Among the solutions the author suggests are a drawing up of the criteria for censorship by psychiatrists and sociologists and not merely by the Censor Board, a revision of censor ratings, and a ban on films that detail how to plan murders, robberies or kidnapping, or show wanton cruelty.

Violence in civilized society is an unnatural phenomenon. It is the creation of sick minds. Motion pictures, wrongly used, spell long-term dangers to society; rightly used, they could provide a hundred way of educating the mass mind and enter the category of meaningful art.

Dr. Lewis Thomas, the celebrated author of *The Lives of a Cell*, in his new book, *The Medusa and the Snail*, takes a look at the microbial

world and concludes that germs are not our enemies, that the role of bacteria is in recycling, not disease. Infection is now a relatively minor threat to life.

The idea that germs are all around us [Dr. Thomas writes] trying to get at us, to devour and destroy us, is firmly rooted in modern consciousness. . . . It is true, of course, that germs are all around us; they comprise a fair proportion of the sheer bulk of the soil, and they abound in the air. But it is certainly not true that they are our natural enemies. Indeed, it comes as a surprise to realize that such a tiny minority of the bacterial populations of the Earth has any interest at all in us. The commonest of encounters between bacteria and the higher forms of life take place after the death of the latter, in the course of recycling the elements of life. This is obviously the main business of the microbial world in general, and it has nothing to do with disease. . . .

The meningococcus, for instance, viewed from a distance, seems to have the characteristics of an implacable, dangerous enemy of the work human race. But, says Dr. Thomas, "it is not so":

When you count up the total number of people infected by the meningococcus, and then compare this with the number coming down with meningitis, the arrangement has a quite different look. The cases of actual meningitis are always a very small minority. . . . The rule for meningococcal infection is a benign, transient infection of the upper respiratory tract, hardly an infection at all, more like an equable association. It is still a mystery that meningitis develops in some patients, but it is unlikely that this represents a special predilection of the bacteria; it may be that the defence mechanisms of affected patients are flawed in some special way, so that the meningococci are granted access, invited in, so to say. Whatever, the disease is a sort of abnormal event in nature, rather like an accident. . . .

It is probably true that symbiotic relationships between bacteria and their metazoan hosts are much more common in nature than infectious disease, although I cannot prove this. But if you count up all the indispensable microbes that live in various intestinal tracts, supplying essential nutrients or providing enzymes for the breakdown of otherwise indigestible food, and add all the peculiar bacterial aggregates that live like necessary organs in the tissues of many insects, plus all the bacterial symbionts engaged in nitrogen fixation in collaboration with legumes, the total mass of symbiotic life is overwhelming. Alongside, the list of im-

portant bacterial infections of human beings is short indeed. . . .

It might be different, I suppose, if we had learned less about sanitation, nutrition, and crowding. . . . But even before all this, when times were uniformly awful everywhere, in the centuries of the great plagues, the war between microbes and men was never really an event of great scale, and more often than not, the violence of those diseases was due primarily to the violence of the host's defense mechanisms. Leprosy, like tuberculosis, is a highly destructive disease, but the destruction is in large part immunological, under governance of the host. . . .

Today, with so much of infectious disease under control, we are left with a roster of important illnesses which it has become fashionable to call "degenerative." They include chronic diseases of the brain and cord, chronic nephritis, arthritic arteriosclerosis, and various disorders caused by impedance to blood circulation. Although the underlying mechanisms governing such diseases are largely mysterious, it is becoming the popular view that many of them may be the result of environmental influences — the things we eat or breathe or touch. As in so much of the thinking about cancer, we are in search of outside causes for the things that go wrong.

It may turn out, however, when we have learned more about pathogenesis in general, that most of the events that underlie the tissue damage in these diseases are host mechanisms, under host control. We are vulnerable because of our very intricacy and complexity. We are systems of mechanisms, subject to all the small disturbances, tiny monkey wrenches, that can, in the end, produce the wracking and unhinging of interminable chains of co-ordinated, meticulously timed interaction.

Pronouncements such as these strike a crushing blow to the dogma of the germ theory of disease and of immunology.

Is the will of man unfettered, or does destiny or pre-ordination prevent him from opening a new chapter in his life? M. K. Venkatarama Iyer, in his article in *Bhavan's Journal* for March 23, seeks to establish that the opposition between free will and destiny is more apparent than real:

A little reflection will show that man enjoys freedom only within certain limits. He is not free to act as he likes. If he yields to the passing whims and fancies of the moment, he will soon

find himself in trouble. . . . It follows that he must go by certain well-defined principles. These form the basis of his character. It generally determines the line of conduct which he will adopt in any contingency. . . .

There is also the backlog which every individual carries with him. This is a load from his past. It is what may be called his *Samskara*. It is made up of the tendencies and impressions which his thoughts, words and deeds have already left on his mind.

Every thought, word and deed produces a twofold result, one of which is directly seen (*Drista*) and the other indirect and therefore unseen (*Adrista*). The former is the immediate consequence arising from our thoughts, words and deeds and the latter takes the form of tendencies (*Samskaras*).

These are imprinted on the mind and get strengthened with every subsequent repetition of the same line of behaviour. There is interaction between the two. The tendency makes a man prone to a certain line of conduct and gets strengthened in turn by the repetition of such conduct. . . .

There seems to be yet another factor which limits man's freedom and that is the Divine Will. . . . Maintenance of the balance of Dharma in the world may be treated as a cosmic purpose. All of us have to take a hand, knowingly or unknowingly, in this great task. What we do out of free will must also fall into line with it.

Ordinarily we are not alive to this fact. It takes a long time and much careful thinking to discover that the events that we have gone through were preordained and calculated to promote a divine purpose. When we actually go through them, we do not understand their ulterior significance. If they are pleasant, we enjoy them and if they are unpleasant, we show our dissatisfaction. After the lapse of many years, when we pass these events in review, we begin to realize that all of them took place on a set purpose. . . .

This, however does not mean that man's freedom is reduced to a zero. On the other hand there is plenty of scope for exercising his free will within these limits. He can enlarge the scope by conscious self-restraint. . . . Self-control means preventing the senses from being attracted by their respective objects. If the desire is scotched, the tendencies, being mere potentialities, will get considerably weakened. If self-control is practised steadily for a long time, they will die of inanition. Controlling the lower self-will become easy if man realizes that he is essentially spiritual in

nature. He will then no longer be in the grip of his past tendencies. One of the limiting factors can thus be overcome.

As for the pre-ordained plan, it will appear as a limiting factor only so long as we consider our interests to be opposed to it. This is a mistaken notion. We can have no interest separate from the reign of righteousness, much less opposed to it. If we refuse to submit to the clamorous assault of the senses and listen to the inner spirit in us, the course of action which we will then engage in will automatically fall into line with the divine plan.

The opposition will vanish the moment we realize that Dharma is not only the norm of the universe but also the norm of every individual human being.

Generous references from the *Ramayana* are adduced to substantiate the author's thesis that there is no opposition between free will and belief in a power divine which makes for righteousness.

THIS is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no "belief candle" to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW