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“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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A DAY OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE

All down the ages men have been endeavouring to correct existing conditions, by simply rearranging them. A rearrangement of errors does not make for knowledge; the errors arise because of ignorance; knowledge must be sought as to the causes that produce existing conditions. This, Theosophy teaches by showing what man is, his origin, nature, history, and development so far, as well as his grand destiny. Without this knowledge, all attempts to obtain true and better conditions but plunge mankind deeper in the mire of ignorance and error. Works without knowledge can but lead to more and more ignorant works, piling up all the time a worse and worse future, as history has shown and is showing.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

The 17th of November is a day of special significance. On that day 36 years ago this Magazine was started. On the same day 37 years ago the Bombay Centre of the One United Lodge of Theosophists was inaugurated. Again, on the same day ninety-one years ago H. P. Blavatsky launched the Theosophical Movement of our era and cycle. On the 17th day of the 11th month, we are told in *The Secret Doctrine*, falls the “birthday” of a Dhyani.

The most important work of the original Theosophical Movement was “the relief of human suffering under any or every form, moral as well as physical”; and H.P.B. added the consequential clause — “we believe the former to be more important than the latter.” She further stated that “Theosophy has to inculcate ethics; it has to purify the Soul, if it would relieve the physical body, whose ailments, save cases of accidents, are all hereditary.”

The Theosophical Movement is in the world to reveal to man's

sight the real roots of existence and progression of the Soul. This necessitates an enlightened view of duty. To bring man to duty, to its right performance, and to use it as a talisman which protects the mind against ugliness, vulgarity and debasement is an important task. The degradation of love into lust and corruption of marital integrity which shatters home-life is one of the major problems of this civilization, in comparison with which those of regional or national boundaries and international finance pale into insignificance. Commercialism and materialistic views of life have strengthened the possessive aspect of wealth to such an extent that most men today have forgotten that they are trustees of their possessions, and so money is collected and spent on objectionable gratifications. When love and wealth are thus debased, the values of duties, their order of importance and their purpose undergo grave deterioration.

To cleanse and elevate the minds of others and help them acquire healthy and correct points of view, it is essential to intensify the work of self-improvement and to elevate one's own mind-soul. "The process of self-purification is not the work of a moment, nor of a few months, but of years — nay, extending over a series of lives." The acquisition and application of knowledge is the sure way of self-purification; to pass on the knowledge, to shed its light on other minds, the certain method of lessening the suffering of the race, moral and causal in the first instance.

What was true when H.P.B. wrote is equally true today, that "few are willing to become what is called 'working members' and most prefer to remain the *drones* of Theosophy." The living of the Life, *i.e.*, the practice of Theosophy, depends on one's knowledge. At every stage that knowledge reveals the next step, and provides the necessary strength to take that step. This must not be taken to mean that there are no obstacles. The travail of spiritual birth is difficult; the task of freeing the mind from creed-class-religion-race is hard. Weaknesses and vices of the mind are more formidable and therefore more exhausting than debility and diseases of the body. Our methods of combating and conquering evil are not rooted in true knowledge and often we do not understand the real meaning of these words:

Learn now that there is no cure for desire, no cure for the love of reward, no cure for the misery of longing, save in the fixing of the sight and hearing upon that which is invisible and soundless. Begin even now to practise it, and so a thousand serpents will be kept from your path. Live in the eternal.

Preoccupation with the personality is the root of all our troubles and suffering. For oneself as for humanity, relief from suffering is only obtained when the mind is made to turn within and keep the company of the Divinity in the innermost heart. It is this turning of the mind to the Divine Light within which is recommended by the Master Krishna: "Serve me, fix heart and mind on me, be my servant, my adorer, prostrate thyself before me, and thus, united unto me, at rest, thou shalt go unto me."

Nine years more and the hundred-year cycle of the present Theosophical Movement will draw to a close and another cyclic effort to help on the spiritual progress of Humanity will begin. In each year of this closing decade of the present cycle, as each one who calls himself a student, a promulgator or a devotee acts true or faithless to the true Teachings of Theosophy, he will help or hinder the work of the coming Messenger. The egotistic will disfigure, and the selfless worker improve, the Pattern drawn by us all.

In the coming years, then, what is needed is students who are keen, servers who are unselfish, and devotees who are full of zeal and assiduity in living the Teachings and following that which is implicit in the words, inspiring direct action, of H.P.B.:

Follow the path I show, the Masters that are behind — and do not follow me or my Path.

The path of Practical Theosophy is wide; it is narrow; it is straight; it is crooked; but it is never without good. Expect nothing; work without thought or desire for reward; share your happiness with others; be upright in your dealings with your fellow labourer on life's highway; work for the good of humanity; speak ill of no one; judge the act and not the actor; and last, but not least, strive for consistency as a theosophist. Then will be realized the basic idea of Practical Theosophy and Universal Brotherhood.

—W. Q. JUDGE

REPLIES TO AN ENGLISH F.T.S.

[In the early days of the present Theosophical Movement, "An English F.T.S." (Fellow of the Theosophical Society) addressed some questions to the Adepts on behalf of several English readers of A. P. Sinnett's then new book, *Esoteric Buddhism*. The long and authoritative replies to these queries originated from several sources and were published by H.P.B. in *The Theosophist* of September, October and November 1883. On the authorship of the replies, H.P.B. wrote in an editorial comment on some excerpts from a letter of G. L. Ditson, published in the *Journal of the Theosophical Society* (Supplement to *The Theosophist*) for February 1884:

"Why should our old and trusted American friend address us as though *we* were the author of 'Replies to an English F.T.S.'? It was explained, we believe, and made very clear that the letter of the English F.T.S. being addressed to the Mahatmas, it was not our province to answer the scientific queries contained in it, even if we had the ability to do so, something we never laid a claim to. In point of fact, however, there is not one word in the 'Replies' that we could call our own. We have preserved packs of MSS. in the handwriting of our Masters and their Chelas; and if we got them sometimes copied in the office, it was simply to avoid desecration at the hands of the printer's devil."

Elsewhere, writing to Mr. Sinnett, H.P.B. stated:

"It is *I* who had to copy most of the Replies written half by [Mahatma] M., half by either chelas or handwritings that I see for the first time. . . . M. ordered Subba Row to answer his ["An English F.T.S.'s"] objection on the date of Buddha's birth and Cunningham's fanciful dates."

T. Subba Row, whom H.P.B. referred to as "one of the best metaphysicians and Vedantic scholars in India," also wrote the long reply to Question VIII on Shankaracharya's date and doctrine.

We reprint here the questions asked of the Adepts and the introduction to the replies. The full replies will appear in subsequent issues of THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT. As stated in a footnote signed "Editor" in the September 1883 *Theosophist*: "The questions being of very grave import require to be answered at length; questions involving critical enquiry into the dicta of current science and history cannot be disposed of in a few lines. The replies will therefore appear in instalments."—EDS.]

The object of the following paper is to submit certain questions which have occurred to some English readers of *Esoteric Buddhism*. We have had the great advantage of hearing Mr. Sinnett himself explain many points which perplexed us; and it is with his sanction that we now venture to ask that such light as is permissible may be thrown upon some difficulties which, so far as we can discover, remain as yet unsolved. We have refrained from asking questions on subjects on which we understand that the Adepts forbid inquiry, and we respectfully hope that, as we approach the subject with a genuine wish to arrive at all the truth possible to us, our perplexities may be thought worthy of an authorized solution.

We begin, then, with some obvious *scientific* difficulties.

1. Is the Nebular Theory, as generally held, denied by the Adepts? It seems hard to conceive of the alternate evolution from the sun's central mass of planets, some of them visible and heavy, others invisible, and apparently without weight, as they have no influence on the movements of the visible planets.

2. And, further, the time necessary for the manvantara even of *one* planetary chain, much more of all seven, seems largely to exceed the probable time during which the sun can retain heat, if it is merely a cooling mass, which derives no important accession of heat from without. Is some other view as regards the maintenance of the sun's heat held by the Adepts?

3. The different races which succeed each other on the earth are said to be separated by catastrophes, among which continental subsidences occupy a prominent place. Is it meant that these subsidences are so sudden and unforeseen as to sweep away great nations in an hour? Or, if not, how is it that no appreciable trace is left of such high civilizations as are described in the past? Is it supposed that our present European civilization, with its offshoots all over the globe, can be destroyed by any inundation or conflagration which leaves life still existing on the earth? Are our existing arts and languages doomed to perish? Or was it only the earlier races who were thus profoundly disjoined from one another?

4. The moon is said to be the scene of a life even more immersed in matter than the life on earth. Are there then material organizations living there? If so, how do they dispense with air and water, and how is it that our telescopes discern no trace of their works? We should much like a fuller account of the Adepts' view of the moon, as so much

is already known of her material conditions that further knowledge could be more easily adjusted than in the case (for instance) of planets wholly invisible.

5. Is the expression "a mineral monad" authorized by the Adepts? If so, what relation does the monad bear to the atom, or the molecule, of ordinary scientific hypothesis? And does each mineral monad eventually become a vegetable monad, and then at last a human being? Turning now to some *historical* difficulties, we would ask as follows:

6. Is there not some confusion in the letter quoted on p. 62 of *Esoteric Buddhism*, where "the old Greeks and Romans" are said to have been Atlanteans? The Greeks and Romans were surely Aryans, like the Adepts and ourselves, their language being, as one may say, intermediate between Sanskrit and modern European dialects.

7. Buddha's birth is placed (on p. 141) in the year 643 B.C. Is this date given by the Adepts as undoubtedly correct? Have they any view as to the new inscriptions of Asoka (as given by General A. Cunningham, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicanum*, Vol. I, pp. 20-23), on the strength of which Buddha's Nirvana is placed by Barth (*Religions of India*, p. 106), etc., about 476 B.C., and his birth therefore at about 556 B.C.? It would be exceedingly interesting if the Adepts would give a sketch, however brief, of the history of India in those centuries with authentic dates.

8. Sankaracharya's date is variously given by Orientalists, but always *after* Christ. Barth, for instance, places him about 788 A.D. In *Esoteric Buddhism* he is made to succeed Buddha almost immediately (p. 149). Can this discrepancy be explained? Has not Sankaracharya been usually classed as *Vishnuite* in his teaching? And similarly has not Gaudapada been accounted a *Shivite*, and placed much later than *Esoteric Buddhism* (p. 147) places him? We would willingly pursue this line of inquiry, but think it best to wait and see to what extent the Adepts may be willing to clear up some of the problems in Indian religious history on which, as it would seem, they must surely possess knowledge which might be communicated to lay students without indiscretion.

We pass on to some points beyond the ordinary range of science or history on which we should be very glad to hear more, if possible.

9. We should like to understand more clearly the nature of the subjective intercourse with beloved souls enjoyed in Devachan. Say, for instance, that I die and leave on earth some young children. Are

these children present to my consciousness in Devachan still as children? Do I imagine that they have died when I died, or do I merely *imagine* them as adult without knowing their life-history, or do I miss them from Devachan until they do actually die, and then hear from them their life-history as it has proceeded between my death and theirs?

10. We do not quite understand the amount of *reminiscence* attained at various points in the soul's progress. Do the Adepts, who, we presume, are equivalent to sixth-rounders, recollect all their previous incarnations? Do all souls which live on into the sixth round attain this power of remembrance? Or does the Devachan at the end of each round bring a recollection of all the Devachans, or of all the incarnations, which have formed a part of that particular round? And does reminiscence carry with it the power of so arranging future incarnations as still to remain in company with some chosen soul or group of souls?

We have many more questions to ask, but we scruple to intrude further. And I will conclude here by repeating the remark with which we are most often met when we speak of the Adepts to English friends. We find that our friends do not often ask for so-called *miracles* or *marvels* to prove the genuineness of the Adepts' powers. But they ask why the Adepts will not give some proof—not necessarily that they are far beyond us, but that their knowledge does at least equal our own in the familiar and definite tracks which Western science has worn for itself. A few pregnant remarks on Chemistry—the announcement of a new electrical law, capable of experimental verification—some such communication as this (our interlocutors say) would arrest attention, command respect, and give a weight and prestige to the higher teaching which, so long as it remains in a region wholly unverifiable, it can scarcely acquire.

We gratefully recognize the very acceptable choice which the Adepts have made in selecting Mr. Sinnett as the intermediary between us and them. They could hardly have chosen anyone more congenial to our Western minds—whether we consider the clearness of his written style, the urbanity of his verbal expositions, or the earnest sincerity of his convictions. Since they have thus far met our peculiar needs with such considerate judgment, we cannot but hope that they may find themselves able yet further to adapt their modes of teaching to the requirements of Occidental thought.

LONDON, July 1883.

AN ENGLISH F.T.S.

ANSWERS

It was not in contemplation, at the outset of the work begun in *Fragments*,¹ to deal as fully with the scientific problems of cosmic evolution as now seems expected. A distinct promise was made, as Mr. Sinnett is well aware, to acquaint the readers of this Journal with the outlines of Esoteric doctrines and — no more. A good deal would be given, much more kept back, especially from the columns of a magazine which reaches a promiscuous public.

This seeming unwillingness to share with the world some of Nature's secrets that may have come into the possession of the few, arises from causes quite different from the one generally assigned. It is not SELFISHNESS erecting a Chinese wall between occult science and those who would know more of it, without making any distinction between the simply curious profane, and the earnest, ardent seeker after truth. Wrong and unjust are those who think so; who attribute to indifference for other people's welfare a policy necessitated, on the contrary, by a far-seeing universal philanthropy; who accuse the custodians of lofty physical and spiritual though long rejected truths, of holding them high above the people's heads. In truth, the inability to reach them lies entirely with the seekers. Indeed, the chief reason among many others for such a reticence, at any rate, with regard to secrets pertaining to physical sciences — is to be sought elsewhere.² It rests entirely on the *impossibility* of imparting that, the nature of which is, at the present stage of the world's development, beyond the comprehension of the would-be learners, however intellectual and however scientifically trained may be the latter. This tremendous difficulty is now explained to the few, who, besides having read *Esoteric Buddhism*, have studied and *understood* the several occult axioms approached in it. It is safe to say that it will not be even vaguely realized by the general reader, but will offer the pretext for sheer abuse. Nay, it has already.

It is simply that the gradual development of man's seven princ

¹ "Fragments of Occult Truth": reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT November 1953 to February 1955.—EDS., THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT.

² Needless to remind our correspondent that what is said here applies only to secrets the nature of which, when revealed, will not be turned into a weapon against humanity in general, or its units—men. Secrets of such class could not be given to anyone but a regular chela of many years' standing and during his successive initiations. Mankind as a whole has first to come of age, to reach its majority, which will happen but toward the beginning of its sixth race—before such mysteries can be safely revealed to it. The *vril* is not altogether a fiction, as some chelas and even "lay" chelas know.

ples and physical senses *has* to be coincident and on parallel lines with Rounds and Root-races. Our *fifth* race has so far developed but its *five* senses. Now, if the *Kama* or *Will*-principle of the "Fourth-rounders" has already reached that stage of its evolution when the automatic acts, the unmotivated instincts and impulses of its childhood and youth, instead of following external stimuli, will have become acts of will framed constantly in conjunction with the mind (*Manas*), thus making of every man on earth of that race a *free agent*, a *fully* responsible being — the *Kama* of our hardly adult *fifth* race is only slowly approaching it. As to the sixth sense of this, our race, it has hardly sprouted above the soil of its materiality. It is highly unreasonable, therefore, to expect for the men of the fifth to sense the nature and essence of that which will be fully *sensed* and perceived but by the sixth — let alone the seventh race — *i.e.*, to enjoy the legitimate outgrowth of the evolution and endowments of the future races with only the help of our present limited senses.

The exceptions to this quasi-universal rule have been hitherto found only in some rare cases of constitutional, abnormally precocious individual evolutions; or, in such where, by early training and special methods, reaching the stage of the fifth-rounders, some men in addition to the natural gift of the latter have fully developed (by certain occult methods) their sixth, and in still rarer cases their seventh, sense. As an instance of the former class may be cited the Seeress of Prevorst; a creature born *out of time*, a rare precocious growth, ill adapted to the uncongenial atmosphere that surrounded her, hence a martyr ever ailing and sickly. As an example of the other, the Count St. Germain may be mentioned. Apace with the anthropological and physiological development of man runs his spiritual evolution. To the latter, purely intellectual growth is often more an impediment than a help. An instance: radiant stuff — "the fourth state of matter" — has been hardly discovered, and no one — the eminent discoverer himself not excepted — has yet any idea of its full importance, its possibilities, its connection with physical phenomena, or even its bearing upon the most puzzling scientific problems. How then can any "Adept" attempt to prove the fallacy of much that is predicated in the nebular and solar theories when the only means by which he could successfully prove his position is an appeal to, and the exhibition of, that sixth-sense consciousness which the physicist cannot postulate? Is not this plain?

Thus, the obstacle is not that the "Adepts" would "forbid inquiry,"

but rather the personal, present limitations of the senses of the average, and even of the scientific man. To undertake the explanation of that which at the outset would be rejected as a physical impossibility, the outcome of hallucination, is unwise and even harmful, because premature. It is in consequence of such difficulties that the psychic production of physical phenomena — save in exceptional cases — is strictly forbidden.

And now, "Adepts" are asked to meddle with astronomy — a science which, of all the branches of human knowledge, has yielded the most accurate information, afforded the most mathematically correct data, and of the achievements in which the men of science feel the most justly proud! It is true that on the whole astronomy has achieved triumphs more brilliant than those of most other sciences. But if it has done much in the direction of satisfying man's straining and thirsting mind and his noble aspirations for knowledge, physical as to its most important particulars, it has ever laughed at man's puny efforts to wrest the great secrets of Infinitude by the help of only mechanical apparatus. While the spectroscope has shown the probable similarity of terrestrial and sidereal substance, the chemical actions peculiar to the variously progressed orbs of space have not been detected, nor proven to be identical with those observed on our own planet. In this particular, Esoteric Psychology may be useful. But who of the men of science would consent to confront it with their own handiwork? Who of them would recognize the superiority and greater trustworthiness of the Adept's knowledge over their own hypotheses, since in their case they can claim the mathematical correctness of their deductive reasonings based on the alleged unerring precision of the modern instruments; while the Adepts can claim but their knowledge of the ultimate nature of the materials they have worked with for ages, resulting in the phenomena produced. However much it may be urged that a deductive argument, besides being an incomplete syllogistic form, may often be in conflict with fact; that their major propositions may not always be correct, although the predicates of their conclusions seem correctly drawn — spectrum analysis will not be acknowledged as inferior to purely spiritual research. Nor, before developing his sixth sense, will the man of science concede the error of his theories as to the solar spectrum, unless he abjure; to some degree at least, his marked weakness for conditional and disjunctive syllogisms ending in eternal dilemmas.

At present, the "Adepts" do not see any help for it. Were these

invisible and unknown profanes to interfere with — not to say openly contradict — the *dicta* of the Royal Society, contempt and ridicule, followed by charges of crass ignorance of the first elementary principles of modern science, would be their only reward; while those who would lend an ear to their “vagaries” would be characterized immediately as types of the “mild lunatics” of the age. Unless, indeed, the whole of that august body should be initiated into the great Mysteries at once, and, without any further ado or the preliminary and usual preparations or training, the F.R.S.’s could be *miraculously* endowed with the required sixth sense, the Adepts fear the task would be profitless. The latter have given quite enough, little though it may seem, for the purposes of a first trial. The sequence of martyrs to the great universal truths has never been once broken; and the long list of known and unknown sufferers, headed with the name of Galileo, now closes with that of Zöllner. Is the world of science aware of the real cause of Zöllner’s premature death? When the fourth dimension of space becomes a scientific reality like the fourth state of matter, he may have a statue raised to him by grateful posterity. But this will neither recall him to life, nor will it obliterate the days and months of mental agony that harassed the soul of this intuitional, far-seeing, modest genius, made even after his death to receive the donkey’s kick of misrepresentation and to be publicly charged with lunacy.

Hitherto, astronomy could grope between light and darkness only with the help of the uncertain guidance offered it by analogy. It has reduced to fact and mathematical precision the physical motion and the paths of the heavenly bodies, and — no more. So far, it has been unable to discover with any approach to certainty the physical constitution of either sun, stars, or even cometary matter. Of the latter, it seems to know no more than was taught 5,000 years ago by the official astronomers of old Chaldea and Egypt, namely, that it is vaporous, since it transmits the rays of stars and planets without any sensible obstruction. But let the modern chemist be asked to tell one whether this matter is in any way connected with, or akin to, that of any of the external gases he is acquainted with; or again, to any of the solid elements of his chemistry. The probable answer received will be very little calculated to solve the world’s perplexity; since, all hypotheses to the contrary notwithstanding, cometary matter does not appear to possess even the common law of adhesion or of chemical affinity. The reason for it is very simple. And the truth ought long

ago to have dawned upon the experimentalists, since our little world (though so repeatedly visited by the hairy and bearded travellers, enveloped in the evanescent veil of their tails, and otherwise brought in contact with that matter) has neither been smothered by an addition of nitrogen gas, nor deluged by an excess of hydrogen, nor yet perceptibly affected by a surplus of oxygen. The essence of cometary matter must be — and the “Adepts” say *is* — *totally different from any of the chemical or physical characteristics with which the greatest chemists and physicists of the Earth are familiar* — all recent hypotheses to the contrary notwithstanding. Before the real nature of the elder progeny of *Mula Prakriti* is detected, Mr. Crookes will have to discover matter of the *fifth* or *extra-radiant* state; *et seq.*

Thus, while the astronomer has achieved marvels in the elucidation of the visible relations of the orbs of space, he has learnt nothing of their inner constitution. His science has led him no farther towards a reading of that inner mystery than has that of the geologist, who can tell us only of the Earth's superficial layers, and that of the physiologist who has until now been able to deal only with man's outer shell, or *Sthula Sharira*. Occultists have asserted and go on asserting daily the fallacy of judging the essence by its outward manifestations, the ultimate nature of the life-principle by the circulation of the blood, mind by the grey matter of the brain, and the physical constitution of sun, stars and comets by our terrestrial chemistry and the matter of our own planet.

Verily and indeed, no microscopes, spectroscopes, telescopes, photometers or other physical apparatuses can ever be focused on either the *macro-* or *micro-cosmical* highest principles, nor will the *mayavirupa* of either yield its mystery to physical inquiry. The methods of spiritual research and psychological observation are the only efficient agencies to employ. We have to proceed by analogy in everything, to be sure. Yet the candid men of science must very soon find out that it is not sufficient to examine a few stars — a handful of sand, as it were, from the margin of the shoreless, cosmic ocean — to conclude that these stars are the same as all other stars — our earth included; that, because they have attained a certain very great telescopic power, and gauged an area enclosed in the smallest of spaces when compared with what remains, they have, therefore, concurrently perfected the survey of all that exists within even that limited space. For, in truth, they have done nothing of the kind. They have had only a superficial glance at that which is made visible to them under

the present conditions, with *the limited power of their vision*.

No physical instrument will ever help astronomy to scan distances of the immensity of which that of Sirius, situated at the trifle of 130,125,000,000,000 miles away from the outer boundary of the spherical area, or, even that of Capella with its extra trifle of 295,255,000,000,000³ miles still further away, can give them, as they themselves are well aware — the faintest idea. For, though an Adept is unable to cross bodily (*i.e.*, in his astral shape) the limits of the solar system, yet he *knows* that, far stretching beyond the telescopic power of detection, there are systems upon systems, the smallest of which would, when compared with the system of Sirius, make the latter seem like an atom of dust imbedded in the great Shamo desert. The eye of the astronomer, who thinks he also knows of the existence of such systems, has never rested upon them, has never caught of them even that spectral glimpse, fanciful and hazy as the incoherent vision in a slumbering mind, that he has occasionally had of other systems, and yet he verily believes he has gauged INFINITUDE! And yet these immeasurably distant worlds are brought as clear and near to the spiritual eye of the *astral* astronomer as a neighbouring bed of daisies may be to the eye of the botanist.

Thus, the "Adepts" of the present generation, though unable to help the profane astronomer by explaining the ultimate essence, or even the material constitution of star and planet, since European science, knowing nothing as yet of the existence of such substances, or more properly of their various states or conditions, has neither proper terms for, nor can form any adequate idea of them by any description, they may, perchance, be able to prove what this matter *is not* — and this is more than sufficient for all present purposes. The next best thing to learning what is true is to ascertain what is *not* true.

Having thus anticipated a few general objections, and traced a limit to expectations, since there is no need of drawing any veil of mystery before "An English F.T.S.," his few questions may be partially answered. The negative character of the replies draws a sufficiently strong line of demarcation between the views of the Adepts and those of Western science to afford some useful hints at least.

³ The figures are given from the mathematical calculations of exoteric Western astronomy. Esoteric astronomy may prove them false some day.

THE JOURNEY

"*I-must-get-there; I-must-get-there; I-must-get-there!*" So spoke the train wheels to my brain.

"Hurry-hurry-hurry!"

With my mind set on the journey's end, the chug-chugging of the train wheels seemed so slow!

"Hurry-hurry-hurry! *I-must-get-there; I-must-get-there; I-must-get-there!*"

Stations passed by; the countryside, beautiful with the spring blossoms shining under the rays of the sun, fled by. But I had no time to look.

"*I-must-get-there; I-must-get-there; I-must-get-there!*" Over and over again the rhythm of the refrain soothed me. What it was I was going to I was not quite sure, but get there I must, the urge was so strong. I had no time for anything; the beautiful was not for me; helpfulness to others became a duty, not a pleasure, for it reduced my speed.

At last I arrived. The night was dark, the chug-chug of the wheels was slowing down. My heart beats were almost suffocating me with anticipation. . . . The train stopped. It was no longer my desire to repeat "*I must-get-there.*" I *was* THERE!

I got out of the train, and as my eyes became accustomed to the little light there was, what did I see? No welcoming crowds of those pleased to see me, to congratulate me. No one to thank me. There was nothing — a vast desert of nothing. Blankness and despair and even anger filled my heart. Was it for this I had struggled and hurried? Was it for this I had searched? Was this the end I had envisioned? Where was the beauty I had expected, the warmth of gratitude for me from those I had come to see? There was nothing!

"Nothingness-nothingness-nothingness," my weary brain began pounding, in place of "*I-must-get-there.*"

How shall I live? Where are my friends? Where are those I worked for and struggled to reach?

There is no one to answer me, not even the wind can carry my voice afar. I am myself nothing in a sea of nothingness!

After the blankness of despair had begun to pass, the desire arose for the past, for the places and people and friends I had left behind. "Go back — go back — go back" it seemed to say. "There where you used to be, among others like you, you will find true friends. This journey was absurd. Go back where you belong and find happiness." Bit by bit the desire grew and I turned my eyes round. To my joy the train was waiting patiently for me. I ran to it and cried, "Take-me-back." It started, and through the long return journey its wheels said to my brain, "I-am-going-back; I-am-going-back; I-am-going-back!"

The rhythm of that wonderful phrase began to revive me. Yes, I am going back, going back, going back. Now there is no hurry. I can pause and see the beauty of the hedgerows and gardens. I can call at the stations and be greeted by my friends with joy. This is my place. It is HOME to me. There is no more hurry to go elsewhere.

But, at night, my dreams plague me. They show me a mirage or a vision of what lay behind the nothingness I had seen, the real which had been hidden by the nothingness. And when I awake, I wake to the nothingness of my present life, a nothingness full of people, of desires, of beauty, of helpfulness; but barren, unable to give me peace, for all these now seem to be shadows. The words, "the voidness of the seeming full, the fulness of the seeming void," beat in my brain. And I am in despair.

They say we learn through suffering. Despair made me turn within and look at myself. Who am I, who are these people round me, what is beauty, what is life? My mind is full of questions. But there are no ready answers. I search for the meaning of beauty, of life, of myself. Then — how far off in time I know not — I glimpsed the hidden beneath the outer form, and suddenly I saw that my ordinary life is the outer form of the nothingness I travelled to and left. I see that that nothingness is vibrating with invisible forms, forces, feelings. The world around me with which I am familiar is a world of nothingness. The apparent nothingness is the source of all. It is only nothingness to the outer desires, for it is all ONE. If I can merge myself with that ONE and bring the knowledge of it to the ordinary world, then I shall see myself as between the two, a messenger of life and help to all, one who vibrates with the pulsating of that great Invisible Heart of Compassion at the core of being.

I do not need a train to carry me. I am my own train. There is no hurry, but I can and will use all stopping places as pilgrimages of worship, for they are the reality behind the nothingness. They and I are one also. A great peace has descended on me, the peace of nothingness, the no-*thing*-ness which alone can bring peace. Things are merged into one "feeling" or urge for Union with both the Nothingness and the Fullness of manifested LIFE.

And in that merging I see and know all those whom I sought on my journey but found not. The Nothingness has become the Fullness, and I am part of that Fullness and at the same time of the Nothingness.

STRAY RUMBLINGS OF THE SOUL

The soul is the surest refuge for a fugitive from life — a secure raft for the shipwrecked!

The "Universal" alone constitutes the pivotal point from which to view the evanescent panorama of life.

I feel I grow only by an impetus from within. The rest is all secondary, subsidiary, ancillary.

Verily do I realize the truth of these memorable words of Victor Hugo: "The pupil dilates in the night and sees light in it; the soul dilates in misfortune, and finds God in it."

The only august experience and the only happy moment in a man's life that can ever be is the glorious opening of the windows of the soul to the Light of God, flooding it with divine effulgence.

Embrace all sorrow as your own. Drown your own sufferings in the common pool of suffering of all mankind. Let yours be a drop in the ocean of tears shed by all men.

Give, and you get.

There is an instinct in us which is never satisfied with anything short of entire absorption of our soul into the Infinite.

Life, for me, is an impossibility, without the sustaining vitality of the throbbing soul.

Life is so constituted that it compels a man to fight with himself.

Through deep reflection, we eventually realize that we have only ourselves to contend with.

Is there anything more painful than the admonitions of a guilty conscience?

Isolation is an impossibility in a Universe of Synthesis.

THEOSOPHY—ITS PURVIEW: OUR CHALLENGE

Of necessity our own limitations cloud the *truth*. Our views are partial. Where facts of personal experience are lacking, our minds must make pictures and imaginings which we can check.

Pressing back and further back into the dim "beginnings," we seek to probe the regions of the unmanifested — in search of that final ONE SPIRIT from which *all* has emanated. From IT ensues the descent of "Spirit" into "Matter" — ITSELF in itself — the involution and the evolution of "soul" and its journey back to the Source through the manifested universe. The CAUSELESS CAUSE is the One Source of emanation and evolution in this manifested universe. It is everywhere and it is nowhere. It has no attributes, neither length, depth nor thickness. In terms of manifested time, it is TIMELESS. The First Cause may be given the symbol of the mathematical point. The regular periodic inbreathing and outbreathing of the Spirit in manifestation gives us the periodic "Nights" and "Days" of Brahma. Starting with the mathematical point as the apex of a metaphysical equilateral triangle, H.P.B. shows us how involution proceeds by the two divergent sides, representing "Spirit" and "Matter" — *wisdom* and *knowledge*; the base line that completes this trinity represents the Logos (Brahma, Avalokiteshwara, Ormazd, Osiris, Ophis, Odin, etc., according to the various systems of mythological theogonies — all being one and the same thing).

From this emanate seven Principles (seven Ameshaspends, seven Archangels, seven primeval Rishis) or Logoi; and from each of these a further seven, making 49 in all. From these the archetypal basis for manifestation, the world as a plane of action, came into being. It is this seven times seven scale that we now deal with. Everything, without exception, contains within itself a portion or spark of the omnipresent Divine Consciousness. It is precisely this ray-spark, seeking return to its Source to obtain Absolute SELF-Consciousness, that evolves through the elemental, the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and finally the human "kingdoms."

Self-consciousness begins at a certain stage after the human form is developed. To obtain Absolute SELF-Consciousness, which is awareness of everything, it must pass through every form and state of existence, from the lowest to the highest, on all planes, visible and invisible, and master the whole range of knowledge available to it, transmuting this knowledge into WISDOM, active and beneficent. In other words, this individual ray must become one with the ABSOLUTE CONSCIOUS-

NESS through the experience garnered in manifestation.

The planes of experience are seven. Evolution passing through these stages exhibits seven aspects, called in Theosophy "Globes." Through these the ray-monad evolves. Our own Earth now is the fourth in the series, the others being intangible to our present senses simply because they are on another plane of matter-perception which interpenetrates ours. Seven times around this system does the monad journey, spending millions of years on each globe and incarnating in human form again and again. It is brought back to incarnated life because of the unfulfilled desires and the Karmic causes set up in its past lives with other evolving ray-monads. Always in search of new experience, it pursues this apparently endless journey on its return to the ONE SOURCE. For how long? The wise custodians, evolved Men-Monads of past periods of evolution, accurately record the duration of the cycles, large and small: *Brahmandas*, *Kalpas*, *Manvantaras*, *Yugas*, years. From these Wise Ones comes the Secret Doctrine, set forth in mystic form and traced in the myths, legends and allegories of many a past race. This *secret* record is made accessible only to those who through many incarnations have pursued with devotion and absolute resolution the path that leads to the mastery of the *Occult*.

Each one of us has the opportunity of making of himself that forged and true "key" that will unlock the mighty lock of the secrets of Nature. The hand that eventually turns our key will be our own. This is, however, not the highest goal, since it is still a selfish one. Casting our eyes around, we see a great community of beings of all degrees: at our own level of advancement, below ours and, certainly, above ours. What, then, is our responsibility? It is our sense of responsibility and trustworthiness that is precisely being tested. It is in this subtle way that the process of evolution refines, by offering us opportunities, the compassion rooted in UNITY that emanates from the centre of our *Real* being — the evolving Ray on its way back to its SOURCE.

In our cycle we have H.P.B. and the present Theosophical Movement which she launched. The object was to establish especially in the Western world the nucleus of the brotherhood of man that should exist. Cyclically the time was ripe for the partial restatement of the teachings of the Wisdom-Religion, the Secret Doctrine, and for the formation of an organization through which this could be promulgated and to which individuals who were interested and in sympathy could be attracted. The idea of the WAY was repromulgated — that WAY

which leads inward to the centre of the man-universe. H.P.B. thus came to lay the plans and the outlines for future growth, working with the mind of the race, promulgating great Universal Ideas and setting an example of complete and absolute dedication — of compassion and of wisdom-sacrifice. It is our opportunity and our responsibility to see that growth along the Lines she laid down continues and becomes that living power which will eventually permeate the minds of men and direct their thought to matters of real significance which have truly a long-range purview.

Question—What is the real meaning of that phrase so often seen in Theosophical papers, “the great orphan, Humanity”?

Answer—This phrase has a deep significance for me. If we imagine a child appearing on earth without a parent, we would have to call it an orphan. Humanity is the “great orphan” because it is without parents in the sense that it has produced itself and hence from itself has to procure the guidance it needs. And as it wanders in the dark valley of the shadow of death, it is more in need of help and counsel than the mere body of a child which is the ordinary orphan. The soul is parentless, existing of itself from all eternity, and, considered as soul, mankind is hence an orphan. Plunged into matter, surrounded on every side by the vast number of intricate illusions and temptations that belong to earthly life, it stands every day and hour in need of protection as well as guidance. . . .

I cannot see how the phrase “great orphan” carries with it the notion of being without guide or helper. Among the units composing it are some who have risen through trial to the state where they can help the lower ones. Orphans themselves, they live to benefit mankind of which they are a part. Enthusiasm for the “orphan” is that which will lead to devotion and sacrifice; and that enthusiasm must be developed not only in the Theosophist, but in all the men of earth. Having it, they will help all on their own plane, and each stratum of men rising in development will help all below until all belonging to the globe have risen to the perfect height. Then they can proceed to other spots in cosmos where are also wandering vast masses of souls, also units in the “orphan,” who require and can then receive the same help that we had extended to us.

—W. Q. JUDGE in *The Theosophical Forum*, April, 1894

ON LETTING GO

One of the ills of our modern civilization, which is causing great concern, is that people, feeling the need to escape from, and forget for a time, the problems, responsibilities and frustrations of life, have "let go" too much. If they are not able to do this by reading sensational books or seeing exciting movies, there is always the recourse to drink, and lately drugs, too, are being used to aid the process, so that for a time all control vanishes, and the person is "free" from all care — often with tragedy as the result.

In Theosophy, we are advised to "let go," to free ourselves from the bonds that bind us, so that on the surface at least modern civilization and Theosophy seem to be in agreement — but only on the surface.

While it is true that thoughtful thinkers and writers today are beginning to regard man as much more than just his physical body, there is still a long way to go before the Theosophical concept of man is approached. Very roughly, for purposes of this study, man may be divided into the personality, or the "*persona*," the outer form and name, and the individuality, the real "I," the dweller residing in the personality, the real chooser and thinker, the one who really needs to be "free" — but from what? and why?

The individuality needs to be freed from the bonds and the prison in which it has been encased by the personality. Though forgotten or unknown by the personality, the individuality or inner man has his own plane of action and life, and the responsibility of guiding the personal man to become more impersonal and unselfish; but his voice is unheard and unrecognized because the average person is unaware of his existence, and often even students of Theosophy forget that there is such a being.

Therefore, what is it that the personality needs to "let go" of, to be free from, so that it can be a fit instrument for the individuality to act through? Certainly not its problems and responsibilities; these are the very things that it cannot free itself from, because in many instances their causes have been sown in a previous existence, and have been brought over by the real "I" for the personality to work through and rise above in this present life.

What really needs to be "let go" of is our pride, our vanity, the desire that others should think and feel as we do, the feeling that our

methods are the only correct ones, that our way of life is the only true one — in short, our selfishness and self-centredness.

To test out just how “free” we are, we should take a look, for instance, at our first thoughts on waking, and our last thoughts on sleeping. Do they tend to be concerned with how others have dealt with us, with the mistakes of others, with how we have been mistreated, or are we able to see objectively where we have erred, how we have treated, or mistreated, others, leaving them to worry about their own mistakes? Another test is to notice our reaction to any plan or proposal brought forward for our consideration. Is our first and immediate reaction, “It is not my way of doing it, therefore it is no good,” or, is our reaction, “How will this affect others and the general pattern of work? Will it help or hinder?”

Mr. Judge, in his *Letters That Have Helped Me*, has given another test for us, and along with it very practical advice:

Begin by trying to conquer the habit, almost universal, of pushing yourself forward. This arises from personality. Do not monopolize the conversation. Keep in the background. If someone begins to tell you about himself and his doings, do not take first chance to tell him about yourself, but listen to him and talk solely to bring him out. And when he has finished, suppress in yourself the desire to tell about yourself, your opinions and experiences. Do not ask a question unless you intend to listen to the answer and inquire into its value. Try to recollect that you are a very small affair in the world, and that the people around do not value you at all and grieve not when you are absent. Your only true greatness lies in your inner true self and it is not desirous of obtaining the applause of others. If you will follow these directions for one week you will find they will take considerable effort, and you will begin to discover a part of the meaning of the saying, “Man, know thyself.”

In this day and age, we see things in an upside-down manner. The influences of the astral and psychic planes are much stronger than those of the spiritual plane; therefore we see things in a reversed fashion. We see these lower planes as the only reality, and from the standpoint of the personality they are so. But from the standpoint of the real “I” they are not.

If we could only realize that there is a plane where we are all alike, are bound together by a bond stronger than any family or community or legal bond! It is on this plane, the spiritual, that real Unity

or Oneness exists. All have come from this source, and must eventually return to it. It can only be approached when we have "let go" on this physical plane, not of our responsibilities and problems, but of our pride and vanity and selfishness — the choice is ours. One way will take us deeper into the psychic plane, where there is "under every flower a serpent coiled"; the other, nearer to the real "I" within, the man who forever is. It is up to us, but "let go" we must, one way or the other.

I believe in the supreme worth of the individual and in his right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

I believe that every right implies a responsibility, every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty.

I believe that the law was made for man and not man for the law; that government is the servant of the people and not their master.

I believe in the dignity of labour, whether with head or hand; that the world owes no man a living but that it owes every man an opportunity to make a living.

I believe that thrift is essential to well-ordered living and that economy is a prime requisite of a sound financial structure, whether in government, business or personal affairs.

I believe that truth and justice are fundamental to an enduring social order.

I believe in the sacredness of a promise, that a man's word should be as good as his bond; that character — not wealth or power or position — is of supreme worth.

I believe that the rendering of useful service is the common duty of mankind and that only in the purifying fire of sacrifice is the dross of selfishness consumed and the greatness of the human soul set free.

I believe in the all-wise and all-loving God, named by whatever name, and that the individual's highest fulfilment, greatest happiness, and widest usefulness are to be found in living in harmony with His will.

I believe that love is the greatest thing in the world; that it alone can overcome hate; that right can and will triumph over might.

—INSCRIPTION ON A MEMORIAL TO JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR.

PLATO'S VISION OF AN IDEAL STATE

The trial and death of Socrates led the thoughtful among the Athenians to view with concern the tragic failure of their democratic government in which those at the helm of affairs were ignorant of the art of ruling and too swayed by prejudices and set notions to take reasoned decisions. They saw that the legislators and administrators of a free State, incapable of governing their passions and unused to distinguishing right from wrong, were as much prone to misuse power and perpetrate injustice as any self-seeking dictator would be. Particularly young Plato was much perturbed by the fate meted out to the man whom he held in great respect and who, besides, was proclaimed the wisest man of his country by no less an authority than the Delphic Oracle, to whom all Greece rendered homage. Plato's early ambitions were political, but the condemnation of Socrates by the so-called democratic leaders of the time convinced him that there was no place for a man of conscience in active politics.

Socrates infused his spirit of search for truth into the flowering mind of Plato, who resuscitated the master in his works, and, using the Socratic method of investigation, gave in his *Republic* a scheme for constructing an ideal State. He had learnt enough to recognize that an ideal State could only be conceived and controlled by adept-statesmen who had graduated through the school of self-study and self-control before they presumed to rule and reform others. Nothing good could happen to a nation whose nationals were not good, and the character that a State might hope to evolve could only be the progressive development of the character of its people. "Like man, like State," says Plato.

Plato realized that the people as a rule were immersed too deep in their own pleasures and pains for any reformer to succeed in changing them by the method of contumely or compulsion. No one, however unselfish or learned, could afford to be indifferent to the attachments and interests of the people whom he wished to reform. The common man, if he was not approached in the right spirit of sympathy and understanding, had not only the freedom to turn away from those who wanted to teach him, but also the power to frustrate and destroy them. Plato did not forget the blow dealt to philosophy when Socrates was put to death. His was the mission to ferret out the great ideas buried within the soul-minds of men and to record them for the benefit of future generations, that the discerning among them might clean their

brain-minds of the dross of desires and elevate their lives.

Thomas Taylor, in his rendering of Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras*, explains the divine lineage of great souls such as Plato was. In the light of Theosophy also his exposition deserves consideration. He says:

According to the ancient theology, between those perpetual attendants of a divine nature called *essential* heroes, who are impassive and pure, and the bulk of human souls who descend to earth with passivity and impurity, it is necessary there should be an order of human souls who descend with impassivity and purity. For, as there is no vacuum either in incorporeal or corporeal natures, it is necessary that the last link of a superior order should coalesce with the summit of one proximately inferior. These souls were called by the ancients *terrestrial* heroes, on account of their high degree of proximity and alliance to such as are essentially heroes. Hercules, Theseus, Pythagoras, Plato, etc., were souls of this kind, who descended into mortality both to benefit other souls, and in compliance with that necessity by which all natures inferior to the perpetual attendants of the Gods are at times obliged to descend.

Soon after the death of Socrates, Plato started on his travels in search of a basis on which to rear the edifice of Socratic concepts which he had tentatively imbibed. His initiation into the Mysteries of Egypt gave him an Adept's privilege to adopt and amplify those concepts. In Phoenicia, the Magi trained him in magic. In south Italy he came under Pythagoric influence so much that he is mentioned as the most authentic of the Pythagoreans. In Sicily he met the ruler Dionysius, who, though jealous of his learning and popularity, respected him, and for a while Plato entertained the hope that he would have there the opportunity of experimenting with his ideas of a government in which the true welfare of the people would be more in evidence than the pride and power of the rulers who for their personal interest sought to keep the people under subjection. This hope, however, was not realized, as Dionysius refused to accept Plato's condition either to abdicate or to take to a philosopher's life of study and self-effacement. On his second visit to Sicily the son of Dionysius, who was then the ruler, had him sold as a slave. However, through the intervention of an admirer Plato was ransomed and allowed to return home.

After his return from his travels Plato established in Athens his famous Academy, over which he presided for the rest of his life. On the doors of it were placed these words: "Let no man ignorant of

Geometry enter here"; for Plato believed that "Deity always geometrizes." It was an institute for the systematic pursuit of philosophical and scientific research. Students were also trained in mathematics, jurisprudence and general culture.

Plato taught his pupils the doctrine of Ideas. Behind the surface phenomena and particulars that we see are ideas, laws and ideals which are more permanent, and therefore more real. Thus, Man is more permanent than Tom, Dick or Harry; a circle we draw with the motion of a pencil exists no more when we erase it, but the *idea* of a Circle goes on for ever. Meaning can be given to things only by finding the laws of their being and the purposes and goals of their activity.

Plato taught that "everything before it appeared on earth had first its being in Spirit." This teaching is in accord with the Pythagorean doctrine that God is the Universal Mind diffused through all things. "Thus the Kosmos is 'the Son' with Plato, having for his father and mother the Divine Thought and Matter" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 348). As *Isis Unveiled* (I. 55) records:

Plato... stated distinctly that everything visible was created or evolved out of the invisible and eternal WILL, and after its fashion. Our Heaven — he says — was produced according to the eternal pattern of the "Ideal World," contained, as everything else, in the dodecahedron, the geometrical model used by the Deity. With Plato, the Primal Being is an emanation of the Demiurgic Mind (*Nous*), which contains from the eternity the "*idea*" of the "to be created world" within itself, and which idea he produces out of himself. The laws of nature are the established relations of this *idea* to the forms of its manifestations.

Unfortunately, man has disturbed this relationship and has let loose what Plato calls "a blind, refractory force, which resists the will of the Great Artificer." Until he seeks the protection of his Higher Self and resolves to reshape his life in line with Nature's laws and in conformity with the still, small voice which he has ignored, man will not be able to plan an ideal state of life for himself; still less can he make an ideal corporate State a possibility.

In Plato's *Republic*, behind all the political argument we find the ethical, "mystical" and metaphysical strands of thought deftly combined into a consummate artistic whole. It is a Dialogue about which Will Durant, the author of *The Story of Philosophy*, makes the following appreciative reference:

Here we shall find his metaphysics, his theology, his ethics, his psychology, his pedagogy, his politics, his theory of art. Here we shall find problems reeking with modernity and contemporary savour; communism and socialism, feminism and birth-control and eugenics, Nietzschean problems of morality and aristocracy, Rousseauian problems of return to nature and libertarian education, Bergsonian *élan vital* and Freudian psychoanalysis — everything is here. It is a feast for the *élite*, served by an unstinting host. "Plato is philosophy, and philosophy Plato," says Emerson; and awards to *The Republic* the words of Omar about the *Koran*: "Burn the libraries, for their value is in this book."

Viewed from the lower arc of human development, this eulogy seems complete, but *The Republic* has a deeper and higher value. E. J. Urwick, author of *The Message of Plato*, assigns Vedic origin to its concepts, and states:

Its real essence is super-social and super-moral, something which lies beyond the scope of all ethical theory and system. . . . Plato posits the existence of another life open to us, if we will, not after our death, but while we are still on earth and members of an earthly society. And *its* conditions and laws are the true and only subject-matter of the highest "science" and the deepest philosophy. . . . In other words, our ethics, our social or political philosophy and our metaphysics, are all concerned with the activities of faculties whose province it is to function on the lower path; while Plato's deepest teaching is expressly aimed at carrying us beyond that path, and pointing out the existence of a higher one. The antithesis is that of human, worldly and mental, on the one hand, and superhuman, other-worldly and spiritual, on the other hand. And the latter *cannot* be interpreted in the light of the former.

The Republic seeks an accurate definition of justice. We have here the fundamental problem of ethics, the crux of the theory of moral conduct. Shall we seek justice and righteousness, or shall we seek power? Is it better to be good, or to be strong? Plato argues that it is easier to analyse justice on a larger scale, as part of the structure of a community, than on the small scale of individual behaviour. So *The Republic* discusses not only the problems of personal morality, but the problems of social and political reconstruction as well.

An ideal State is inconceivable without justice being at its core. The quest for justice is the quest for righteousness — *Dharma*. The ideal State, therefore, is for those who fulfil their *Dharma*, are righteous

in conduct and just in their relations with one another as co-sharers of its weal and woe, its work and wealth, its privileges and privations. In such a State each one heartily offers his contribution in time, work and money to the best of his ability, and is content to draw from it only that which he is entitled to, for his needs. Its rulers serve through their wisdom, its defenders serve through their courage, its people serve through their temperance. All are mindful of the interest of each and each one is considerate of the welfare of all. Its citizens are free in mind and peaceful in their hearts because they have conquered their lusts. *The Republic* establishes that justice prevails when everyone minds his business and is not a busybody. "Justice," says Plato, "is the having and doing what is one's own." It is the performance by each individual and by each class in the State of its appropriate function, and of no other. Before arriving at this conclusion, other definitions brought forward by the interlocutors were considered according to the Socratic method of cross-examination and adjustment.

The persons taking part in the discussion were Socrates (serving as the mouthpiece of Plato); Cephalus, a wealthy old man; his son Polemarchus; Thrasymachus, a Sophist; Glaucon and Adeimantus, Plato's brothers; and other youths. They had gathered in the house of Cephalus, who in welcoming Socrates observed that he was happy in his old age as he had dealt justly with people and had never tried to deceive anyone. Socrates asked: What is justice? Is it speaking the truth and paying one's debt? Nothing more? Cephalus, however, expresses his inability to enter into argument with Socrates and leaves the conversation to his son. Polemarchus reminds Socrates that it was Simonides, the poet, who defined justice as speaking the truth and paying one's debt. Socrates asks: Can we pay the debt if a man from whom a sword is borrowed wants it back when he has become mad? Can we always speak the truth before such a man? Even Simonides would not wish that we do an ill turn to our friend by returning his weapon, knowing that he is not in a fit condition to use it well. Then they discuss another definition of justice, *viz.*, doing good to our friends and harm to our enemies. The question now arises: Who is our friend? One who seems so or one who has at heart our own good? And, further, if we harm our enemy will he not harm us? If we repay evil with evil, will not the resulting condition be evil and unjust? It is absurd to talk of justice and spread injustice.

The Sophist, Thrasymachus, who until now had been silent, intervened in the debate at this stage with a gibe at Socrates. He indignantly

stated that Socrates was at his tricks as usual. He was asking questions as if he did not know what justice was. Everyone knew that justice was the interest of the stronger man, as from the olden times it was recognized that might was right. All states were governed by strong men who made laws to serve their own ends, and people obeyed them for fear of something worse happening to them if they did not. Socrates pacified Thrasymachus, who in the end had to agree that rulers made mistakes and were often unable to safeguard even their own interests through laws. Further discussion revealed that people sometimes thought it profitable to be unjust, at the same time managing to keep up a show of justice, for a truly just man had often nothing to look forward to save pain and persecution.

Socrates ultimately led the company to agree that the just man is better and happier than the unjust. A just man is a man in just the right place, doing his best, and giving the full equivalent of what he receives. A society of just men would therefore be a highly harmonious and efficient group, for every element would be in its place, fulfilling its appropriate function like the members of an orchestra. Justice is effective co-ordination, both in the individual and in the state; it is the effective harmony of the Whole. Whatever a worldly-wise Sophist may say, might is not right; the world is as much for the weak as for the strong. Duty is right and justice is the law which establishes order by making men reap the fruit of that which they themselves have sown. Thus *The Republic* visualizes the Law of Karma.

Injustice is a disease arising from ignorance of the fact that this is a universe of absolute honesty where a just law prevails. Therefore *The Republic* puts forth a new scheme of education, prohibiting as a first step books of all poets and writers who have in their stories and songs depicted gods as mischief-makers and war-mongers who do not hesitate to harm human beings. Such notions about the gods corrupt the child mind. To build a Utopia, we must start with the right education of the children. For Plato, the correction of defects in the character was the object of education, for which every child had to have an equal opportunity, irrespective of the family in which he was born. He divided education into the two main branches of Gymnastics for the body and Music for the mind-soul, and these, he held, should be so balanced and proportioned that they helped man to become a harmonious whole. The body was to be kept healthy, not for its own sake, but for making it a fit instrument for the use of the soul. Under music, it should be noted, Plato included all moral, æsthetic and intel-

lectual culture which moulds character and lends grace to the soul. The inclinations and aptitudes of the children had to be watched, and, when they grew up, training given them for appropriate vocations through which they might be of best help to themselves and to their fellows.

The people of a State Plato would divide into three main vocational classes: (1) rulers, including high officers, judges, teachers, etc.; (2) defenders, including the police and the military forces; and (3) business people, including farmers and labourers. These three classes correspond, respectively, to the three qualities of the soul, which, in the words of *The Republic*, are reason, emotion and desire. The State would aim at developing in its people three corresponding virtues, *viz.*, wisdom, courage, temperance.

Wisdom is the highest expression of the human soul; it is true Knowledge in action; the desire and design of the Deity. Plato would have only wise and altruistic men and women of mature age and experience at the helm of affairs in his State. Before qualifying for this task, they would have to go through a rigorous training. After years of training in the doctrine of Ideas — the art of perceiving the universal laws and ideal potentialities behind all things — they would have to devote many more years to practical training, to the facing of the realities of life and the inculcation of self-reliance and virtue. This training of life would prepare them to be men of action rather than mere impractical metaphysicians. Plato speaks of the moral life of the "philosopher-king," whose virtue is founded "on a personal *knowledge* of good." A higher level of moral goodness is demanded of him than of other citizens even of the ideal Utopia. Men so trained would lead the way to the formation of an ideal society in which one looked upon every other human being as a brother, a sister, a son, a daughter, a father or a mother. Statesmanship is a science and an art; one must have lived for it and been long prepared. Only a philosopher-king is fit to guide a nation. "Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and wisdom and political leadership meet in the same man... cities will never cease from ill, nor the human race."

Younger men of courage having no fear of death would be associated with these wise rulers for preserving law and order. These defenders of the State would serve, not for gold or silver, but for the love of defending right against might. Their courage would not be tarnished

with brutality, nor would they be moved by malice. Their constant struggle with their inner enemies would give them the privilege to fight the enemies of the State.

The rest would form the bulk of the population, left free to do their own business but under the necessity of cultivating the virtue of temperance in all things. Nothing would be imposed, but each citizen must realize that none can escape the consequences of his acts, whether of omission or commission, and that it is his duty to contribute his mite to the welfare of others, on which his own welfare depends.

In short, the perfect society would be that in which each class and each unit would be doing the work to which its nature and aptitude best adapted it; in which no class or individual would interfere with others, but all would co-operate to produce an efficient and harmonious whole. That would be a just State.

To understand all social and political problems we must understand the nature of man. Therefore the concept of the ideal State given in *The Republic* takes into account the idea of reincarnation and immortality of the soul, which, says Plato, "is the most ancient of all things." The body exists for the sake of the soul. "The soul which administers all things that are moved in every way, administers likewise the heavens." *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 88) states:

How precise and true is Plato's expression, how profound and philosophical his remark on the (human) soul or EGO, when he defined it as "a compound of the *same* and the *other*"... for the EGO (the "Higher Self" when merged with and in the Divine Monad) is Man, and yet the *same* as the "OTHER," the Angel in him incarnated, as the same with the universal MAHAT.

Plato also defines the soul as "the motion that is able to move itself." He says:

Soul then leads everything in heaven, and on earth, and in the sea, by its movement — the names of which are, to will, to consider, to take care of, to consult, to form opinions true and false, to be in a state of joy, sorrow, confidence, fear, hate, love, together with all such primary movements as are allied to these ... being a goddess herself, she ever takes as an ally *Nous*, a god, and disciplines all things correctly and happily; but when with *Annoia* — not *Nous* — it works out everything the contrary.

As discerning human beings, and especially as students of Theosophy, we cannot but carefully watch these movements of the soul and

endeavour to apply the needed antidote of good thoughts, words and deeds, for the improvement of our moral and spiritual health, with the object of attaining an ideal soul-state ultimately, not only for ourselves individually but also for humanity at large.

Some may say that it is easy to sit in a circle and talk with friends, as do the participants in the dialogue of *The Republic*, about the Utopia of hope and happiness we would like to have, but that it does not and cannot exist in reality. One of the participants actually remarked during the discussion that the ideal State of Plato's conception can only exist in "heaven." However, Plato was vindicated a few centuries later when Jesus proclaimed that the Kingdom of Heaven can be established on earth and everyone can find it within himself. Theosophy teaches that heaven is not a geographical locality far from us but is an attitude of our superior mind. Man has made this earth a cave of shadows, which Plato describes in Book VII of *The Republic*. In this cave are reflected the images of his kama-manasic thoughts and acts, and he himself is a prisoner therein with his eyes straining to see in the darkness of ignorance and his back turned to the light of true knowledge. Unless he finds courage and frees himself from the binding chords of the numerous desires and passions which have impaired his vision, he cannot face reality and perceive that the ideal State exists for those who desire and deserve it. The human soul gets what it desires and works for, and as choosers it is incumbent upon us to choose aright. Doing what is right, we make ourselves better human beings, and the ideal State is ours even if our brothers and neighbours do not choose to make it theirs.

When man escapes from the dark den where he finds himself imprisoned and where he mistakes shadows for realities, when the soul frees itself from the prison-house of the senses and enters the world of true reality, when he sees that Justice which is Compassion is "the Law of LAWS — eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting right, and fitness of all things, the law of Love eternal," then does the ideal State become a reality.

Plato was, in the fullest sense of the word, the world's interpreter. And the greatest philosopher of the pre-Christian era mirrored faithfully in his works the spiritualism of the Vedic philosophers who lived thousands of years before himself, and its metaphysical expression. . . . To Plato and the ancient Hindu sages was alike revealed the same wisdom.

—*Isis Unveiled*, I. xi

THE LIMITING NATURE OF SELFISHNESS

Rabindranath Tagore in his *Sadhana* states: "To the man who lives for an idea, for his country, for the good of humanity, life has an extensive meaning, and to that extent pain becomes less important to him." This is a statement which becomes self-evident upon consideration. This is to state, a person is free of suffering to the extent he is unselfish. This is because he is not consumed by his own needs and desires. The selfish person demands the personal attention of others, often by calling upon them to do those things he is entirely able to do himself. He demands attention by reciting his pains and troubles to anyone who will listen. He calls attention to any area in which he may excel. In short, he lives but for his own pleasure.

Tagore observes: "Pleasure is for one's own self, but goodness is concerned with the happiness of all humanity and for all time." He adds: "From the point of view of the good, pleasure and pain appear in a different meaning; so much so, that pleasure may be shunned and pain courted in its place, and death itself be made welcome as giving a higher value to life."

The limiting nature of selfishness and separateness is centripetal, increasingly restricted, until the personal self's choice of movement is reduced to a minimum. The interest of the self-centred person is increasingly limited, the imagination failing and faulty, gradually losing its ability to respond to the creative impulse. The will becomes narrow and ineffective. Thought loses its elasticity and its ability to recognize Universals. The feelings become dejected and frustrated, suffering the torture of hopelessness and despair.

Our Individuality, by its nature, seeks the Universal. The more vigorous our Individuality, the more it widens toward the Universal. It seeks to embrace more and more of its environment. When inspired by "goodness," when it seeks its own in others' good, when it realizes that all separateness brings pain and misery and that the feeling of Oneness brings happiness, then personal interests and accentuation of the "me" and "mine" become abhorrent and meaningless. This was the Message of Unity proclaimed by all those who have gone before. Then, gradually as we grow, we find a great change in our attitude. "Gradually the Conscious Will replaces the subconscious Desire." This is the Way of Life, the Path, the Road to Greatness, for it arouses increasing awareness of the Universal Self, the true Individuality, and that is the essence of Greatness.

EQUALITY—RESPONSIBILITY AND LAW

Theosophy teaches that everything happens under law, and therefore the race, nation, family and type of body we are born in is the best reflection and perfect balance of the causes in thought, feeling and action we ourselves have set in motion. Equality is seen in this context as the equilibrium or balance between cause and effect on all planes of being, mental, emotional and physical, and responsibility arises with the recognition of the Law that brings about this equal balancing.

There is nothing in this world, or for that matter in any world, visible or invisible, that can prevent a human being from progressing unconsciously under law, once he has become aware of it and has taken the necessary steps to know, understand and act in accordance with it. True perception of its existence can be gained by the earnest student who will take the trouble to study the second of the Three Fundamental Propositions of Theosophy as given out in *The Secret Doctrine*, and then to seek its action in the world around him, and finally within the periphery of his own mind and heart, because this law arises from within us and we perceive only its manifestations without.

Strange, is it not, that so many individuals and groups of individuals in the fields of religion, philosophy and science actually endeavour to trace the ramifications of law in the Kosmos and in the kingdoms of Nature making up our earth, yet fail entirely to realize the moral responsibilities that knowledge of such a law imposes upon them! Is it because they do not see the inner Unity underlying the outer diversity, and therefore perceive but the surface workings of the Law? As a result of this, they have failed to perceive that mind or Manas is dual in its function, and that therefore outer perceptions and knowledge must go hand in hand with true inner perceptions and knowledge. Relative and Absolute Knowledge are soon seen to be complementary when this work of reconciliation is undertaken in earnest by the sincere student. A study of Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms with this work in mind can provide the necessary hints and instructions for its accomplishment.

Relative knowledge can be acquired by an individual through the channel of the personality. Absolute knowledge requires an inner perception of the Thinker, Perceiver or Self within, and of its relationships with the fields of relative knowledge, as well as meditation upon the ramifications of Duty and Responsibility that such knowledge auto-

matically opens before us. (See *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 233-35)

The Karma of the Individual becomes the Dharma of the Incarnated Soul when that Individual rises above the perception of the purely negative aspect of Law as reward and punishment, and begins to perceive it as the ways and means of rendering that type of service which is due from one soul to another, and having perceived this, begins to think and act in terms of it.

Equality is, therefore, seen to be much more than a political maxim, or even a social adjustment between the sexes, because within its larger meaning of Responsibility and Law, the individual finds the means to subdue, by the process of purification, his instruments, and learns to use them as channels for the discharging of ever-growing duties based on responsibilities voluntarily assumed in rendering service to others.

In this way one gradually becomes a candidate for membership in the Fraternity or Brotherhood of Great Teachers and Their Disciples, who work as One Mind and One Heart to bring about the only True Equality which comes with the acceptance of Responsibility as Souls under Law.

Men live in people's minds not for the wealth they amass or the power they wield or the positions they occupy. All these are ephemeral. Even memories of heroic deeds and stirring events fade away. What endures is the moral example we leave behind. . . .

Even if we improve the conditions of life, we cannot neglect the inner life of man. Man himself has to be changed. His chief enemy is his own unruly nature, the dark pent-up forces in him. We have been developing desires and starving purposes. Love, which is heart's compassion, is becoming rare in this world. It must grow wider in extent and deeper in perception.

Peace is in the hearts of all men of good will. We need peace within and without to solve our problems. If the values of civilization are to endure, we must come to terms with our close neighbours and work for world fellowship.

A grave emotional concern of thinking men today is over the present state of the world. If deep uneasiness disturbs us when we look out on the world, it only shows that a great change must come. We are trembling on its verge. Whether it is a leap forward to unmeasured prosperity or a plunge backward to barbarism depends on us, on what we make of the spectacular achievements of science and technology.

—S. RADHAKRISHNAN

“LUCIFER” CORRESPONDENCE

CHILDREN ALLOWED TO TRAIN THEMSELVES FOR MURDER

[Those who give children weapons for toys or regard with amusement their play with such weapons are incurring unthought-of Karmic responsibility. This is brought out in the following editorial comment on a letter which H.P.B. printed in *Lucifer*, Vol. III, pp. 341-42, for December 1888. Parents and teachers will find what is said here of practical value in their work.—EDS.]

“ARIADNA” writes:

English folk are fond of maintaining the superiority of their national morals as contrasted with those of our Continental neighbours across the seas. Yet had one of the latter been strolling down a thoroughfare of one of our large seaside resorts but a few days ago, he might have been inclined to doubt it. In a large shop an alluring tray of boys' knives was exhibited, ticketed “Jack Ripper's knives!” In an adjacent street, a merry gang of children, aged respectively from six to eleven years, were playing at “Ripper,” jumping one over the other and knocking them down — a true *rehearsal* of the felonious act.

Of course the natural question would be, “Why did not their parents stop them and prohibit the ghastly play?” . . .

But they did not, it is evident; and the fond parents, children themselves of the present age, must have merrily laughed and felt amused at the “original idea.” Good Christian people! They do not even think of uprooting the evil by lodging a complaint against the infamous speculators who are permitted to bring out *such* a toy! “Jack Ripper's” knives are permitted to be freely sold to children: for what can be more innocent than a cardboard or a wooden knife, gaudily painted, for boys and girls to play with, on its very face! Has any of the lookers-on while witnessing those children, bright things “fresh from the hand of God,” the merry, playing babe, put himself the question:

“What wilt thou be hereafter?”

Yet, how many of these little boys and girls now, openly sporting with knives and playing at “Jack Ripper” shall, directly in consequence of such “play,” become candidates for gallows and *swing* in that “hereafter”? Yea, LAW in all her majesty may claim, through her righteous judges, ten or twenty years hence, any of these light-

hearted "little ones" as her lawful prey. "May God have mercy on your soul!" will be the pompous but awful verdict of a black-capped Judge as the logical result of such play for one of those now innocent, then guilty, "Jack Rippers." Will any of the future judges or jurymen, we wonder, remember during such a possible trial that, when himself a boy, he may have longed to take the part, nay, perhaps actually has had a hand in the *fun* during a vacation in one of those fashionable seaside resorts?

The child is father to the man. It is the first impressions, visual or mental, which the young senses take in the quickest, to store them indelibly in the virgin memory. It is the imagery and scenes which happen to us during our childhood, and the spirit in which they are viewed by our elders and received by us, that determine the manner in which we accept suchlike scenes or look upon good or evil in subsequent years. For, it is most of that early intellectual capital so accumulated day by day during our boyhood and girlhood that we trade with and speculate upon throughout later life.

The capacity of children for the storing away of early impressions is great indeed. And, if an innocent child playing at "Jack Ripper" remarks that his *sport* produces merriment and amusement instead of horror in the lookers-on, why should a child be expected to connect the same act with sin and crime later on? It is by riding wooden horses in childhood that a boy loses all fear of a living horse in subsequent years. Hence, the urchin who now *pretends* to murder will look on murder and kill *de facto* with as much unconcern when he becomes a man as he does now. There is much sophistry in Mrs. Stowe's remark that "children will grow up substantially what they *are* by nature," for this can only apply to those exceptional children who are left to take care of themselves; and these do not buy toys at fashionable shops. A child brought up by parents, and having a home instead of a gutter to live and sleep in, if left to *self*-education will draw from his own observations and conclusions for evil as for good, and these conclusions are sure to colour all his after life. Playing at "Jack Ripper," he will think unconsciously of Jack Ripper, and what he may have heard of that now fashionable Mr. Hyde of Whitechapel. And—

"...he who but conceives a crime in thought
Contracts the danger of an actual fault."

THE FOUR STAGES OF GROWTH

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All growth is a spiral, each successive circle being made up of four stages, repeated thus continually, while greater and greater spirals contain the lesser movements. We can easily see the cycle of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, upon whose pattern are built a myriad spirals of growth in animal, vegetable, mineral and elemental kingdoms. Two stages are evolutionary (outward turning), two involutory, and this holds also in the human life-cycle divided by the Hindu sages into four stages—those of (1) the *Brahmacharya* (the student), (2) the *Grihastha* (the married householder), (3) the *Vanaprastha* (the hermit) and (4) the *Sannyasi* (the free spiritual devotee).

For those who come to Theosophy as the gateway to Spiritual Life, the formula of those four stages, or states of consciousness, may be symbolized by the titles of four books written for Theosophists. They are (1) *The Ocean of Theosophy*, (2) *The Key to Theosophy*, (3) *The Secret Doctrine* and (4) *The Voice of the Silence*. The present aim is not the consideration of the books themselves, but an attempt to distil from the titles something of the line of effort to be made in the growth out of the personal into the impersonal life.

I.—THE OCEAN OF THEOSOPHY

I have seen

A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy; for from within were heard
Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea.
Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Theosophy has been likened to an ocean, vast and all-embracing. The many differing reactions to it may be paralleled with those of city-dwellers to the sea. Some are indifferent because the sea is not like the city; to others it is the background for a holiday resort. Some find an emotional thrill that soon makes room for the next enthusiasm; while others shrink, repulsed by the vast expanse, lonely and terrifying in its strangeness. Only to those with a child's eager acceptance of life there opens out at the sight of its immensity and ceaseless, changeless motion, a new world of wonder and of awe. The lungs expand to the stimulation of the sea-breeze and the whole system quickens, while eyes whose vision has been cramped in narrow streets stretch towards the far horizon, to the unknown that lies beyond.

In the same way, to some people Theosophy appears mere froth and fancy; to others, something enjoyed but quickly forgotten, while to others it is repellent in its vastness. The glad expansion comes only to him whose soul, beating against this built-up world of externalities, of conventions and false values, has been seeking, however unconsciously, for life's meaning. When he comes to the Ocean of Wisdom, Theosophia, the horizon swings wide, and wonder and reverence are born as the personal glimpses the Impersonal. How paltry is seen to be the walled-in perception of self in face of the spacious viewpoint of eternity!

At first there is not so much an understanding grasp of the philosophy, as a natural impulse, an inner urge, something which has been dormant, or has hungered unwittingly for truths known in former births, and which, lit by the flame of Spirit, springs to such glad life that even weary plodders on the way, for whom the "vision splendid" has been obscured, take fire again and are revived.

What is the potent message of Theosophy that can transmute the outlook thus? Its whole keynote is Unity, the unity of God, Nature and Man — not the Creator, his creation and his creatures as separate beings, but Life as an absolute Unity, perceived as the ONE or as the many according to whether the mind works from the centre or the circumference. All beings, nay, every point in space is Spirit-Matter-Mind, the Three-in-One, the Universal Self, though the outer natures or appearances delude the ignorant into thinking of "myself and other selves." Brahmin and Mlechchha, Christian and Pagan, Jew and Gentile, Nordic and Negro, intellectual and ignoramus, sage and criminal, they all are ONE. To the eye that pierces the form to the inmost Life, the beasts and the birds, the flowers, the trees and the quiet fields, the dust that swirls in the desert storms, fire, air, water, earth, the sun, the moon and the shining

frame of stars, they all are ONE. Universal Brotherhood is a fact. Small wonder then that those who in vain have searched outside for God and a purpose to life should joy at freedom in the One Truth that unifies all things. What they had taken for granted as separate are in reality the indivisible parts of a universal whole.

'Tis the sublime of man,
 Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves
 Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole!
 This fraternizes man, this constitutes
 Our charities and bearings. But 'tis God
 Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole;
 This is the worst superstition, him except
 Aught to desire, Supreme Reality!
 The plenitude and permanence of bliss!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Those attracted by intellectual rather than devotional qualities find that same unity in Knowledge. Men divide and subdivide head-learning into specialized departments, *ad infinitum*. Perfected Men know that true Religion, true Science, true Art and true Philosophy are not separate or even related branches of knowledge, but ONE. Each at its fullest is universal, and there cannot be four universals. They actually are ONE. To know the fundamental pattern of that One is to know the pattern of each part, since the same Life moves as the same Law in all. Then comes the dawning power to reduce the chaotic flood of facts and speculations, specializations and classifications, to a comprehensible order, with each fresh fact acquired finding its right place in the design. We cannot even separate the laws of physical existence from those of psychic and spiritual life, or think that events happen by chance, or fate, or in some untoward manner, according to the will of God. We cannot separate cause and effect, as though we received the results of that which we had not caused. Though it is not easy to apply this personally, the recognition of the unity of Law gives its own sense of freedom, since this satisfies the sense of justice and gives security greater than anything on earth.

Man is his own star, and the soul that can
 Render an honest and a perfect man,
 Commands all light, all influence, all fate,
 Nothing to him falls early or too late.
 Our acts, our angels are, or good or ill,
 Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

JOHN FLETCHER

Yet this stage is but a beginning. The Spirit in the body is the energizer of the "ardent turning to the Divine," the creator of this new awareness, but it is a human being through whom It works, and its expression is still largely in terms of the personal factor. The aspiration is therefore mixed, personal-impersonal. The expansion of being, though sensed in some part of the nature, means still somehow the expansion of oneself, so that the budding aspirant may vision adeptship before him, like the child who naïvely boasts "When I'm a man," ignorant of the pangs of growth and the responsibilities that accompany the state of manhood. Devotion, though drawn from Spirit, is mingled with the thrill of emotion, that previously held the field. Personal adoration of Masters, almost as demigods, the placing of immediate teachers on disproportionate pedestals, even the viewing of extraordinarily ordinary fellow students through a rose-coloured glamour, are all symptoms of this mixture of higher and lower. That emotional enthusiasm, like all transient things, ebbs and flows. Depression follows elation, disillusionment the illusion. The aim should be to hold fast to the spiritual vision when the emotional thrill has died down from it, and, on the returning spiral, to reach back to the spiritual force without re-invoking so great a proportion of the previous emotional response.

So, too, on the surface the fundamental tenets may appear simple — reincarnation is obvious, but how hazy the notion of what reincarnates! It is, as said, an acceptance rather than an understanding, and even that acceptance is of the philosophy as seen through the personal conception, with a bias for some portions of the doctrine, determined by previous education and environment acting as unconscious touchstones. It is an extension rather than a change in the ideas held, and is thus an outward-going stage, just as the aspiration, though *recognizing* unity, is still towards a goal "*outside*" oneself, since the *realization* of unity — of the fact that one is even here and now the goal — needs time for its achievement.

Though not yet out of the shallow waters round the shore of Ignorance, *Jagrat*, whose illusion rests on objective semblances, the soul-boat is launched with the birth of aspiration towards the Divine, the starting-point for effort, the forerunner of *Dharana*, which, in its larger application, is the fixing of the life's attention on its centre as the centre of the ALL. Seamanship can now be learned, the charts be studied, for the boat's course is set, the prow turned towards the unknown goal. May it cross safely to that nameless "other shore"!

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Apropos of the current interest in the study of world religions in the United States, Prof. O. H. de A. Wijesekera of the Centre for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, writes, in the July *Indo-Asian Culture*, of the "shift from a study oriented to the external manifestations of religion (phenomenology) to the deeper and more vital issues of man's *religiousness*."

Professor Wijesekera outlines the "novel direction" given to the subject in recent books by Dr. W. Cantwell Smith, Professor of Religion at Harvard University. According to Professor Smith, it is not enough to be mere observers from the outside of alien "religions"; one must "participate in the *religiousness* of others to be able to grasp the significance of their piety or Truth." The task of comparative religion "should be not only to describe the institutions, beliefs and practices of a tradition, but to ascertain also, if one can, what these things mean to those who participate in them. . . . The student of other faiths than his own should be a participant in their religious life."

Professor Smith recommends a complete break from the traditional usage of the term "religion." Religion, he says, must not be confused with theology; he defines it as "the faith in men's hearts." For him religion is a dynamic "quality" of man's *interior* nature. "The conceptualized or deified notion of 'religion' as developed in the West does not at all do justice to the dynamic and psychological value of man's *religiousness*. The mere externalia of religion and dogmatic creeds do not suffice to provide an insight into the deepest spiritual recesses in man's being."

What Professor Smith thinks is the most urgent task of the student of comparative religion at the present juncture is to formulate ideas that will do justice to the profundity and the diversity of the faiths of all men.

In his writings Professor Smith gives expression to the realization gaining currency in the West that a deeper study of the faiths of Eastern peoples is a *sine qua non* to their full apprehension of the present world crisis in order to achieve the ideal of international harmony. Religions are to be studied, to echo the words of Brauer, not merely to provide *knowledge* of other men and their faiths or to find "ammunition to uphold a given religion," but because in view of the world situation it has become urgent to grasp the social and political signifi-

cance of man as *homo religious*. The further advance that appears to be afoot in religious studies at the present time, pre-eminently evidenced in Professor Smith's writings, is the attempt to discover what basically man's religiousness is, although it is yet considered too early to attempt any relative valuation of the diverse and dynamic modalities of the deeper religious experience of mankind.

Theosophically, a comparative study of religions should lead men to look to the inspiration within and behind all religions, which, when found, will be recognized as the Wisdom of all time. Mere academic study of creeds and dogmas which are separative is of little avail.

The idea of promoting the comparative study of religions is not new. Ever since H. P. Blavatsky launched her mission in 1875, there have been many efforts towards inter-religious *rapprochement* and it can truly be said that the Theosophical Movement paved the way for these. It has done much to open up the spiritual treasures of the ancient East to seekers in both the modern West and East alike.

Earlier this year, five "Unesco Lectures" were given under the sponsorship of the U.S. National Commission for Unesco to celebrate the founding of the organization. One of these lectures, on "Culture and Leisure," by W. H. Auden, is printed in part in *Unesco Features* for August 11. Mr. Auden divides human activities into labour, work and play. Labour he defines as an activity imposed by necessity and lacking any element of free choice. At the other end is Play, or recreation, which one enjoys doing for its own sake, but which is of no concern to others and has no consequences beyond itself. Between these two extremes comes the activity of Work — something which is in accord with one's interests and talents and which is, at the same time, of sufficient importance to others to make possible the earning of one's livelihood by doing what one enjoys doing. Our society being what it is today, few people have the good fortune to be workers in this sense.

Mr. Auden continues:

Up till now, the machine, by reducing the need for manual skill and by rationalizing the process of fabrication, breaking it down into a series of sub-operations which have no meaning in themselves, has had the effect of degrading many who former-

ly were workers into labourers. . . . For those of us who derive our greatest satisfaction from using our minds, a technological society offers few obstacles and may even increase our opportunities, but the outlook is gloomy for those, and they are many, whose satisfaction requires the exercise of their muscles. . . .

If the future confronting us is what the technicians prophesy, then the majority of the population are going to have to cope with the problem which has hitherto been confined to aristocracies, namely, excess of free time . . . and when one considers the behaviour of aristocracies throughout history, such a future gives cause for disquiet.

On the task of education Mr. Auden stated:

The feat of the so-called civilizations was to construct a stable world between the human flux of mood and mortality and the flux of nature. This fabricated world was made up of many different kinds of objects, houses, temples, roads, works of art, legal codes, etc., which were intended to be permanently on hand, inherited and visible from generation to generation. Thanks to the existence of a world he had made himself, and could understand, man felt at home in time; the presence of an enduring past gave him confidence in the future.

Today the technological revolution has already largely destroyed this fabricated human world and replaced it by a second nature of machines as unhuman and unpredictable as wild nature was in the beginning. . . . The task of education today seems to me curiously similar to what it was for primitive man, namely, to develop the right attitudes and the right personal techniques in relation to this second technological nature, so that we are not spiritually destroyed by it.

On the intimate relationship between man and the universe Mr. Auden said:

When we do anything which is æsthetically or morally wrong, we do injury to the universe. To make a hideous lampshade is to torture metal; to make a hydrogen bomb is to corrupt the morals of a host of innocent neutrons below the age of consent. If our power and our leisure are to create anything worth calling culture, perhaps we should begin by pondering seriously on these words of St. Paul: "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now. And not only they, but ourselves also."

“What Is Inspiration?” was the subject of a talk by S. H. Vatsyayan broadcast over All India Radio, Delhi (*Akashvani*, September 25).

According to the speaker, inspiration is not an inducible state; it is not something one can search for, or make a deliberate effort to find. What, then, causes the springs of creativity to well up?

If to be inspired is to be in any sense “possessed” [the speaker said], it must be made clear that this possession is not by an air, not by anything outside of me. In fact, perhaps the closest I can come to a positive definition is to say that it is a state of being possessed by myself . . . by the whole of me as I am. In other words, as far as I know, inspiration is a state of total being. . . .

I think that most of us live with only a part of our being at any particular time. Perhaps with different parts at different times, but even so only with parts most of the time. And this is probably more rather than less true of artists. . . . I have heard it said of a strong artistic character that “when he is there he is all there.” . . . But that “all of him is all there” is an assertion which we can only make at certain rare moments, and those to my mind are the moments of inspiration. It is this that gives inspiration the air of possessedness, the impress of the grip of a demon. The temporary, exigent, work-a-day self is held for the time being by the total self — the self which has the sum of one’s questionings and inferences, discoveries and insights, orderings, arrangements and compositions, one’s adventuring and one’s rootedness, one’s awareness of rhythm and discord and harmony, of time and timelessness, limit and space, all together in one recognition of significance. Such a “possession” is to my mind inspiration.

The argument presented in the article “Are Chelas Mediums?” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13*) is that all men are the vehicles for inspiration from one or another source. But in the highest sense, the source of inspiration is within us — the Inner Ruler Immortal. True inspiration enlightens and elevates the mind and heart and floods the whole of man’s being. It makes the man whole: the inner struggle of his own constituents ceases; that which the Christian scriptures designate as the “war in our members” comes to an end. The strength of Peace comes to a man when he has become whole. Thus inspiration has for its inner mark this peace and its strength, which outwardly expresses itself in the service of human souls.
