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“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THEOSOPHY AND THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

With this issue we commence a new volume of this Magazine — the XXXVth. Its date of publication coincides with the anniversary of the Theosophical Movement of our era, which now enters its 90th year. It is an appropriate time, therefore, for all student-servers to remind themselves of what Theosophy and the Theosophical Movement, of which the Mission of H.P.B. is the latest expression, stand for. We cannot do better than call upon the student who desires to learn and to serve to ponder over these words written during the early years of the Theosophical Movement by its Real Founders, the Masters of Wisdom:

“Theosophy is no new candidate for the world’s attention, but only the restatement of principles which have been recognized from the very infancy of mankind. The historic sequence ought to be succinctly yet graphically traced through the successive evolutions of philosophical schools, and illustrated with accounts of the experimental demonstrations of occult power ascribed to various thaumaturgists. The alternate breakings-out and subsidences of mystical phenomena, as well as their shiftings from one centre to another of population, show the conflicting play of the opposing forces of spirituality and animalism. And lastly it will appear that the present tidal-wave of phenomena, with its varied effects upon human thought and feeling, made the revival of Theosophical enquiry an indispensable necessity. The only problem to solve is the practical one, of how best to promote the necessary study, and give to the spiritualistic movement a needed upward impulse. It is a good beginning to make the inherent capabilities of the inner, living man better comprehended. . . . When one regards the magnitude of the task to be undertaken by our theosophical volunteers, and especially the multitudinous agencies arrayed, and to be arrayed, in opposition, we may well

compare it to one of those desperate efforts against overwhelming odds that the true soldier glories to attempt. You have done well to see the 'large purpose' in the small beginnings of the T.S.¹ . . . Already many minds like yours are pondering the question of occult law — forced upon the thinking public by this agitation. Like you, they are dissatisfied with what has been hitherto attainable and clamour for better. Let this — encourage you."

"The truths and mysteries of occultism constitute, indeed, a body of the highest spiritual importance, at once profound and practical for the world at large. Yet, it is not as a mere addition to the tangled mass of theory or speculation in the world of science that they are being given to you, but for their practical bearing on the interests of mankind. . . . They *have* to prove both destructive and constructive — *destructive* in the pernicious errors of the past, in the old creeds and superstitions which suffocate in their poisonous embrace like the Mexican weed nigh all mankind; but *constructive* of new institutions of a genuine, practical Brotherhood of Humanity where all will become co-workers of nature, will work for the good of mankind. . . . And now it is your province to decide which you will have: the highest philosophy or simple exhibitions of occult powers. . . . The *Chiefs* want a 'Brotherhood of Humanity,' a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds."

"No messenger of the truth, no prophet has ever achieved during his lifetime a complete triumph — not even Buddha. The Theosophical Society was chosen as the cornerstone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity. To achieve the proposed object, a greater, wiser, and especially a more benevolent intermingling of the high and the low, the alpha and the omega of society, was determined upon. The white race must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations, to call the poor despised 'nigger' brother. This prospect may not smile for all, but he is no Theosophist who objects to this principle. . . . He who does not feel competent to grasp the noble idea sufficiently to work for it, need not undertake a task too heavy for him. But there is hardly a Theosophist in the whole Society unable to effectually help it by correcting erroneous impressions of outsiders, if not by actually propagating the ideas himself. Oh! for noble and unselfish men to help us effectually

¹ All references to the T.S. (Theosophical Society) in these extracts are of course to the original Society founded by H.P.B. in 1875.—EDS.

in that divine task! All our knowledge, past and present, would not be sufficient to repay them."

"It is the vilification and abuse of the founders, the general misconception of the aims and objects of the Society that paralyses its progress — nothing else. There's no want of definitiveness in these objects were they but properly explained. The members would have plenty to do were they to pursue reality with half the fervour they do *mirage*. I am sorry to find you comparing Theosophy to a painted house on the stage whereas in the hands of true philanthropists and theosophists it might become as strong as an impregnable fort. The situation is this: men who join the Society with the one selfish object of reaching power, making occult science their only or even chief aim, may as well not join it — they are doomed to disappointment as much as those who commit the mistake of letting them believe that the Society is nothing else. It is just because they preach too much 'the Brothers' and too little if at all *Brotherhood* that they fail. How many times had we to repeat, that he who joins the Society with the sole object of coming in contact with us, and if not of acquiring at least of assuring himself of the reality of such powers and of our objective existence — was pursuing a mirage? I say again then. It is he alone who has the love of humanity at heart, who is capable of grasping thoroughly the idea of a regenerating practical Brotherhood, who is entitled to the possession of our secrets."

"Spheres of influence can be found everywhere. The first object of the T.S. is philanthropy. The true Theosophist is a philanthropist — 'not for himself but for the world he lives.' This, and philosophy, the right comprehension of life and its mysteries, will give the 'necessary basis' and show the right path to pursue. Yet the best 'sphere of influence' for the applicant is now in [his own land].... My reference to 'philanthropy' was meant in its broadest sense, and to draw attention to the absolute need of the 'doctrine of the heart' as opposed to that which is merely 'of the eye.' And before, I have written that our Society is not a mere intellectual school for occultism, and those greater than we have said that he who thinks the task of working for others too hard had better not undertake it. The moral and spiritual sufferings of the world are more important and need help and cure more than science needs aid from us in any field of discovery. 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.'"

"You and your colleagues may help to furnish the materials for a needed universal religious philosophy; one impregnable to scientific

assault, because itself the finality of absolute science, and a religion that is indeed worthy of the name since it includes the relations of man physical to man psychical, and of the two to all that is above and below them. Is not this worth a slight sacrifice? And if, after reflection, you should decide to enter this new career, let it be known that your society is no miracle-mongering or banqueting club, nor specially given to the study of phenomenalism. Its chief aim is to extirpate current superstitions and skepticism, and from long-sealed ancient fountains to draw the proof that man may shape his own future destiny, and know for a certainty that he can live hereafter, if he only wills, and that all 'phenomena' are but manifestations of natural law, to try to comprehend which is the duty of every intelligent being."

"Theosophy can only find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life, thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity, and brotherly love. Its Society, as a body, has a task before it which, unless performed with the utmost discretion, will cause the world of the indifferent and the selfish to rise up in arms against it. Theosophy has to fight intolerance, prejudice, ignorance, and selfishness, hidden under the mantle of hypocrisy. It has to throw all the light it can from the torch of Truth, with which its servants are entrusted. It must do this without fear or hesitation, dreading neither reproof nor condemnation. Theosophy, through its mouthpiece, the Society, has to tell the TRUTH to the very face of LIE; to beard the tiger in its den, without thought or fear of evil consequences, and to set at defiance calumny and threats....

"The problem of true Theosophy and its great mission are, first, the working out of clear unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties, such as shall best and most fully satisfy the right and altruistic feelings in men; and second, the modelling of these conceptions for their adaptation into such forms of daily life, as shall offer a field where they may be applied with most equitableness."

"The sun of Theosophy must shine for all, not for a part. There is more of this movement than you have yet had an inkling of, and the work of the T.S. is linked in with similar work that is secretly going on in all parts of the world."

THE FLEXIBLE NATURE OF UNITY

“Seek, O Beginner, to blend thy Mind and Soul.”

—*The Voice of the Silence*

Unity is seen at its best in harmony. It does not consist in the monotonous striking of a note endlessly so that the identical vibration repeats itself to the point of satiety. It is pre-eminently achieved when there is generated a cohesive force which permeates heterogeneous elements and binds them into a compact and harmonious whole. Unity has the ability to thread its way through discords and still retain its compact nature. Its characteristics are balance and equipoise. Its binding force can be weakened only by a corrosion or a sapping away of the elements which made the union possible.

The parable of the bundle of sticks illustrates this truth from one angle of perception. Any act or omission which unties the bundle makes unity to fall apart and then the individual sticks could be broken one by one by a force which probably would have had no marked effect on the bundle as a whole. This force which springs from united things is not only to be seen where like substances are made to cohere. It is also to be perceived when things which are not identical are gathered into a union. A study of alloys shows that the product obtained by the fusion or union of one metal with another manifests startling qualities not otherwise perceptible in the metals as they existed prior to fusion. Similarly, the centrifugal and the centripetal forces are contrary the one to the other. Yet, when the one supplements the other, the united action of both sustains the Universe. Their unity is the more subtle because they, as Shakespeare put it, work by contraries. The fire and the water elements in our own bodies do not destroy each other. They co-exist and unite to make the man live.

When ill health comes to our bodies, it is produced always by an agent which is inimical to the prevalent unity. If health is to be restored, the disease has to be ejected from the system; and blood, lymph, bones, tissue and muscle have to pool their resources to drive away the invader. When they fail, ill health (physical malaise or disorder) rules despite the best medical efforts. To put it metaphysically, the centripetal force is no longer balanced or harmonized and death comes that much nearer.

The student of Theosophy has to seek this unity in all the departments of his complex being. Since the physical is the mere outward shadow of the inner man, the unity has to be established primarily on the inner planes of consciousness. The eye rarely fights the ear, or the

nostrils the liver. Yet eyes, ears, nostrils and liver may be so disunited from the inner man that they may toss him about and make him helpless against the tempests that infest his tumultuous desires. The too acute mind and the sharpened reasoning faculty when divorced from the guidance of the Soul have been known to be the slayers of the intuitive faculty in man. This destructive bias comes from their disunity with Soul and Spirit. In like manner, the lopsided development of the psychic faculties has produced mediums and sensitives who, not being united to the True, have become diseased derelicts and moral bankrupts.

For experiments in unity, the laboratory is vast and is always ready to the student's hand. The Divine Unity which is symbolized by the "Great Breath" is reflected on earth in the centrifugal and the centripetal forces. Body, mind and heart must now master the know-how by which balance is established in the "in-breathing" and the "out-breathing" forces. Have you a bodily ailment? But how wonderful and opportune the circumstance! Nature is giving you your first great experiment to try out. Learn how to tune the organ back to its natural vibration and to make it contribute again to the vital unity of the whole. Herbs and salves may be aids in the process and will yield to you their secrets of electrical and magnetic effects on living organisms. Have you a mind which runs away with you? Tame it to be united in action to the Soul. Teach it to jump to instant obedience at the Soul's direction so that the mental vibrations but echo back the vibratory pulse of purified desires or the majestic harmony of great thoughts.

The particular type of union that the disciple covets is termed "Yoga" in Sanskrit literature. It is the aspiration towards the higher by the lesser light. It signifies a union and a merging back of the lower into the higher. It is command of the one and prompt execution by the other in circumstances where, to use a paradox, there is neither the one nor the other but a united whole wherein command and execution cannot be differentiated. It is in this sense that Yoga is seen established in equal-mindedness as it is in the practice of devotion and in the state of exemption from attachment to desires. When the student has to some extent succeeded in viewing and establishing unity within himself, he becomes ready to widen his practice to deliberately include other human beings.

It is in these wider fields of endeavour that the disciple's understanding of unity is tested. It is in the congenial company of like-minded earnest students that unity can be fostered and maintained by a joint effort at touching the universal essence of harmony. Now, if he so chooses, he can become part of a cell which makes up an organ in the living

organism of a vibrant, living Brotherhood. His first efforts at unity are not the performance of strange rites and stranger observances. They are directed to the discharge — faithful and sincere — of his duties in the light of a newly awakened consciousness. Each act obligated by duty has to be performed at the proper time, in the right place, for the correct objective and with an unselfish motive. The disciple's faltering steps and failures in performing the simple duties of the threshold may not do great harm to the organism, but such failures indicate the degree of instability to be expected from that particular student.

Each Soul incarnates in an environment suited to its stage of development. It inherits its duties from the Karmas of numerous past incarnations. The student-disciple is bound to discharge these, and as he succeeds in fulfilling his obligations he generates the only true cohesive force that links him to the divine in himself and in nature. Adjusting his bearings among his co-disciples, he learns from experience that unity does not come from friendship or sympathy or the lesser emotions. It comes only where two or more students subscribe to the identical *aim*, *purpose* and *teaching*. No hammering out of compromises, no shutting of eyes at divergences in any of these three fields can achieve unity. The identity of outlook in regard to each of these departments must be complete. Duties then provide the talisman for forging unity. Each departure from duty, each breakage of the discipline — even though it be completely unknown to other co-disciples — undermines and wrecks unity. When the senses run away as do maddened horses, they fail in their duty to the mind. Action bereft of a spiritual basis can no longer become a cleansing agent and, being disunited from the True, clogs up the inlets of the sublime. Emotions become the destroyers of unity because the performance of duties requires an equilibrium which through emotions is dissolved in tears of pain or of pleasure. In the resulting turbulence the light of the Higher Mind is dimmed and ignored. When the mind, feeling irked under the governance of the Soul, leaves its father's house to seek its pleasures in the perishable things of the earth, it leaves its true anchorage and, forming false attachments, seeks its union with perishable things. This unity with the elements that reside in the night-side of life fascinates the unwary and pollutes their desires till to them stench is like perfumes and graveyards, heaven.

Each act of escapism, each departure from duty, becomes a seed of disunion, a jarring, discordant note that screeches violently across harmony and turns beauty into ugliness. It is from little acts of discord that stem the great disorders that disrupt harmony. A chill neglected can cut

short a whole life-span. A harsh word can for one incarnation at least make friendship impossible. A weakness pampered in ignorance may bloom into a vice and a whole incarnation may prove a costly failure.

Unity which is Yoga has to be achieved because all life depends on it, because in fact it pervades the vast manifested whole and in its entirety has strength enough by Karmic adjustments to neutralize in the long run the tremors that disunity sets up. Unity is not established as some imagine by the militant strength of right over wrong. Unity gets established in the unhindered and stately rotation of the wheel of the Good Law. The turbulence that upsets equilibrium finds its master and subduer in the all-pervasive Self. Calmness is a FORCE, an energy. It is not a mere negation of violence. "Thy strength is in thine Soul and thy Soul's strength is in the calm and not in the storm revealed."

True unity has its roots in the Highest. It flies from falsehood even though for a time unrighteousness triumphs and an Empire built on the blood of countless victims may seem to flourish. Metaphysically, unity exists in the Wisdom-Religion and in the complete esoteric and exoteric code. Morally, ethically and practically it exists in the Lodge of White Adepts. Initiates, Rishis, Masters, Mahatmas, Dhyān Chohans, Adepts are each in their respective spheres emblems of the Higher Unity. The student can only hope and aspire and strive. When his efforts become altruistic, when his union with other disciples gets established, he becomes part of the divine life and a receptacle of the great cohesive force of a Unity which is noble and a nobility which is sublime.

The clouds, wind, moon, sun, and sky, act in co-operation that thou mayest get thy daily bread, and not eat it with indifference; all revolve for thy sake, and are obedient to command; it must be an equitable condition, that thou shalt be obedient also.

—SA'DI

REFLECTIONS ON "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"

I

Hesiod believed . . . that "the winds were the sons of the giant Typhœus," who were chained and unchained at will by Æolus, and the polytheistic Greeks accepted it along with Hesiod. Why should not they, since the monotheistic Jews had the same beliefs, with other names for their *dramatis personæ*, and since Christians believe in the same to this day? . . . While the Hellenes were taught that Æolus tied and untied the winds, the Jews believed as fervently that their Lord God, "with smoke coming out of his nostrils and fire out of his mouth, rode upon a cherub and did fly; and was seen upon the wings of the wind" (II. Sam., xxii 9 and 11). The expressions of the two nations . . . arise from a keen sense of oneness with nature, and a perception of the mysterious and the intelligent behind every natural phenomenon, which the moderns no longer possess.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 446

We have become so accustomed to thinking directly about the reflective and flowing evanescence of the visible that we fail to think of it as the veil for *one single mind*. We look in the mirror and see the obscure reflection of our inner condition; or we study the flow of time and see a maze of cycles interlocked in *one single repetition*.

Observing the life about us, we see it locked in the circle of return and repetition regardless of how tiny or immense any particular cycle might be. If our physical body is merely an "operating point" and our environment is our more real "nature," then a study of it as if it were *one thing* rather than a collection of pieces might imbue us with the idea that we do get another chance, that our environment is a constant and recurring confrontation of our wakefulness; an ever-present opportunity for us to demonstrate whether we shall work for our environmental body or lapse back into identification with the personal and particular flesh which we inhabit.

But what is this that forgets and remembers, that works for the environment or reduces its *idea of reality* to a tiny fragment of the TOTAL? Is it not here that we return to the intelligent and the causative, the invisible mind behind the visible drapery? Maybe our visible body of space or environment has the invisible causative mind, just as our private flesh is a veil for our mental condition.

If we were to think of the space we live in as being *ourselves* and of our flesh as if it were a fortuitous location, would this not do strange

things to our ideas of self-interest, or how to better ourself, or how to get ahead, or to succeed? Would it not profoundly alter the "how" and "why" behind our acts, or even our understanding of what the word "action" means? To add to this the idea that our environment can only be changed by changing the condition-of-mind or intelligence which lives invisibly within it, might also have a profound influence on the "why" and "how" of our deeds.

An attribute of the Higher Mind may be that it tends more to make us conscious of being a "We" rather than an "I," or as Plotinus says:

...the higher soul which constitutes the We is the principle not of our existence but of our excellence — or, if also of our existence, then only in the sense that, when the body is already constituted, it enters, bringing with it some effluence from the Divine Reason in support of the existence. . . .

The total man is to be something better than a body ensouled — the bodily element dominant with a trace of Soul running through it and a resultant life-course mainly of the body — for in such a combination all is, in fact, bodily. There is another life, emancipated, whose quality is progression towards the higher realm, towards the good and divine, towards that Principle which no one possesses except by deliberate usage but so may appropriate, becoming, each personally, the higher, the beautiful, the Godlike, and living, remote, in and by It — unless one choose to go bereaved of that higher Soul and therefore, to live fate-bound, no longer profiting, merely, by the significance of the sidereal system but becoming as it were a part sunken in it and dragged along with the whole thus adopted. (*Ennead*, II. 1. 5; 3. 9)

In the material surrounding this quotation from the Second *Ennead*, Third Tractate, "Are the Stars Causes?" (translated by Stephen MacKenna), Plotinus discusses the idea that we and the heavenly system are all parts of *one thing* and therefore have effects upon one another. However, these are only upon the material nature of man and his personality, *not his individuality*. Only as one is enslaved to matter and personality does his life become predictable by a study of these mutual relations, or, as Plotinus says, he will live "fate-bound." Yet we need not be thus enslaved.

For every human Being is of twofold character; there is that compromise-total [the lower quaternary] and there is the Authentic Man: and it is so with the Kosmos as a whole; it is in the one phase a conjunction of body with a certain form of the Soul bound

up in body; in the other phase it is the Universal Soul, that which is not itself embodied but flashes down its rays into the embodied Soul. . . . (II. 3. 9)

All things must be enchained; and the sympathy and correspondence obtaining in any one closely knit organism must exist, first, and most intensely, in the All. There must be one principle constituting this unit of many forms of life and enclosing the several members within the unity, while at the same time, precisely as in each thing of detail the parts too have each a definite function, so in the All (the higher All) each several member must have its own task — but more markedly so since in this case the parts are not merely members but themselves Alls, members of the loftier Kind. (II. 3. 7)

But if, in these material bodies, we are to preserve our connection with the *general* or ENCOMPASSING MIND, it may be that we should be intense within the HERE and NOW. Is it not the mental lapse of the moment that reduces us to the *private* and the *particular*? Is it not mental forgetfulness of *what we are* that makes much of our daily life degenerate into a traffic with second-hand information and criticism of others; or into the inner-play mental resentments and ambitions?

It has sometimes been said that meditation is a process of bringing the mind back to a *given purpose*. If this is so, then there may be a way in which our whole twenty-four hours should be a kind of meditation, a constant process of bringing the mind out of the comfortable quagmire of the personal.

There is a part of our Mind that "reminds us" when we fall into this stage of forgetfulness, and it becomes more active as we take seriously and act upon its promptings. Our more serious errors may not be those times that we lapse into a disregard for others, but rather those occasions when we suddenly realize what we are doing, *and yet do nothing about it!* Are we not killing the very possibility of salvation within ourselves when we do this? Does this not maintain the chaos of our inner life? By such action we aid in the atrophy of the very thing that could save us, for we cause the "mental-pivot" by which our decisions are made to serve the animal part of us.

The process of destroying ourselves in a self-fulfilling or catalytic sort of way is well described by H.P.B. when she says:

Siva-Rudra is the Destroyer, as Vishnu is the preserver; and both are the regenerators of spiritual as well as of physical nature. To live as a plant, the *seed* must die. To live as a conscious entity

in the Eternity, the passions and senses of man must first DIE before his body does. "To live is to die and to die is to live," has been too little understood in the West. Siva, the *destroyer*, is the *creator* and the Saviour of Spiritual man, as he is the good gardener of nature. He weeds out the plants, human and cosmic, and kills the passions of the physical, to call to life the perceptions of the spiritual, man. (I. 459 fn.)

Is there not a sense in which one can say that he is killing himself as a personal man in order that he may begin to live for others? This process of becoming alive to the idea that our life is that of the Group and that we are a part of it for better or worse is a difficult one to carry out, for it means that the person who is still more or less centred in the views and pursuits of a personal life decides to dissolve his kingdom, to obey a wider radius of concern.

Just as a person beginning a discipline of self-improvement is not free to choose his starting point, but must start where he is, so the worker in Theosophy cannot control his brother-Theosophists, but must start his work *with the conditions that presently exist*. Our fellow student and worker, despite his possibly drab and cantankerous ways, has still met a most important criterion which alone qualifies him to receive our help: He has *seen the importance of Theosophy; he has a similar aim and purpose*. This is not to say that he is as efficient as we would like, or as intelligent as we would prefer; *still he stands before us as a co-worker*, while others, however excellent, do not.

If our approach and ways of work in spreading and promulgating Theosophy in our environment are better than another's, then maybe we had better get to work, else how is there to be comparison upon which to base change? So often we want others to imitate us, or we build up mental plans of work that can only be accomplished if everyone dances to our cadence. If we cannot sincerely involve ourselves in the ways of work of another, we might trim our demands to a smaller radius, namely ourself. Of this ship we are Captain and can make it as excellent as possible.

While it is true that we cannot learn or grow vicariously, but must discover and tread the Path in ways peculiar to ourselves, still the recurring testimony of past experience seems to be that there are individuals who have, in some sense, awakened to the idea that their life is part of LIFE in general; that particular ways of work are not so important as union and harmony with others in a common purpose.

It might be that we can come to understand others better if we subordinate our preferences in order to maintain our involvement with them

in a common work. Thus the path of observation and comparison is kept open. All situations can be discovered as "special" if we learn how to view life and environment as one unified thing. Especially might this idea of unity add light to our mental condition, leading us to right performance of duty, of which Mr. Judge has said:

...right performance of duty means the mental state, for the mere performance of an act has no moral quality in it, since even a machine may be made to perform acts usually done by men. The moral quality resides in the person inside and in his presence or absence. If a human body, asleep or devoid of a soul, raised its hand and took the life of another, that would not be a crime. And oppositely the performance of a good act is no virtue unless the person within is in the right attitude of mind. Many an apparently good act is done from selfish, hypocritical, crafty or other wrong motives. These are only outwardly good. So we must attain to a proper state of mind, or mental devotion, in order to know how to skilfully perform our actions without doing so for the sake of the result; doing them because they ought to be done, because they are our duties. (*The Heart Doctrine*, pp. 52-53)

Yet we do not choose our duties mechanically, but do this in a dynamic way, being led by the idea of non-separateness, or as Mr. Judge says:

The bearing of the teaching upon ethics is in my opinion very important. It gives a vital system as opposed to a mechanical one. We are to do our duty with the thought that we are acting for and as the Supreme Being, because that Being acts only by and through creatures. If this be our real rule it would in time be impossible for us to do wrong, for constantly thinking thus we grow careful as to what acts we commit and are always clearing up our view of duty as we proceed. (*Ibid.*, pp. 54-55)

It might be that this mental search for the universal base within one's particular life has something of a self-correcting aspect, *i.e.*, no matter how mistaken we might be, if our mistake begins from an orientation to serve the UNITY of life, then that orientation itself tends to uncover the mistake. Once we recognize the *self-fulfilling quality* of an inner-orientation, it becomes natural for us to cease being dominated by the opinions and directives of others. By discovering such an orientation within our own life we are more likely to defend the independence of others, thus minimizing the obscuring effects of our acts upon their life.

TO NON-SUBSCRIBERS

[We reprint below what W. Q. Judge wrote editorially in *The Path*, Vol. IV, p. 383, for March 1890. It has been reprinted before in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, but it bears repetition, for much of what Mr. Judge says is applicable also to this Magazine, which endeavours to serve, as *The Path* did, the Cause of genuine Theosophy.—EDS.]

All Theosophists who can afford \$2.00 per year are asked if they should not support *The Path*. The magazine is not carried on for profit, and is solely devoted to the interests of the Theosophical Society, and yet it is a fact that its subscribers are nearly all non-theosophists. Its editor and its writers all work for nothing, but for four years it has been published at a loss which is always met out of private means. Members of the Society who all know that *The Path* maintains an independent attitude, supporting no clique and pandering to no self-interest, should not keep back their support from a journal that does much to keep alive and make respected the Society and its literature. We can now point to four volumes in which will be found consistent theosophical articles, well-written, by students who all have devoted years to the subject, and we ask your subscription. *The Path* will not stop even if this suggestion is not followed, because so long as its Editor thinks the Society can be helped by it, he will publish the magazine. Nevertheless, a larger circulation aids a magazine in every way, bringing it to the attention of persons otherwise ignorant of it and of its mission, stimulating writers to their best efforts for its columns, ensuring more notice of and quotation from it by other periodicals. One exceedingly valuable assistance to both it and Theosophy is private subscription on behalf of Public Libraries. It would be well if every such Library, willing to give it a place, was supplied regularly with *The Path* by private subscription. About 13 are thus supplied at present, and no one can calculate the missionizing influence thereby exerted. Well-to-do Theosophists can order it sent to their poorer Brethren also, not as a benefaction to the Editor, but to them and to the Cause. For the *life* of a movement is largely in its literature, and its literature is epitomized in its magazines.

GURU NANAK AND HIS TEACHINGS

Guru Nanak, born in 1469 in Talwandi (now known as Nanakana), a village in the Lahore District of the Punjab, is regarded by millions of Sikhs in India as the original head and founder of their faith, but history records that the establishment of the present Sikh faith with its militant politico-religious creed was a later development, with which Guru Nanak, a man of peace and a protagonist of one Wisdom-Religion for all mankind, had nothing to do.

Theosophy teaches that no prophet ever came among us to found a new religion. All great teachers come under the law of cycles to point out the way to the erring people of their times, who have deviated from the path of purity shown to them by earlier sages and seers. Nanak was like them a moral and spiritual reformer who made it his mission to bring about better understanding between the followers of the two principal religious communities in India, namely, the Hindus and the Muslims.

Since Muhammad Ghori's conquest of India as far as Delhi in 1193, relations between the two communities had become so hostile during the three centuries before the advent of Nanak that the latter was constrained to speak of his times in severe terms, thus:

This age is a knife; kings are butchers; justice hath taken wings and fled. In this completely dark night of falsehood the moon of truth is never seen to rise. I have become perplexed in my search; in the darkness I find no way. Devoted to pride, I weep in sorrow. How shall deliverance be obtained?

Nanak gave proof of his spiritual status from early childhood by his meditative, calm and compassionate disposition. But his father, Mehta Kalu, had no eyes to perceive that his son was meant for higher things than merely earning his bread and being a respectable householder. He was sent to the village school where he learnt to read and write in an amazingly short time and composed an acrostic on the futility of that learning which takes no account of the rule of the one God of truth and love and the one Law of life, under the ægis of which man has to grow and cure himself of his egotism. He says in this acrostic:

True merit and reward they alone shall win
Who meekly serve, who in their lives realize and practise truth. . . .
Why all this bustle for show and deceit, my friend?
In a while or two hence wilt thou go; this show will end.

Why gamble thy life thus idly away?
Hie to the Lord; at His feet thyself thou lay.

And further:

What is doubt and what is illusion?
Whatever pleaseth Him is good.
Impute no blame to others, my soul,
On thy Karma the blame doth lie in whole.
As did I sow so now I reap;
I'd blame none else for this my grief.

This composition appertaining to the higher life by a child under seven made a deep impression on the mind of the discerning schoolmaster, who, nevertheless, pointed out to his pupil that his father's instructions were to train him for the purpose of ultimately becoming the village accountant. He therefore advised Nanak to think first of the needs of this world. Nanak queried, "Will all that you wish to teach help me at the time when an account of this life must needs be rendered?" And he spoke these words of wisdom to his teacher:

Burn thy earthly cravings, grind their ashes well, and
make thy ink therefrom;
Let a pure, high mind thy paper be;
Make love thy pen and heart thy writer;
Then write as a Teacher true doth guide thee.
Write the Name of God, write his praises,
Write of the Lord that hath no limit, end, or measure;
O Friend, learn to write this account,
So that, when and where an account is called from thee,
Thou mayest win a mark of honour true.

The teacher reported to Mehta Kalu that his son was a self-taught sage. He was his guru, not a pupil. Thus, at the age of seven, he came to be known as Guru Nanak. Subsequently he was given to the charge of other teachers to learn Sanskrit and Persian, but with similar result.

When Nanak was nine years old, Mehta Kalu decided to invest him with the sacred thread. During the course of the ceremony, as the priest was about to put the thread round his neck, to the surprise of the priest and the assembled guests Nanak inquired what the purpose of the thread was and what advantage it conferred on the wearer. When the priest replied that it was for the protection of his soul, the boy asked if it ever bound anyone's passions, his foul tongue or his evil eye, his hands and feet, to save him from going astray. He declined to accept such a cotton

thread purchased for a copper, which does not accompany the soul after death but is discarded with the body. He then explained to the priest and to the assembled people how the lasting, sacred thread for the soul should be made:

Out of the cotton of compassion
Spin the thread of contentment,
Tie knots of continence, give it the twist of truth.
Make such a sacred thread for the mind;
Such a thread once worn will never break
Nor get soiled, burnt or lost.
The man who weareth such a thread
Is blessed.

In spite of accumulating evidence about the spiritual greatness of his son, Mehta Kalu was not easy in his mind about the boy's future. He took him for a wayward, self-willed boy who was wasting his time in profitless contemplation or in the company of unworldly ascetics camping in the forest surrounding Talwandi. From time to time he would press him to take to some profession for a living, but Nanak skilfully parried all such importunities of his father by indicating that all worldly professions had their counterparts in the inner realm, which is the training-ground for everyone's soul-self. Thus, when Mehta Kalu suggested farming as a profession, Nanak said, "Father, I am all the time engaged in real farming."

This body is the field,
The mind is the ploughman,
Modesty the irrigating water.
I sow the seed of the Divine Name
And with the leveller of contentment
Pulverize the crust of pride into true humility.
In it the seed of love will prosper.
Seated in the abode of truth
I behold its progress.
Father, Mammon accompanieth not man;
The world is deluded by it.
Only a few walk out of the delusion and
attain discrimination.

As Nanak advanced in years, unlike other boys he sought seclusion, practised silence and avoided food. His parents, greatly concerned about his health, called in a physician to treat him. They did not realize that their son's suffering lay deep in the region of the heart. The "I-am-ness"

which separated men from one another and from their Divine Father was a constant cause of pain to him. He said to the physician:

Man's mind blind with desire,
Sows the seed of its own suffering;
In pursuit of indulgence of the self,
It forgets God and undergoes endless suffering.
O ignorant physician,
Thy physic is of no avail:
Suffering itself is the symptom of disease
As well as its cure.

The people among whom Nanak was born were divided into many castes, creeds and conditions. Those who were in positions of power ruthlessly enforced their power. Their victims retaliated with sullen passivity and nursed silent hatred towards their oppressors. In the name of religion, unheard-of irreligiosity was flourishing. Ignorance of the true doctrine was the common failing of the religious heads of both the Hindus and the Muslims. Both, however, nursed pridefully their opposing sectarian beliefs and negated the natural order of the brotherhood of humanity under the fatherhood of one God. Guru Nanak strove to wean his countrymen of both communities from their self-destroying ways and to rally them round the immemorial, self-sustaining teachings of true religion given by the Great Ones down the ages. He called himself Nanak Nirankari and claimed to belong to the denomination of the Formless and to be a devotee of the one God. In many of his songs he gives us glimpses of the God he believed in. For example:

He who filleth all space, Him I carry in my heart —
His light filleth the three worlds.
In every being is present the unapproachable and the
endless one and the true;
By subduing thine own self, join Him.

He was sent to reside with his married sister at Sultanpur, where employment was found for him as storekeeper of the Nawab of that place. Nanak stayed at Sultanpur for several years, married, and had two sons. His duty as a storekeeper was to weigh in the tributes and taxes received from the people in kind, and weigh out their quotas to those who were entitled to receive their provisions from the Nawab's store. Though a storekeeper and a householder, he did not allow himself to be deflected from his main task in life. It is recorded that so engrossed would he be in contemplation on the Name that often his mind was not fixed on his duties as storekeeper; still somehow his work was done with

such exactness that his accounts and stocks whenever checked were found accurate to a degree.

At last he felt that humanity needed him and that he must respond to its call. It was his practice to go to the river to have ablutions. On one particular occasion he did not return home as usual and after futile search he was supposed to have been drowned. He reappeared, however, on the third day, but only to dispose of his belongings and to take leave of his family and friends.

His first public pronouncement was: "There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim." This enraged the Qazi of Sultanpur, who persuaded the Nawab to summon him and take him to task for contempt of the ruling Muslim community. The Nawab had in the past had many proofs of Nanak's spiritual standing and held him in respect; so he permitted him to defend himself without fear. Nanak asserted that the so-called Mohammedans were engaged in acts which went against the principles of Islam. He named the characteristics of a true Mohammedan, which were conspicuous by their absence in those who called themselves Mohammedans, and gave out in a hymn the qualities which any follower of true religion should possess:

He who is firm in his faith
 Has a right to be called a Muslim.
 His acts must accord with his faith in the Prophet,
 He must cleanse his heart of pride and greed,
 No more troubled by the two impostors — life and death.
 Resigned to the will of God,
 Knowing him as the Doer,
 Freed from the domination of the self,
 Compassionate to all things,
 Such a one may call himself a Muslim.

Addressing the Qazi he continued:

In the Mosque of Love
 Spread the carpet of faith,
 Enjoy only thy rightful earnings,
 Follow the holy script.
 Make restraint and modesty thy circumcision,
 Moderation thy fast,
 Right action thy pilgrimage to Kaba.
 Make truth thy spiritual guide,
 Good works thy creed,
 Thus become a Muslim.

To the assembled people he emphasized the necessity of learning the meaning of prayer. Purification of the mind alone can give power and significance to the prayers. Their five prayers, said at five different times of the day, should aim at developing in them five virtues: (1) truthfulness, (2) right livelihood, (3) true charity, (4) right motive and a pure heart, and (5) praise of God.

He whose deeds precede the word of prayer
Has the right to call himself a Muslim:
They wander into the wilderness of untruth
Who follow the form and ignore the spirit.

Guru Nanak has given the gist of his teachings in just one word — *Ek Onkar* — the Name, which is the basis of all that was, is, and shall hereafter be; the essence of every thought and thing in the universe. In numerous songs and hymns he explains the philosophy of the Name. Whatever a man stands for, whatever he is in need of, whatever aims and ends motivate him, he can find in the true apprehension of the Name a corrector of his lapses and a supporter of his soul.

Nanak was under thirty when he left Sultanpur to teach the doctrine of the Name to the people at large in all parts of India. He also undertook several foreign tours, visiting Tibet, China, Egypt and several places of Muslim culture, including Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, etc., up to European Turkey. Bhai Mardana, a Muslim minstrel, was his companion in travels. Mardana played on the rebec while Nanak sang. These extemporaneously composed songs were meant to instruct the listeners on the points arising from the incidents of daily life or out of discussions with religious heads, learned men and officials in power.

His inner vision was capable of seeing through the pretence of his interlocutors. An instance will illustrate this. After his unsuccessful case against Nanak, the Qazi of Sultanpur persuaded the Nawab to get him to join them in their prayers in the mosque. Nanak consented and went, but remained standing and laughed when the Qazi was conducting the prayer. After the prayer, when asked for an explanation, the Guru replied that he had promised to join in *true* prayer, which was a matter of mental devotion. He disclosed that while the Qazi was saying his prayers his mind had wandered to the courtyard of his house, concerned about the safety of his mare and her newly delivered foal. The Qazi, though put to shame, insisted that at least the Nawab was saying true prayers. Nanak, with due deference to the Nawab, declared that his mind had been in Kabul where his agents were purchasing horses for him.

On one occasion when Nanak visited Syedpur, he was told that the atrocities of the Pathan rulers of the place had become unbearable. In a prophetic hymn he apprised the people that the rule of the Pathans would end, but before better times came Syedpur would be the worst sufferer at the hands of the invading Moguls led by Babar. In accord with the Guru's prophecy, Babar's invasion came about in A.D. 1521. Ibrahim Lodi's officers in Syedpur instigated the people to put up a resistance against Babar's army as it marched through the city. The consequence of this was that the invader issued a general order for indiscriminate massacre and loot. Nanak came to Syedpur again at this time. He and Mardana were arrested along with many others and forced into the service of the marching army, Nanak as a common load-bearer and Mardana as a groom. Even in this plight the Guru managed to sing as a master of *Mantrikashakti* alone can do. *The Secret Doctrine* defines this power as

the force or power of letters, speech or music. The *Mantra Shastra* has for its subject-matter this force in all its manifestations.... The influence of melody is one of its ordinary manifestations. The power of the ineffable name is the crown of this Sakti.

It was the melody of the songs, irrespective of their sublime theme, which stirred the hearts of the listeners. Babar and his officers did not know the Punjabi language in which Nanak sang about the inscrutable ways of Karma and man's inhumanity towards man; still they were touched.

Babar was filled with remorse and apologized to the Guru for the misdeeds committed by his men under his orders. He offered to make such amends as were possible for him under the circumstances. All prisoners were released, Mogul soldiers were withdrawn from the town and the looted property was restored. Nanak remained with Babar for three days at his invitation and delved deeper into the penitent heart of the conqueror with the following admonition:

When these men of this earth give themselves a great name
and call themselves kings and do as it pleaseth them,
They should remember that Thou seest them all, My Lord!
Yes, Thou seest even the tiny creatures that crawl and
the worms that nibble the corn.

He alone can merit win who accepts a dying life, who has
inhibited his lower self, and in the spirit doth hourly
live,

And who, each moment of his life, doth love and serve and remember God.

Nanak's parting advice to Babar was:

Be just and never do that which is unjust. Never depart from the path of truth. Temper justice with mercy, and forgive others as you wish to be forgiven. Do not covet that which is meant for others, for God is just. Do not act when you are burning with any of the five fires [passion, anger, greed, delusion, conceit]; always act for the benefit of others. Do not sow the seed of cruelty. He who is cruel, himself suffers cruelty.

Guru Nanak started on his travels again. After travelling off and on for over 20 years, he made his home in Kartarpur, where his family joined him. Through precept and example he taught that both action and devotion, asceticism and a householder's life, were necessary and should go hand in hand. For our physical existence health of the body was a prime necessity. He therefore unequivocally disapproved of the methods of *Hatha Yogis* and other selfish ascetics who tormented their bodies or lived a life of sloth and beggary instead of working for a livelihood and being of help to the really helpless. He himself took to agriculture for a living and at the same time continued to teach through songs and sermons.

Fear none and frighten none was his advice to both the Hindus and the Muslims. No one was of high or of low caste by virtue of his birth, but each one's actions made him low or high. He showed the way to his followers to come out from among the living dead by courageously standing up to the oppression of ignorant *pirs*, *pandits* and potentates. The body was not worth preserving at the cost of the soul, for the body must die in any case. When fear of death is overcome man will learn to establish justice which is harmony and to see the fitness of all things in the universe. Nanak says:

If we live justly, the need for administering justice does not arise. If we forgive those who harm us, we need invoke no man-made law. If we live as members of one human family, every individual living for the others, then we follow the divine law, and if we follow the divine law we transform this world full of misery into a world of happiness. . . .

There is darkness in light and light in darkness. To lose the self is to become light; to assert the self is to become darkness. Self-assertion freezes the self into darkness. The fire of love melts

the self into light. . . . In this way consciousness of self abides in unconsciousness of self, and selfhood in non-self.

“We can receive a richer inheritance,” he says, “if we feel, as I feel, and enter a larger and happier family, such as I have entered”:

Forgiveness is my mother, Contentment is my father, Truth the uncle; these have subdued my mind. How can other relationships be good which hold the human mind in chains? Aspiration is my brother, Love for all beings my son, Patience my daughter — see what a delightful relationship I enjoy! The result is that Peace is my constant companion, Wisdom my serving maiden, the One Onkar, the creator, my Lord and Master. He who forsaketh Him and clingeth to others courts nothing but misery.

Sacrifice of their own self for other selves is the chosen lot of all great Teachers. The Guru says:

To give what one needs for one's self to another, whose need is greater, is an act of sacrifice. They who give and expect a return make no sacrifice. They are like a money-lender who makes advances at compound interest. They who give and want nothing in return are the real givers, but he who takes all he can without giving is below the human stage.

Guru Nanak preached the religion of work, true prayer and devotion. He told men of their duty to God (and his concept of God was very much similar to that of the First Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*), to their brethren and to their own selves — body and soul alike. He did not indulge in theological quibbles but dealt mainly with practical life. The essence of Sikhism, as of every religion in its origin, is a Way of Life, the way of brotherhood and of harmony, the way of self-forgetting service.

A distinction always exists between a religious philosophy as enunciated by an enlightened teacher and the formal organization with orthodox creed and prescribed rites which grows up sooner or later around his message. Guru Nanak had set his face against ritualism, and such rites and ceremonies as Sikhism has today were a later devising. When, however, we remove the outer shell of Sikh orthodoxy, we find a religious philosophy that in its essence does not differ from that enshrined in Hinduism or in Islam, and all three spring obviously from the same Mother-Source, the Wisdom-Religion or *Theosophia*.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONERS

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From E.A.K.

We are told that Spirit — a portion of the Absolute — becomes embodied in matter. Passing through numberless gradations in the ascending scale of being, it eventually returns whence it came and is absorbed in the Infinite. Now, does it return exactly as it left the Infinite? If so, what is the use of the terrible ordeal and almost interminable experiences that it has undergone? If it is said that the Spirit returns to the Absolute enriched and improved, then we have to admit that the Infinite can be improved and added to, and such a conclusion is impossible.

Answer. — If the premises were right the conclusion would be also; but the first proposition is incorrect, and I have never heard that “we are told” anything of the kind. The spirit does not “become embodied in matter” except in the case of a perfected man or a Mahatma. During our pilgrimage the spirit is *connected* with matter, and it is for us to win recognition or to lose the Spirit. Nor does it pass “through numberless gradations in the ascending scale of being.” It is ever perfect, and has no ascension or declension.

The confusion has arisen because of the confused use of the term “spirit.” I should like to have it pointed out by the questioner in what book I may find it stated that the spirit becomes embodied in matter, etc. It is the same sort of confusion introduced by the use of the word “jiva” in Mr. Sinnett’s books. This is the same word as is used to refer to what the present questioner calls spirit.

We are all said to be “jivas” on our way to the eternal and absolute reality, and we are also called “jivatma” — or soul-spirit; and then again the jiva is also the mere life-principle in the body. But we may use English and say that the SPIRIT is not embodied and does not pass through matter in the way the question has it, but that at all times it knows all things and is the witness only of all these struggles spoken of; and it is necessary to get some grasp of the idea that all this material world is an illusion, and all the sufferings and interminable experiences are also illusions, and the long periods of time are seemingly long because we ourselves make them so. We would also advise a careful study of Patanjali’s Yoga Philosophy. But, after all, these questions are the same as that one asked of Buddha as to the first cause and why all this universe is here: to which he would make no reply.

A.C.R. asks if a long definition of Karma given in the letter is in harmony with the Asiatic definition.

Answer. — We do not think that the definition of A.C.R. is good, for the reason that it is not clear what is meant. One thing is certain, and that is that Karma is the governor of all our circumstances and is also in part a cause of acts, and is again the act and the circumstance also. The Universe itself is the Karma of the Supreme. Karma means work or action, and, as action is performed in more ways than by the bodily organs, the field of Karma must not be limited to the body. As A.C.R. says, the most important thing to consider is how we think and what is the motive with which we do any act.

On the subject of Karma the sect of the Vishishtadwaitas says:

“Karma is the cause of connection of Jivatma — or the particular spirit — with matter in the shape of Karanasarira, as well as the cause of misery or happiness. Karma is the producing cause of birth, death, rebirth, and every kind of body. Karma is the result of the conscious action of Jivatma, whether good or bad. Good Karma is that which results in pleasing, and bad Karma is that which results in displeasing, Ishwara. [He is held to be the particular spirit in each body — our Higher Self.] The action of Jiva produces Karma through ignorance, and this ignorance is of two sorts: one the confounding of the attributes of one thing with those of another; and the second the confounding of one thing with another. Thus, the Jivatma first confounds the body with itself, and then such attributes as birth, death, and so on with the attributes which really belong to Jivatma only; then certain actions are done, and they lead to other Karma composed of ignorance and of habit. Thus

Karma even works in *Swarga* or heaven, for, as soon as the causes mentioned above remain latent during a pralaya or night of Brahma, and when a new evolution begins they again become active and produce results as before.”

Karma even works in *Swarga* or heaven, for, as soon as the causes that take us there are exhausted, we are brought back to rebirth under the operation of Karma; thus it is seen to be stronger than the blissful state of heaven. This going to and returning from *Swarga* goes on until salvation is obtained — one who attains that state is called Jivanmukta. This condition is defined as “an entire separation of Jiva from all connection with matter, and complete destruction of Karma, whether good or bad.” The word *Moksha* literally means “release from bondage.”

—NARAYAN NILAKANT

THE ILLUSION OF DEVACHAN

The causes which send us to *Devachan*, an intermediate state between two earth-lives, into which the Ego enters after death, are, it would appear, four in number: (1) recompense for "undeserved" suffering; (2) assimilation of the spiritual experiences gained but not made part and parcel of one-self during life; (3) fulfilment of our longings; and (4) rest for the soul.

If, therefore, we wish to shorten or "escape" this period so that we may continue to work for humanity, four things are necessary: (1) we must not have any feeling that we suffer undeservedly; (2) we must assimilate life's experiences during incarnated existence; (3) we must not have longings of a personal nature; (4) we must perform such actions in our daily life as are pleasing to the soul and not merely to the personality.

We speak of *Devachan* as being a state of illusion. It would appear that it is really only the third of the above factors that causes this illusion. There can be nothing illusionary about the happiness experienced in *Devachan* to make up for the "undeserved" suffering in earth life, or about the rest needed by the soul, or about the assimilation by the soul of those experiences gained during life which were of its own nature. But if our longings during life have been day-dreams of a personal nature, then in *Devachan* we see ourselves, as also others, acting in terms of our wishful thinking and not in terms of reality.

Suppose, for example, a person has been "crossed in love," or a mother longs for the reformation of her son who is a drunkard; in *Devachan*, we are told, the former delights in the fulfilment of his love, and the mother in the belief that her son has become a sober and good man; yet both conditions are illusions. It has even been suggested that if we long to escape *Devachan* so that we may continue on the earth with Masters' work, but have done nothing to create the causes which will produce the effect of cutting down our stay in that state, then we may spend ages there imagining all the time that we are working for the Masters in the world!

Therefore to be released from the illusion of *Devachan* we have to watch our personal longings. It should be remembered that the word "illusion" covers everything save the Spirit or *Reality*, but while on any plane everything on it is reality for us.

With regard to recompense for "undeserved" suffering, this is a harder matter to adjust, for it covers the whole field of one's Kama-Manasic attitude to life. We have so to understand Karma that even a

fleeting thought of anything being unjust cannot be held. Automatically, our reaction to everything should be: "This is just what I in fact desired." All of us know how often we have to repeat things before they become automatic. We have to reach the attitude referred to in *Light on the Path*, where it is said that the eyes must be *incapable* of tears and the voice *incapable* of wounding. That is to say, everything has to be seen as just. If we pay more attention to the benefits we now enjoy as a result of the efforts we ourselves had made in prior lives, and less to the difficulties we are now encountering, we shall the more easily get the true balance, for both are but avenues of experience for the development of true virtue and capacities.

As for rest for the Ego after death, this would not be necessary if certain conditions were fulfilled now and here. If during life we do not cause "trouble" to the soul by wrong-doing, by refusing to act up to our conscience, thus crucifying the Christ within, then the soul will not need rest after death.

Assimilation of life's experiences can also be accomplished during life. If we look back, with the right attitude, at each day's activities — thoughts, feelings, words and deeds — and visualize the coming day, the soul will not only assimilate the good that has been experienced but will be in a condition where it is not crucified all the time.

Whether we spend long ages in *Devachan* or shorten our stay there or renounce it altogether, let us be content with trying to sow the right causes, for that is best for us.

If thou workest at that which is before thee, following right reason seriously, vigorously, calmly, without allowing anything else to distract thee, but keeping thy divine part pure, as if thou shouldst be bound to give it back immediately; if thou holdest to this, expecting nothing, fearing nothing, but satisfied with thy present activity according to nature, and with heroic truth in every word and sound which thou utterest, thou wilt live happy: and there is no man who is able to prevent this.

—MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

HAMLET

A STORY OF PSYCHIC UNBALANCE

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As there is equilibrium in Nature, so there is equilibrium in man, and likewise between man and Nature. Sanity properly defined is that equilibrium. It is mental, moral and physical health. It is a right balance between all the human states and all the principles. Very few men in the present age possess such health and sanity. Most of us have only compromises. Certain average conditions are looked on as standard and normal, therefore healthy. Whatever departs much from these is called diseased, abnormal or subnormal. The principles in man, those instruments through which his soul works, both protect and manifest his Spirit-Power or Life-Force. Because of some past errors of thought and action, these instruments and defenders may be poorly connected in a man, and the result in the parts of his nature called psychic is comparable to the action of a loose-jointed physical body in which bones or muscles sometimes slip out of place.

In general usage, "psychic" and "psychism" are not clearly defined. They include both correct and partially incorrect or at least vague, limited conceptions. They are made to refer not only to a division of man's nature and to some of his important powers and principles, but also to many life-phenomena. Each of these uses is proper enough, yet it is well to see that the psychic powers and principles largely make up in fact man's nature as a human being; likewise, that they are the means by which human nature operates and manifests itself. And it should also be understood that the life-phenomena referred to, both subjective and objective, result from the interrelations and activities of the principles and powers. The phenomena give evidence of the existence and characteristics of the Psychic as a great Department in Nature and in man. Much of the confusion is due to the limited concepts of what psychic phenomena are. Many things actually such are not so named; for example, what people call "brain storms" and emotional "upheavals," either of enthusiasm, fear or anger, are psychic phenomena.

Popularly, however, the expression psychic phenomena is chiefly applied to the extraordinary or the abnormal. For this is the point to be particularly noted: it is the abnormal, the weird, the wrongly-called "supernatural" — it is what science ignores or does not explain — that is especially referred to, by custom, in the word psychic. This limitation in

meaning is indeed unfortunate, though even so the word covers a wide range of experience and a very important tendency in humanity. The fascination, often hypnotic, exerted by the weird and the uncanny is a source and an abiding-place of superstition, excessive emotionalism and strange fears. Naturally too it has always been — never more than now — a rich pasture for commercially-minded mystery-mongers and “psycho-” specialists under many names.

The welter of ignorance thus indicated can be removed and men’s minds enlightened as to Psychism by a study of the Theosophical teachings in regard to the sevenfold division of man’s nature. In that teaching Psychic is a big general term for all of man’s elements except the very highest or purely spiritual, and the very lowest or purely physical. Men have therefore higher psychic phases of life and lower phases. It is thus the Psychic in humanity which undergoes evolution in the long course of experience, which either remains mortal and transitory or becomes pure and lasting, according as it moves downward to undeveloped matter or upward to Spirit, according as it follows unwisdom or wisdom. Most men of today know little of the higher psychic phases; they live too largely in the mere physical and its close companion, the low psychical.

There is also in Theosophy another and a special use of the term psychic. It is a name in particular for the fourth or middle division of the seven in man — for the principle or section that hangs in the balance, the one that sways between good and bad, true and false.

In this special Theosophic meaning, the drama *Hamlet* may be called “psychic”; for in the behaviour of that middle balance principle in the chief character the action is centred and the tragedy is found.

Without opposing directly any of the arguments for or against the sanity of Hamlet, a Theosophist may say that in insanity there is some actual disconnection between the organs and functions of the brain; that insanity is of course Karmic; and that its cause is really moral. In the man Hamlet the middle principle tips in some actions far over toward uncontrol. Yet it soon recovers its balance. The unbalance is a kind of temporary insanity. In a man whose principles are not firmly connected (and are thus comparable to the loose-jointed physical body), the middle balance principle, always changeable, is especially unstable; his mind is wavering, easily open to outside influences high or low; he may have daring flights of fancy, sudden gusts of passion, moods of exalted enthusiastic action, or times of drooping melancholy and doubt which check any action. Such a man lives chiefly in his lower psychic nature, and fails to control it, for in will he varies between violence and laxity; the

physical in him is a close adjunct to the lower psychological, the ethical impulses are inconstant and the operation of the purely spiritual is almost choked. Possibly not enough attention has been directed by critics to the phases of Hamlet's life that may be called ethical.

The special touchstone given by Theosophy as a test for insanity is the degree of a man's selfishness, his intensity of personalism. Hamlet is certainly not an altruist, yet he is not especially selfish in the way that might be expected. The fact that his uncle has supplanted him as heir to the throne seems not to be the chief element in the melancholy that veils him at first. He has had a strong confiding filial love for his father and mother. The father has suddenly gone. Astonished that the mother so promptly married the uncle, he distrusts them both. His self-love is less wounded than his filial love. This feeling affects him much throughout the play and fills him with dismayed wonder. He does not think of fighting for his legal rights but wishes, against his mother's and his uncle's desire, to withdraw to his university again where he may continue to live in quiet. These facts, made evident at the very first, before he has seen The Ghost, show traits that should be observed. He is a student, a thinker, a dreamer. He prefers passiveness to action.

A question as to what throws his middle principle somewhat out of gear and leaves it undirected by Will from his higher nature is answered as the drama proceeds. The shock to his filial love causes the first unbalancing, namely, the undue melancholy. The shock given by the coming of his father's Ghost carries him into amazed terror. The revelations of the father's death by murder, of the uncle's other vile treachery, of the mother's weakness, mental and moral — these plough up all his solid foundations. On this terrific overturning comes the command "Revenge!" But before obeying that command, while he is hesitating about it, while his soul is harrowed by suffering, he forms a relation with Ophelia which soon creates much added mental disturbance and unbalance.

In this relation he moves farthest over the border toward insanity. Unhappy at home, he has gone to her at first because she is winsome and may give him comfort. He loathes the proved sensuality of his mother; Ophelia seems sweetly pure. When later she obeys her father's hasty command to give Hamlet no more time, he is hurt by the unexplained change and coldness in her. Brooding over all these heart-shaking experiences, his feelings rise at times almost to frenzy. At one such moment, with thoughts distraught and clothes awry, he privately seeks her out to learn what indeed she is — can he trust her, can she be what he needs? He gets the answer from her blank face, her silent lips, her

fright. With such response to his moment of sick longing for help, how can he regard her as more than a weak child? He leaves her in great grief, in lingering silence, slowly seeing that he does not wish to woo her further. Ophelia's own grief at the father's command, which deprives her of her lover, is now intensified by pity for that lover as mad — mad for love of her.

This leads Polonius and the King to test Hamlet as to that possibility. With characteristic double-dealing, of which Ophelia is fully aware, they place her where they can watch Hamlet unexpectedly come upon her. But he soon suspects and assures himself that he is being overheard and tested. In a flash he determines to turn the test on her for at least truth-telling. Bluntly he asks, "Where's your father?" "At home, my lord," she sweetly answers. Stung to fury by her lie, and by the contemptible behaviour of the two men, feeling his own folly, and hers, and all the world's, he rails at her in terms that bow her down like a reed before a storm. His private hurt is so great that he would ease it by thrusting the injustice of it partly on her.

For some time thereafter Hamlet feels chiefly rage and disgust for Ophelia and her father; while the poor little weakling girl shudders off into the melancholy caused by blighted affections. Then soon comes the startling death of her father through her one-time lover. After this her melancholy rapidly passes into actual insanity. There can be no question that her reaction to these blows is intensely personal. "Blighted affections" means just that — single-eyed concentration on one's self, one's dreams of marriage and one's beloved. The mind has no other object, the soul no broader outlook. There is no capacity to resist disappointment.

Thus with Ophelia is proved the Adept teaching that insanity springs from some form of concentrated selfism. From this point of view, Ophelia's manner of death may seem to have symbolical colourings. As she falls into the water (matter), her wide feminine garments puff out with air and support her for a time, she scattering her flowers and songs and dainty graces till the clothing is water-soaked and drags her down — the sense attractions in her and for her pulling her finally into the sense-element (matter) from which they first came. Her death is pitiful, but the contracted little soul-life she has led is more so. The perception of this weak extreme passivity makes admiration of such a woman impossible. To describe her as worthy of great praise and to be much stirred by her death are philosophical errors into which many critics have fallen.

Hamlet's behaviour in the grave scene is just such an unreasoning outburst as an unbalanced psychic nature may be guilty of when it is

surprised, grieved and personally offended. Previous to this for some time Ophelia and the feeling she had stirred in him have been partially put aside, his mind preoccupied by that command "Revenge!" still not obeyed, and by the complications caused by the delay. Due to his absence he has had no recent news of the girl he had loved. Just after his return he is idly philosophizing beside a newly dug grave, when he is wildly startled by learning that the approaching mourners and the grave are for Ophelia. He sees her brother leap into the grave in excessive lament. Then the old half-forgotten love sweeps violently over him. Disgusted by that artificial sorrowing, he flies into a passion and even jumps into the grave to fight with the brother in a mad contest as to whose grief is greater and worthier. This is the least sane act of the unbalanced Hamlet.

Yet all these mental agonies of disappointment and grief connected with Ophelia pass with little lasting effect. Such experiences come in the course of nature to every man; but for Hamlet they are rather obstacles and byways in his path. They do not constitute the chief line of his mental action. They leave him still facing his permanent problem: The Ghost laid upon him a command as a duty; he accepted it as such; he has not fulfilled it. Why?

It is very important to perceive that The Ghost is not a mere shadowy wraith, or a mere picture in the minds of several persons. The Elder Hamlet was murdered, thrust out of life before his time. In Theosophical teaching the physical aspects of men in the first stages after death are in general called Kamarupas; but the Kamarupas of those murdered, either by accident, by law or otherwise, differ from the rest. Such beings are not dead to the same extent. The Force in Nature named Cohesion which held their principles together in physical life still holds them together in their Kamarupas, and must do so till their particular portions of that Force are ended by natural exhaustion. Hence the Kamarupa of King Hamlet is strongly cohesive and can materialize to living men, as he does to the Watch and to the son, in the form of the armed King — a form indicative of the feelings with which he materializes.

There is of course some dramatic embroidery attached to the story by traditional superstition; yet the statement may be unhesitatingly made that The Ghost of King Hamlet is a genuine materialization of that Kamarupa to living eyes. All that this being lacks is his physical body, the instrument through which his principles could still function; but a Kamarupa is not able to function or to affect physical earth-life except through some living physical man. Since his physical instrument is all

that the ex-King has lost, his character is just what it was before his body died. His mind remains the same collection of theological, feudal and other race beliefs prevalent in his day. As a living man and as a king, he seems to have been the usual proud, aristocratic, commanding type, unquestioningly accepting his rank, its emoluments and his own deservings. His codes of honour are those customary. Hamlet, the son, from childhood has been imbued with all these beliefs and has never much questioned them, but his egoic nature is more given to philosophy and learned pursuits. King Hamlet when alive had thought punishment the only proper return for any dishonour shown him. Lately, as a Kama-rupa, he has been brooding over the wrongs he thinks he has suffered by being unjustly deprived of continuing life on earth and of his possessions. The rankling sense of injustice and the knowledge of his brother's treachery and his wife's falsity rouse all his lower-desire principles into full activity. He sees only two things — the revenge he wishes and the son as the one in physical life who should execute the revenge.

This all-potent desire is what enables him to materialize to those alive, and his demand on the son for vengeance, though not ranting, is imperious and compulsive. Revenge means, of course, killing the brother-uncle-king and seizing the throne.

But such a demand for vengeance is in itself wrong. It is almost wholly selfish and therefore against Nature's law. When one remembers, as a student of Theosophy must, that each man is not only his father's son, or a member of a family, but is an independent Ego and a sevenfold being with his own virtues and vices and his own Karma manifesting on each of seven planes, one sees that such an act of revenge cannot affect a man only externally, as is commonly assumed. The thought and act of murder must reverberate through the whole and therefore affect the entire life and nature of the one who kills. The knowledge and vision of Atma, or the Higher Self in every man, is the true ethical standard. According to that knowledge and vision, revenge and murder are never right; and the Voice of that Self is heard as "qualms of conscience" in any man not quite deafened by wrong-doing.

What, then, from the higher-soul point of view, is Hamlet's relation to that Kamarupa and its demand? During the actual interview, though he is in shivering fear, he is convinced that the Apparition is the living remainder of his father, able to move, speak and declare the truth. He fully accepts at that time The Ghost's word. His quick agreement in the first excited moments is a natural outcome of his filial affection and of his beliefs by education, such as the false sense of honour which requires

murder for murder. But also his own mind has long been full of suspicious resentment toward his uncle. Hence while *The Ghost* is speaking Hamlet has little or no power to feel that the demand for vengeance may be questioned, or to see what the *Kamarupa* embodies and would instil into him. His resentment throws him wide open. He is not then or later exactly obsessed by the *Kamarupa*, but he remains throughout the play constantly under its influence.

Previously, though possessing native goodness, Hamlet had grown selfish through indulgence of the intellect. Prevaingly mental, he had gratified himself by years of continued university study and life, absorbed himself in that, instead of becoming at home the chief companion and the counsellor, hence the guard, of his beloved father against the designing uncle and the crafty time-serving Polonius. He has thus become passive toward actual life, remote from it. Though he admits much sin in his past, he is not striving to grow better. The prime mover in him is not Spirit but the lower intellectual mind. Well trained in logical analysis, he is yet slow to discriminate between his wrong and right motives or to analyse the subtleties of his thought ethically. Also, he is incapable of taking a practical masterful position in the court (probably the uncle counted on this weakness); and just as incapable of perceiving the real cause of his dilatoriness and hesitation. Thus the days pass; though he proves that the *Kamarupa* is genuine and gives true information, yet he does not progress far enough morally to perceive that its demand for vengeance is unrighteous, is merely conventional, and that his promise to take vengeance by the conventional means of murder has put his whole life on a false basis through a mistaken concept of duty.

Instead of seeing this, Hamlet shares and cherishes the resentment expressed by the *Kamarupa*, and thus fails to detect the danger in such "commercing with the dead." He does not comprehend that, in the general ignorance concerning the dead, a man's confidence and obedience in such an experience may prevent due attention to practical duties in the world of the living. Though he has a sense of being part of a nation, his thought, like the *Kamarupa's*, is much more to get revenge than to clear away the court wickedness and serve the Danish people. Nowhere in his talks or the *Kamarupa's*, is there definite recognition of obligation to them. King Hamlet, like other kings of his time, had lived for his own satisfaction and glory. His son's patriotism is no higher.

But through all his misunderstandings and omissions, Hamlet does have "qualms of conscience" regarding the vengeance. Far within — too far for him to interpret them for what they are — his higher Egoic Self

is sending them out in a struggle to enlighten him. His hesitations and delays are partly due to these admonishings of his Higher Self which he does not comprehend.

Active and keen Hamlet's mind is — on the surface; and it delights in using these qualities of itself. But back of the surface is a layer of thick passivity, a heavy sluggishness and inertia, a resistance to change. Most men have to contend with much of this mental inertia. In Hamlet his Will in the outer life is quick, even violent. But within the outer shell his Will often remains swamped in that deep layer of psychic sluggishness. The monitions of the higher Egoic, the Conscience, struggling to stir that heavy mass, to make it less dense and unreceptive to the spiritual, do not have much power. The reason is that in past lives, as in the present, they have been too little obeyed to permit their free action now; hence there is a mental deposit of torpidity.

Caring much intellectually about philosophy, Hamlet has not grasped its deeper phases that are morally regenerating. He has been content to abide by the prevalent religion and the prevalent ethics. Such inactivity in the higher reaches of thought, such psychic sluggishness, is due to the lack of practical application of what his intellect has stored, to the failure to put it into service for others and for his own growth in ethical understanding. Of such practical application, especially for others' benefit, the drama gives almost no evidence. This failure, now and previously, to make useful what he knows, is the reason why the Ego has such difficulty in leading Hamlet to question the moral rightness of that murderous revenge he has promised. The egoic monition does cause him to hesitate — only that — for even when he finds the King in prayer, there is no impulse toward mercy. Sensing hypocrisy, he feels merely an added motive for a still fiercer revenge, a "more horrid hent." Thus, instead of recognizing any prompting of his own higher nature, he blames himself furiously — "unpacks his heart with words" — for his slackness, his puzzling procrastination and seeming incapacity.

That procrastination affects him almost from the beginning, as soon as The Ghost is gone. Even in the very first wording of his eagerness to do something, his vehement impulse is weakened by intellectual analysing and his student-like search for his "tables" (his note-book) to set down his conclusions about his uncle, his country and the wretched situation — to set them down for what? Some activity in the future?

The companions of the Watch beg him to explain about The Ghost. In defending his privacy he flashes into the plan of "putting an antic disposition on" (playing insane), which involves just that — action in the

future, delay in the present; because, not knowing what to do, he feels incapable, and because, under the effect of his conscience and his inertia, he really does not *wish* to do. This immediately passes into self-pity — “The time is out of joint” indeed; but “O cursed spite, that ever *I* was born to set it right.” Thus, though perceiving a need for action but unable to decide what action, he pauses, lets days slip by while he plays the antic, philosophizes and broods. Gradually he comes to excuse all this to himself by harbouring doubts of The Ghost and its word, by believing he should get better proofs, “grounds more relative than this.” For many weeks he thus drifts and dives alternately; drifts into love for Ophelia, bringing about her mental undoing; dives into the Play Scene, which gives strong proof by exactly “catching the conscience of the King”; finds as a consequence the aptest opportunity for his revenge (while the King is at prayer), but puts it by, thinking to make his vengeance even more complete. Then immediately afterward, in angry excitement with his mother, he plunges into a sudden unplanned action that swiftly puts out of life the eavesdropping Polonius. After such blundering, perhaps with a feeling of self-contempt, he permits the frightened King to send him out of the country as a dangerous person.

Only once does the higher monition pierce through these blinding clouds successfully — that is, when his very life is threatened. Then, by quick action, he learns that the King has really sent him to his death, manages to escape and get back — but not without committing his guards (his former friends!) to *their* death, an act unnecessary and unjustifiable. His conscience as to right and wrong is now nearly silenced. Still farther he passes into incompetence; his life, purpose and opportunity are frittered away. The action of the play reflects that weakness, but with no loss of interest, for this wasting into impotence *is* the tragedy.

Once more, near the close, the higher monition warns him of grave danger to his life and could have saved him; but this time he does not obey. He refuses to listen to the “divinity that had shaped his end” before. At this point a vicious intrigue by the King is proceeding successfully, entangling Hamlet in its deadly folds, and soon by mistake enwrapping the Queen and others. Then Hamlet sees what has happened, and at last satisfies himself by rushing upon the King and forcing the death. So impotent is his revenge, so worthless!

Regarding him and the other chief persons as once living beings and this story as in some measure their actual story, a Theosophist shrinks at the Karma it depicts in that present and hints at for the future. Wasted lives, vitiated characters, lost opportunities, repetitions and

agonies to come, because so little of that present has been understood and corrected. Yet there is no fatalism in the drama. Hamlet is never once compelled by any outside force to a given line of action. He always has the power of choice, and the chance that every living man has to sweep away his temptations and to act on his higher intuitions.

The stage history of *Hamlet* shows that this play was always popular, for various reasons, with both actors and audiences. In the nineteenth century it was praised by some German and English critics as the greatest accomplishment of Shakespeare. If it is accepted as the greatest, it must be so because it presents the problems of a vast number of men. What are those problems? First and foremost, psychic sluggishness or mental inertia, blinding their discrimination, silencing their higher voice, stifling their better aspirations; then, the intellectualizing of life and imagining that to be the highest attainment; also, the insistence on revenge by punishment or death as the means of redressing wrongs; further, and perhaps worst, the brooding on the dead and being misled by their influence actual or supposed; all of this being Karmic, all due to men's present and past habitual careless disobeying of their higher monitions, to their following the conventional and selfish instead of the freshly vital and serviceable to their fellow-men in general.

Around us constantly are men struggling under these errors, needing to be understood and encouraged, and when possible advised and guided. The fact is instructive that those critics who originally stated that high estimate of this drama, found in it a picture of themselves. Search into their lives proves them to have been of the Hamlet type, their minds brilliant, unstable, their course of action not much more firm or truly intelligent than Hamlet's own, and their ends perhaps no richer in soul-values than his. In fact, the everyday-ness of the problems presented in this play is what endows it with its most compelling power. It is on the level of the character and the needs of general humanity, and thereby holds its special rank.

This practicability for men's everyday lives may often not be recognized consciously, yet it does carry a measure of its advisory power to those who feel a kinship with Hamlet. If they are spiritually intelligent enough to enter really into the deeper causes and effects of his character, they may benefit much by the half-hidden instruction. Practical application to actual life was what Shakespeare's Adept Inspirers always wished to encourage. They would naturally, therefore, give some particular esteem to *Hamlet* as a drama.

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

Thank you for your letter which I have read with close interest and sympathy for your continued pain and weakness. The ways of our Karma are always hard to follow with our lower minds and feelings, for the bodily elementals which suffer pain and enjoy pleasure seem to interfere with our highest wishes for the Work and our deepest feelings of helpfulness. Yet we know that nothing does happen without a cause and even the pain has its message of freedom from the past through fulfilment in the present. All I can say to comfort you is: Keep on like the brave soul you are, shouldering your heavy burden with complete faith and trust in those Great-Souled and Compassionate Ones to whom we are devoted and who will give us all that is possible. While you are so weak try to relax your mind and let the assimilation of our great philosophy which you have studied in past years play its beneficent role on your personal consciousness. So, while great and beneficent Karma keeps you in the body you still are a comfort to those around you, and however little you are able to do, you are still a "witness" on this earth.

As for the future and the present pain and weariness, my dear friend, place your will in the hands of the great Will and surrender and trust, with your thought on the Work which is our Work from the past to the future, for all times. And look forward to your next life and the re-meeting with old friends. As age progresses more and more, comfort comes in remembering Mr. Judge's first meeting with H.P.B. We all take on where we left off and in between we are in Masters' keeping. I suffer for and with you and hope sincerely that the cause of your pain may be found and relief be given to you. But it is one of the difficulties of human life that we can never bear the pain of another. All we can do is to send you loving thoughts and strength and say again, try (though we know how difficult it is) to find a centre within your consciousness which can squeeze out of the pain the life-essence of freedom.

You have suffered great pain and no doubt there has been mental anguish; but, taken aright, every ache becomes a purifier and more — an uplifter. And so if you utilize the period aright you will emerge from your illness not only better in body but also stronger in soul. You must, however, guard against undue haste in coming out of your convalescence. Work will not gain from such haste, nor will your own inner unfoldment. You have but one duty at present — to get strong in body, to gain clearer mental perceptions. Nothing else matters, for nothing else is your duty.

Give your body the chance it now so *deserves*. Having survived such abnormalities it deserves compensation at your hands and you, the Ego, get a fine chance of acquiring a purchase on the new lives, the new Builders, who are now active. So try to maintain mental serenity, mental contentment. Do not give one minute to the notion that time is being wasted while you are taking it easy. Mental gentleness towards the brain and the body, especially the aching and injured parts and organs, is needed. Builders require their own time for construction and you cannot force their pace without irritating them, spoiling their work and delaying your complete recovery. Just think not about when you can get up, get out and get to work. Let the Builders take their time — it may look long to you — but in the end you yourself will be the gainer. What you may gain in speed now you will lose in permanency later; so be wise and remember the Self is the friend of the self and self can become its own enemy.

You are already through with an ordeal and it is very good that you were able to go through it in the right spirit. The coming period of convalescence will be more trying, especially if it is a little prolonged. Do not allow yourself to be tempted away from the course of prudence and hasten to do this and that after a few days. Take advantage of what has happened and give your neglected body a good chance to renovate itself. Driving the body is not wise as pampering it is not wise. All of us have to learn to make it our friend and there are opportunities which well taken cement friendship — of this type or any other kind. So take it easy. You will be doing it more naturally if you go on recalling the truth to your consciousness that during bodily ailments, when the corpus is at a low speed of functioning and when as a consequence the mind is freer from the knots of the brain than ordinarily, the Ego gets a better purchase on the entire bodily system; the quieting of the cerebrum makes the Ego's work on and with the cerebellum a little more effective. So, your immediate *duty* is not to be impatient to get to work, but to relax and recuperate fully and thoroughly, thus avoiding any kind of complication and any kind of relapse. If through this seemingly evil experience you will (and you can) develop inner calmness to balance your outer enthusiasm you will never regret the pain you have been undergoing. So, retain calmness, go slow in the matter of outer movements, hold fast and let Nature and Karma complete their cycle — these bring pain so that real healing may follow.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The student of Theosophy must welcome the increase of interest in the philosophy of reincarnation in various quarters. *Scientific* investigation into rebirth cases would have been unthought of a few decades ago, yet this is precisely what Dr. Ian Stevenson, Dean of the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry, Virginia University, U.S.A., is engaged in at present. (See "In the Light of Theosophy" for September 1961.)

Dr. Stevenson, who was lately in India on a study tour of rebirth cases, disclosed at a meeting of the staff and trainees of the Bureau of Psychology in Allahabad, U.P., that over 300 cases in which persons have claimed to remember the events of their previous lives have so far been reported from all over the world and have been investigated scientifically (*The Evening News of India*, September 4). India topped the list of such cases, especially North India. This is not to be wondered at, for the idea of reincarnation is widely prevalent in this country.

Dr. Stevenson said that if these scientific investigations succeeded in definitely *proving* reincarnation, it would not only have an impact on our way of living but also on neurology, medicine and science. What seems especially significant is his revelation that most of the cases investigated by him have been of persons who have died due to violence or accident in their previous lives.

The Statesman (Delhi) of September 11 narrates an instance given by Dr. Jamuna Prashad, Director of the U.P. Bureau of Psychology and a member of the rebirth study team headed by Dr. Stevenson. According to Dr. Prashad, a British soldier killed in World War II had been reborn in Delhi and bore the bullet scars of his previous life. Though reborn in a Hindu family, the young man had not adopted the Indian mode of living and still dressed as a soldier. In fluent English he narrated how he was killed in the War, Dr. Prashad said.

Another instance is reported in *The Statesman* of September 10. A young girl, born in a village of Madhya Pradesh, speaks fluent Assamese, which is not the language of her parents and which she could not have learnt in her present life. She was interviewed by Dr. Stevenson. Mr. R. S. Lal, a psychologist attached to the U.P. Bureau of Psychology, told UNI that this case disproved the theory that the claimed memories of former births could be attributed to telepathy or clairvoyance.

It should be noted that in almost all the cases where children and adults have remembered their past life quick rebirth has taken place. In

average cases a period of many centuries would have to elapse before reincarnation could take place; but those who have died very young as also individuals whose lives have been violently cut off by some accident are exceptions to the general rule and quick rebirth is possible in such cases (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 303).

Mr. Judge has given in *The Ocean of Theosophy* (pp. 81-82) the rationale of the soul's recollection:

The whole mass of detail of a life is preserved in the inner man to be one day fully brought back to the conscious memory in some other life when we are perfected. And even now, imperfect as we are and little as we know, the experiments in hypnotism show that all the smallest details are registered in what is for the present known as the sub-conscious mind. . . . By living according to the dictates of the soul the brain may at last be made porous to the soul's recollections. . . . But as the brain had no part in the life last lived, it is in general unable to remember. And this is a wise law, for we should be very miserable if the deeds and scenes of our former lives were not hidden from our view until by discipline we become able to bear a knowledge of them.

In recent years the idea of a "science of peace" has come to the fore and has led to the creation of research institutes as well as special courses at a number of institutions of higher learning in various countries. (See "In the Light of Theosophy" for November 1962.) In *World Union-Goodwill* for August, Dr. B. Landheer, the Director-Librarian at the Library of the Palace of Peace in The Hague, The Netherlands, answers the question whether a science of peace is possible and what sort of discipline it should be.

Dr. Landheer observes that peace is a condition which exists when a social group has become so far integrated and well-balanced that the use of violence, physical or mental, is at a minimum. In a wider sphere, this would mean the absence of major conflicts, internal as well as international. Such a situation would only exist in a balanced and coordinated world society. "Science of world society" would be a better name than "peace science," because the term "peace" is still reminiscent of a temporary and uneasy truce between national states. The formulation of a wish for a world society is obviously not enough. The road to such a society will be long and difficult, but it is better to realize

this than to think that it is all just around the corner and only needs handsome phrases and numerous conferences. What is needed is the sincere and unselfish effort of many people in many countries.

We should not strive so much [says Dr. Landheer] for identification with a world society, which is only realistic for small groups of policy makers, as for internal balance and an outlook which is aimed at a permanent society, though this is obviously only possible if conditions are relatively satisfactory.... A science of international relations should define the possible rather than the desirable. If we aim constantly for the desirable without even getting near it, we cause great psychic tensions.

It is the dualism of modern society that on the surface we seem to be progressing while the basic problems remain unsolved. This results in the awkward combination of prosperity and tremendous armaments in the rich countries, and poverty combined with political and power ambition in the poor countries. There is consequently increasing social distance between the nations of the world which, on the surface, present themselves as equal and sovereign. This friction between what the sociologists call "formal" and "informal" structure is alarming.

A world society cannot be imposed from above; it cannot be won by military force. It is time it was evident that there can be no lasting outer reform without reform from within. Therefore the need of the times is to bring about a change in the individual himself, and that demands something more than arousing enthusiasm for world citizenship. Unless men learn the metaphysical basis for brotherhood, that in their spiritual aspect they are literally one with all; unless they deliberately attempt to live in terms of that perception, ambition and self-seeking can wreck the finest plans for a united world and a lasting peace.

In recent months, much interest has been aroused in the ability some people have to "see" through their fingertips. (See "In the Light of Theosophy" for March 1964.) The September issue of *Discovery* prints an article by a blind author, Dr. D. Liddle: "Fingertip Sight: Fact or Fiction?"

Dr. Liddle describes briefly the investigation by a group of Russian scientists of the claim of a 22-year-old Russian girl, Rosa Kuleshova, to be able to see through her fingertips. Rosa, apparently, has demonstrated her ability to distinguish colours, to read print and to "see" a

photograph with the fingers of her right hand, while heavily blindfolded. Russian scientists have discovered other people possessing, or claiming to possess, the same power in differing degrees, which apparently can be heightened by practice.

The author points out that the possession of this power by different people has been recorded for a period of over 140 years. He also describes experiments he himself has carried out to test his own ability, and the precautions he has taken against self-deception.

No physical explanation can account for all the abilities claimed or demonstrated. For example, the possibility of a tactile appreciation of the texture of different surfaces being an explanation has been eliminated by covering the surfaces with a sheet of glass. There is no mechanism in the skin even approximating to the complexity of the mechanism necessary for eye vision. The author concludes that the only other explanation, if the possibility of fraud or self-deception can definitely be excluded, is supernatural powers.

One can understand scientists' caution in accepting anything that appears to lie outside the realm of what may be thought of as normal experience because the possibilities of hoax and self-deception are so great. But the fact that some people do possess such a power as that described above has been amply demonstrated under test conditions. Madame Blavatsky makes this assertion on page 43 of *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*:

The senses are to a certain extent interchangeable. How would you account, for instance, for the fact that in trance a clairvoyant can read a letter, sometimes placed on the forehead, at the soles of the feet, or on the stomach-pit? . . . It is simply that the sense of seeing can be interchanged with the sense of touch. . . . Such clairvoyants, however, will not be able to tell the contents of a letter which they have not seen or been brought into contact with; this requires the exercise of the sixth sense; the former is an exercise of senses on the physical plane, the latter of a sense on a higher plane.

Nevertheless, is it not strange that man, while normally exercising the power of sight through the highly complex mechanism of the eye, can, in certain circumstances, exercise the same power through the much simpler mechanism of the skin? Is the answer to be found in the fact that the real senses are centred in the astral, and that a skilled craftsman can, if deprived of his normal tools, still carry out skilful operations with cruder substitutes?

[He] who works to revive Buddhism may be regarded as one who labours in the true path of Theosophy, far more than any man who chooses as his goal the gratification of his own ardent aspirations for occult knowledge. Buddhism, stripped of its superstition, is eternal truth; and he who strives for the latter is striving for Theosophia, divine wisdom, which is a synonym of truth. ("The Great Master's Letter": *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 33*, p. 1)

These words of the Maha Chohan come to mind when one thinks of the Venerable Anagarika Dharmapala, the centenary of whose birth was observed throughout the Buddhist world on September 17. *The Buddhist* (Colombo, Ceylon) for August-September recalls his strenuous work for the revival of Buddhism in India, the land of its birth, and for the propagation of the Buddha's Message in Europe and America.

Students of Theosophy will be interested to know especially of the impact the Theosophical Movement had on him. As *The Buddhist* recalls:

In 1880, an event occurred which altered the future career of young Dharmapala. It was the arrival in Ceylon of Madame Blavatsky and Colonel H. S. Olcott, Founders of the Theosophical Movement. In 1884, he became a member of the Theosophical Society, and went to Adyar in the company of Madame Blavatsky. On his return he threw himself whole-heartedly into the work of the Theosophical Society in Colombo. Under the aegis of the Society he published its well-known organ, the *Sarasavisandarasa*, with its English supplement — *The Buddhist*. In 1890 he attended the Adyar Convention and subsequently made his first pilgrimage to places sacred to Buddhism in India.

Through the medium of the Maha Bodhi Society founded by him in 1891, with branches in many parts of the world, he carried out his mission of the propagation of the *Buddha Dharma*.

The importance of the propagation of the Buddha's Message can be seen from the following that H.P.B. wrote in *The Theosophical Glossary*:

His is the only *absolutely bloodless* religion among all the existing religions: tolerant and liberal, teaching universal compassion and charity, love and self-sacrifice, poverty and contentment with one's lot, whatever it may be. . . . If the simple, humane and philosophical code of daily life left to us by the greatest Man-Reformer ever known, should ever come to be adopted by mankind at large, then indeed an era of bliss and peace would dawn on Humanity.
