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INDEX  
TO  
"THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT"

VOLUME XXXIX : NOVEMBER 1968 - OCTOBER 1969



# INDEX TO "THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT"

VOLUME XXXIX : NOVEMBER 1968 - OCTOBER 1969

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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17th November 1968

## “ON HIGH MISSION BENT”

If the Theosophical Movement were one of those numerous modern crazes, as harmless at the end as they are evanescent, it would be simply laughed at — as it is now by those who still do not understand its real purport — and left severely alone. But it is nothing of the kind. Intrinsicly, Theosophy is the most serious movement of this age; and one, moreover, which threatens the very life of most of the time-honoured humbugs, prejudices, and social evils of the day. . . . Think of this, and you will easily understand the reason of such a relentless persecution by those others who, more observant and perspicacious, do see the true nature of Theosophy, and therefore dread it.

—*The Key to Theosophy*

AS TIME ROLLS ONWARD to meet 1975 and the Theosophical Movement enters upon the last seven-year phase of its centenary cycle, testing of hearts among students of Theosophy is taking place with an accelerated speed. Each one who calls himself a student-server of Theosophy must ask himself, if he has not already done so, and ask himself afresh if he has done so in the past, whether he has been true to the Original Programme which emanated with the Original Impulse set in motion in 1875 when the most serious Movement of our age was launched.

The mission of the Theosophical Movement was clearly and definitely programmed by H.P.B. under the direct guidance of her Masters. In giving a Message to W. Q. Judge she gave one to every student-server of the Cause of Theosophy. She wrote:

Well, my *only* friend, you ought to know better. Look into my life and try to realize it — in its outer course at least, as the rest is hidden. I am under the curse of ever writing, as the

wandering Jew was under that of being ever on the move, never stopping one moment to rest. Three ordinary healthy persons could hardly do what *I have* to do. I live an artificial life; I am an automaton running full steam until the power of generating steam stops, and then — good-bye! \* \* \* Night before last I was shown a bird's-eye view of the Theosophical Societies. I saw a few earnest reliable Theosophists in a death struggle with the world in general, with other — nominal but ambitious — Theosophists. The former are greater in numbers than you may think, and *they prevailed*, as you in *America will prevail*, if you only remain staunch to the Master's programme and true to yourselves. And last night I saw \* \* and now I feel strong — such as I am in my body — and ready to fight for Theosophy and the few *true* ones to my last breath. The defending forces have to be judiciously — so scanty they are — distributed over the globe, wherever Theosophy is struggling against the powers of darkness.

She wrote and she wrote and she wrote — all that she had to. For whom? For all who wanted to serve the Theosophical Movement which she inaugurated. Each student-server must teach himself to “remain staunch to the Master's programme” and must educate himself in intellectual honesty to be true to himself.

H.P.B.'s mission was to change the Manas and Buddhi of the race by a wide-spread promulgation of the Teachings of Theosophy. She founded the Theosophical Society for the study of the subjects she treated of in *Isis Unveiled* (see her dedication to it). If she struck that note of study in her first work, she repeated it with particular emphasis in her last book — *The Key to Theosophy*. That book she wrote so that all her pupils might learn and teach the one philosophy.

All students, individually or in groups, have the solemn duty to study, apply and promulgate Theosophy. Straight Theosophy. But what is straight Theosophy? In *The Key to Theosophy* H.P.B. has clearly pointed out what students should learn and what they should teach.

ENQ. Then is all this metaphysics and mysticism with which you occupy yourself so much, of no importance?

THEO. To the masses, who need only practical guidance and support, they are not of much consequence; but for the educated, the natural leaders of the masses, those whose modes of thought and action will sooner or later be adopted by those masses, they are of the greatest importance. It is only by means of the philosophy that an intelligent and educated man can avoid the intellectual suicide of believing on blind faith; and it is only by assimi-

lating the strict continuity and logical coherence of the Eastern, if not esoteric, doctrines, that he can realize their truth. Conviction breeds enthusiasm, and "Enthusiasm," says Bulwer Lytton, "is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it": while Emerson most truly remarks that "every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is the triumph of enthusiasm." And what is more calculated to produce such a feeling than a philosophy so grand, so consistent, so logical, and so all-embracing as our Eastern Doctrines?

While the student's first duty is to acquire knowledge of Theosophy, including "metaphysics and mysticism," he is asked to promulgate four important and fundamental teachings to all. What are they? (1) Universal Unity and Causation; (2) Human Solidarity; (3) the Law of Karma; (4) Reincarnation. And H.P.B. adds: "These are the four links of the golden chain which should bind humanity into one family, one universal Brotherhood."

In this connection it is very important to note that Theosophy has teachings both for the mind and for the heart. Our mind as well as our heart needs to be educated. Within our body is not only the Mind which always thinks straight, the Heart which always loves aright, but also the mechanistic and machinating mind, the heart blinded by personal affections and aversions. The Human Soul has at its service the wisdom and compassion of the Spiritual Soul, but it is also influenced by the Animal Soul — more subtle than the chameleon. Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

Mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects. It needs the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions. Seek, O Beginner, to blend thy Mind and Soul.

Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions; mistrust thy senses, they are false. But within thy body — the shrine of thy sensations — seek in the Impersonal for the "Eternal Man"; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.

Shun praise, O Devotee. Praise leads to self-delusion. Thy body is not Self, thy SELF is in itself without a body, and either praise or blame affects it not.

Self-gratulation, O Disciple, is like unto a lofty tower, up which a haughty fool has climbed. Thereon he sits in prideful solitude and unperceived by any but himself.

False learning is rejected by the Wise, and scattered to the Winds by the Good Law. Its wheel revolves for all, the humble and the proud. The "Doctrine of the Eye" is for the crowd; the "Doctrine of the Heart" for the elect. The first repeat in pride: "Behold, I know," the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess: "Thus have I heard."

The true student-server of Theosophy teaches himself to repeat — "Thus have I heard." Immediately following the above is the verse: "'Great Sifter' is the name of the 'Heart Doctrine,' O Disciple."

The Esoteric Philosophy, constant and consistent, ever tests the devotee-altruist. It has done so in yugas gone by; it will do so in eras yet to come; it is actually accomplishing the task at the present hour.

THE GOAL ever recedes from us. The greater the progress, the greater the recognition of our unworthiness. Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment.

Civilization in the real sense of the term consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary restriction of wants.

My goal is friendship with the whole world and I can combine the greatest love with the greatest opposition to wrong.

If a man reaches the heart of his own religion, he has reached the heart of the others too.

The golden rule of conduct is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike and we shall see truth in fragments and from different angles of vision.

The true source of rights is duty. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek.

Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? In reality there are as many religions as there are individuals.

Indeed religion should pervade every one of our actions. Here religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in ordered moral government of the universe. It is not less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality.

—M. K. GANDHI

## INAUGURAL ADDRESS

[On November 17, 1875, the Theosophical Society was inaugurated in New York City, and Col. H. S. Olcott, as President, delivered the first address. This address is reprinted here from *Theosophy* for February and March 1947. The emphasis on Spiritualism came naturally because the majority of the early members were Spiritualists, and H. P. Blavatsky's first work was with that movement.

Not content with defining the broad philosophical purpose of the Theosophical Society, towards the close of his address Olcott made extravagant claims for the "magical powers" of a Mr. George Felt, an Egyptologist who claimed to be able to control the "elementals" or nature-spirits. Olcott's folly in promoting Felt as one who would amaze the world with occult phenomena was soon evident, for that gentleman failed to produce any elementals at all — "not even the tip end of the tail of the tiniest Nature-spirit," as Olcott later mournfully related. He found this a "mortifying disappointment" which resulted in the departure from the Society of several whose interest was limited to sensation-seeking. This incident illustrates Olcott's habitual emphasis on "phenomena," and his tendency, never entirely overcome, to hope for conversion of others to Theosophy through miraculous demonstrations, for which he turned, usually in vain, to H.P.B. "Let the Society flourish on its moral worth, and not by phenomena made so often degrading," was the unequivocal direction given. Gratitude for Olcott's unflagging devotion to the work *as he conceived it* can, however, never be denied him by any loyal Theosophist, as it was not by H.P.B., by W.Q.J., or by the Masters.

Looking back on the event of the founding of the Theosophical Society, H.P.B. wrote in 1881:

"Our Society as a body might certainly be wrecked by mismanagement or the death of its founders, but the IDEA which it represents and which has gained so wide a currency, will run on like a crested wave of thought until it dashes upon the hard beach where materialism is picking and sorting its pebbles. Of the thirteen persons who composed our first board of officers, in 1875, nine were Spiritualists of greater or less experience. It goes without saying, then, that the aim of the Society was not to destroy but to better and purify spiritualism. The phenomena we knew to be real, and we believed them to be the most important of

all current subjects for investigation. For, whether they should finally prove to be traceable to the agency of the departed, or but manifestations of occult natural forces acting in concert with latent psycho-physiological human powers, they opened up a great field of research, the outcome of which must be enlightenment upon the master problem of life, Man and his Relations. We had seen phenomenalism running riot and twenty millions of believers clutching at one drifting theory after another in the hope to gain the truth. We had reason to know that the whole truth could only be found in one quarter, the Asiatic schools of philosophy, and we felt convinced that the truth could never be discovered until men of all races and creeds should join like brothers in the search. So, taking our stand upon that ground, we began to point the way eastward."

—Eds.]

IN FUTURE TIMES, when the impartial historian shall write an account of the progress of religious ideas in the present century, the formation of this Theosophical Society, whose first meeting under its formal declaration of principles we are now attending, will not pass unnoticed. This much is certain. The bare announcement of the intended inauguration of such a movement attracted attention, and caused no little discussion in the secular as well as the religious press. It has sounded in the ears of some of the leaders of the contending forces of theology and science, like the distant blast of a trumpet to the struggling armies in a battle. The note is faint as yet, and indicates neither the strength nor purposes of the body approaching. For either side, it may mean a reinforcement that will help turn the tide of victory: it may herald only the gathering of neutrals to watch events; or it may threaten the discomfiture and disarmament of both antagonists.

From what little has been said in its behalf, it is not yet clear to the public how this "new departure" should be regarded. Neither church nor college knows whether to adopt a policy of denunciation, misrepresentation, contumely, or amity. By some secular journals it is patronizingly encouraged as likely to "enliven a prosaic age with exhibitions of mediæval tricks of sorcery," while others denounce it as the forerunner of a relapse into "the worst forms of fetishism." The spiritualists began, a few weeks ago, with voluminous and angry protests against its promoters, as seeking to supplant the prevalent democratic relations with the other world by an aristocratic esoterism, and even now, while they seem to be watching our next move with the greatest

interest, their press teems with defamatory criticisms. Neither of the religious sects has definitively committed itself, although our preliminary advances have been noticed in a guarded way in some of their organs.

Such being the state of the case at the very outset of our movement, before one blow has been struck, am I not warranted in repeating the statement that in the coming time it is inevitable that the birth of this Society of ours must be considered as a factor in the problem which the historian will be required to solve?

The present small number of its members is not to be considered at all in judging of its probable career. Eighteen hundred and forty odd years ago, the whole Christian Church could be contained within a Galilean fisherman's hut, and yet it now embraces one hundred and twenty millions of people within its communion; and twelve centuries ago, the only believer in Islamism, which now counts two hundred and fifty million devotees, bestrode a camel and dreamed dreams.

No, it is not a question of numbers how great an effect this Society will have upon religious thought — I will go further, and say the science and philosophy — of the age: great events sometimes come from far more modest beginnings. I need not occupy time in quoting examples which will occur to every one of you in corroboration of my point. Nor is it a question of endowment funds and income any more than one of numerous members: the propagandist disciples sent out by Jesus went barefoot, ill clothed, and without purse or scrip.

What is it, then, which makes me say what in deepest seriousness and a full knowledge of its truth I have said? What is it that makes me not only content but proud to stand for the brief moment as the mouthpiece and figurehead of this movement, risking abuse, misrepresentation, and every vile assault? It is the fact that in my soul I feel that behind us, behind our little band, behind our feeble new-born organization, there gathers a MIGHTY POWER that nothing can withstand — the power of truth! Because I feel that we are only the advance-guard, holding the pass until the main body shall come up. Because I feel that we are enlisted in a holy cause, and that truth, now as always, is mighty and will prevail. Because I see around us a multitude of people of many different creeds worshipping, through sheer ignorance, shams and effete superstitions, and who are only waiting to be shown the audacity and dishonesty of their spiritual guides to call them to account, and begin to think for themselves. Because I feel, as a

sincere theosophist, that we shall be able to give to science such evidences of the truth of the ancient philosophy and the comprehensiveness of ancient science, that her drift towards atheism will be arrested, and our chemists will, as Madame Blavatsky expresses it, "set to work to learn a new alphabet of Science on the lap of Mother Nature."

As a believer in Theosophy, theoretical and practical, I personally am confident that this Society will be the means of furnishing such unanswerable proofs of the immortality of the soul, that none but fools will doubt. I believe that the time will come when men will be 'as ashamed of ever having advocated atheism in any of its forms, as, thirty years hence, they will be of ever having owned a slave or countenanced human slavery.

Look back the few, the very few, years to the time when William Lloyd Garrison was led through Boston streets with a rope around his neck. Compare that with the present state of the Slavery Question, and then tell me what may *not* a few earnest, determined, unselfish persons do. Why, in 1859, I myself went, at the risk of my life, to report for the *New York Tribune* the hanging of John Brown; and in 1857, while I was visiting Senator Hammond, of South Carolina, solely in my character of a student of scientific agriculture, and having nothing whatever to do with politics, an Augusta paper advised my commission to jail because I wrote for the *Tribune*, although only upon agriculture. Having passed through such experiences, and seen so complete a reversal of conditions within the space of less than a score of years, I feel that neither I nor this society incurs any great danger by displaying a little moral courage in so good a cause. Let the future take care of itself; it is for us to so shape the present as to make it beget what we desire and what will bring honour upon us. If we are true to each other and true to ourselves, we shall surmount every obstacle, vanquish every foe, and attain what we are all in search of, the peace of mind which comes of absolute knowledge. If we are divided, irresolute, temporizing, jesuitical, we shall fail as a society to do what is now clearly within our reach; and future years will doubtless see us bewailing the loss of such a golden opportunity as comes to few persons in a succession of centuries.

But if this society were to dissolve within one year, we should not have lived in vain. Today is our own; tomorrow may be; but yesterday is gone forever. In the economy of nature, an impulse, however slight, once given to matter is eternal; and an act once performed, its consequences, be they great or small, must be worked out sooner or

later. The passing caprice of a woman may change the destiny of nations; the speaking of a word in the mountains brings a crushing avalanche upon the hamlet that lies at their feet; the turning of a man's footsteps to the right or left, to avoid a stone, or chase a butterfly, or gratify it matters not what idle whim, may alter his whole life, and, directly or indirectly, result in momentous consequences to a world.

About us we see the people struggling blindly to emancipate their thought from ecclesiastical despotism — without seeing more than a faint glimmer of light in the whole black horizon of their religious ideas. They struggle from an irrepressible desire to be free from shackles which bind their limping reason after their volant intuitions have outgrown them. Upon the one side, the philosophical chemists invite them to an apotheosis of matter; upon the other, the spiritualists fling open the painted doors of their "angel world." The clergy hold them back and hiss warnings and anathemas in their ear. They waver, uncertain which way to go. Heirs to the spiritual longings of the race, they shrink back from the prospect of annihilation, which, in their own case, when life's burden presses heavily, may not always seem unwelcome, but which was never meant for those near and dear ones who have died in their youth and purity, and left behind a sweet fragrance when the alabaster box was broken and they passed behind the Veil of Isis.

But when they turn to spiritualism for comfort and conviction, they encounter such a barrier of imposture, tricky mediums, lying spirits, and revolting social theories, that they recoil with loathing, secretly lamenting the necessity which compels them to do it. They count among their acquaintance, perhaps, many persons of irreproachable character who can testify to the identification of departed friends and count themselves spiritualists; but they see these very friends attending their churches as before, abstaining from spiritualist meetings, and taking the spiritualist papers secretly. When they ask why this is so, the universal reply is that so many immoral people have fastened upon the cause, and mediums are being so constantly detected in trickery, that it is almost disreputable to be an open and avowed spiritualist. The organs of the class apologize for cheating mediums, demanding that sceptics shall overlook the nine instances of fraud and consider the one genuine phenomenon, forgetting that it requires blunt nerves and a strong purpose to dig to the bottom of a muck-heap for the chance of finding something of value there.

The Protestant sects began with the fatal assumption that an in-

fallible and inspired Bible will bear the test of reason, and so forecast their own doom; for the analytical power of reason is bounded only by the limits of ascertained truth, and fresh discoveries are daily made among the remains of antiquity which attack the very foundations upon which the whole scheme of Christianity is based. The most audacious explorers in science are recruits from Protestantism, and that would-be mistress of our conscience is stabbed by her own children. The Catholic Church having erected a theocracy upon the ruins of the ancient faiths, and stolen not only their allegories but their very exoteric symbolism and revamped them for their own use, is gathering her forces for the struggle that she knows too well is close at hand, and that will be mortal. Enraged at the progress of the age, which has extinguished her penal fires, destroyed her torture-chambers, blunted her axe, and made it impossible for her to rebathe her hands in human blood, she is working silently, cunningly, and with intense eagerness to regain her lost supremacy. What this undercurrent is we may see in the disgraceful Orange Riot of 1872; the recent conviction of poor Laymarie, in Paris; and the affair of Guibord, in Montreal, whose body has just been buried in a ton of Portland cement and under the escort of thirteen hundred armed police, infantry and artillery, to protect it from the rage of the Catholics, because Guibord belonged to a society which admitted liberal books into its library! We may also see the secret machinations of the church in the perversions to its communion; the establishment of schools, colleges, convents, monasteries; the schemes to romanize a portion of our common schools; the building of costly cathedrals; and the erection of parishes into bishoprics, and bishoprics into archiepiscopal sees.

Upon what does this church or any other ecclesiastical hierarchy stand, but upon the congenital longing of man for an immortal existence; the obscurity of our view of the other world by reason of intervening matter; and the urgency of material wants, which oblige us to accept the intervention of a select class of spiritual guides and expounders, or go without spiritual nourishment other than such as we can pick up beside the dusty road along which we trudge from youth to old age?

If the founders of this Society are true to themselves, they will set to work to study the religious question from the standpoint of the ancient peoples, gather together their wisdom, verify their alleged theosophic discoveries (I say *alleged*, as president of a non-committal society of investigation: as an individual, I should omit that word, and give full credit where it is due) and contribute to the common fund

whatever is of common interest. If there be any who have begun without counting the cost; if there be any who think to pervert this body to sectarian or any other narrow, selfish ends; if there be any cowards, who wish to meet with us in secret and revile us in public; if there be any who begin with the hope or expectation of making everything bend to their preconceived notions, regardless of the evidence; if there be any who, in subscribing to the broad and manly principle enunciated in the by-laws, that we will discover all we can about *all* the laws of nature, do so with a mental reservation that they will back out if any pet theory, or creed, or interest is endangered — if there be any such, I pray them, in all kindness, to withdraw now, when they can do so without hard words or hard feelings. For, if I understand the spirit of this Society, it consecrates itself to the intrepid and conscientious study of truth, and binds itself, individually as collectively, to suffer *nothing* to stand in the way. As for me — poor, weak man, honoured far beyond my deserts in my election to this place of honour and of danger — I can only say that, come well come ill, my heart, my soul, my mind, and my strength are pledged to this cause, and I shall stand fast while I have breath of life in me, though all others shall retire and leave me to stand alone. But I shall not be alone, nor will the Theosophical Society be alone. Even now branch societies are projected in this country. Our organization has been noticed in England, and I am told that an article upon the subject is about to appear in one of the greatest of the quarterlies. Whether it shall be couched in friendly or hostile spirit matters little; our protest and challenge will be announced, and we may safely leave the rest to the natural order of events.

If I rightly apprehend our work, it is to aid in freeing the public mind of theological superstition and a tame subservience to the arrogance of science. However much or little we may do, I think it would have been hardly possible to hope for anything if the work had been begun in any country which did not afford perfect political and religious liberty. It certainly would have been useless to attempt it except in one where all religions stand alike before the law, and where religious heterodoxy works no abridgment of civil rights.

Our society is, I may say, without precedent. From the days when the Neo-Platonists and the last Theurgists of Alexandria were scattered by the murderous hand of Christianity, until now, the revival of a study of Theosophy has not been attempted. There have been secret political, commercial, and industrial societies, and societies of Freemasons and

their offshoots, but, even in secrecy, they have not attempted to perform the labour which lies before us and which we will do openly.

To the Protestant and Catholic sectaries we have to show the pagan origin of many of their most sacred idols and most cherished dogmas; to the liberal minds in science, the profound scientific attainments of the ancient magi. Society has reached a point where *something* must be done; it is for us to indicate where that something may be found.

If we would compare our organization with its archetype, where can it be found? It cannot be called theurgic, for the theurgists not only believed in God, but knew Him through their knowledge of His attributes as they exist in the ASTRAL LIGHT, or, as the old Cabalists called it, the Matrix of the World. The theurgists had two kinds of mysteries — the *exoteric*, or public, and *esoteric*, or secret. The exoteric comprised the working of wonderful effects at public ceremonies — among others the causing of statues to walk, talk, and prophesy. These effects were said to have been produced by natural forces in combination with the elementary spirits which lurk in the astral light. As the practice of even exoteric theurgy is dangerous, it was left to the High Priests and the “Initiates of the Outer Temple.” But the real esoteric mysteries were chiefly confined to the hierophants. A life of the strictest purity and self-abnegation was required for it — a life such as that of Jesus or Apollonius. Certainly the Theosophical Society cannot be compared to an ancient school of theurgy, for scarcely one of its members as yet suspects that the obtaining of occult knowledge requires any more sacrifices than any other branch of knowledge.

The Neo-Platonists formed a school of philosophy which arose in Alexandria coincidentally with Christianity, and was the last public school of theurgy. It based its psychological system upon those of Pythagoras and Plato, but drew a great deal more from the primeval source of all religions, the books of Hermes and the Vedas — of Egypt and India respectively. The Jewish Kabbalah coloured Neo-Platonism no little, for real theurgy having degenerated at that time and the few remaining adepts having sought solitude with the Essenes and in India, the Neo-Platonists had no longer access to the real treatises upon the Divine Science (which were carefully collected and withdrawn to a secret place a few days before the burning of the Alexandrian library by Julius Caesar), and so they had to fall back upon the Kabbalah of Moses and the Seventy. Neo-Platonism was tinged with both Orientalism and Occidentalism; and its expounders tried to present the elements

of Theosophy and philosophy according to the primitive doctrines of the Oriental prophets, in combination with poetical Platonism and the positivism of Aristotle in the form of Grecian dialectics. Their proper doctrines were: the Oriental doctrine of Emanation; the Pythagorean Number of Harmony; Plato's ideas of the creation and the separation from the world of sense.<sup>1</sup> They believed in elementary spirits, whom they evoked and controlled — a point of especial interest to us.

We cannot, of course, include ourselves among the number of American spiritualists who implicitly accept all the genuine phenomena to be produced by disembodied spirits; for, while some of us unreservedly believe in the occasional return of human spirits and in the existence of true mediums, others discredit both. Moreover, of the believers, some not only admit the possibility of occult forces of nature being directed, consciously or unconsciously, by the human will for the production of startling results, but also recognize in most of the physical phenomena called spiritual the agency of elementary spirits who often falsely personate persons not communing with the circles, answer the thoughts which lie visible to them

"... as clear  
As pebbles within brooks appear,"

and echo and respond to every fanciful vagary which agitates the questioner's mind.

Spiritualism proper was rife at Rome in the time of Ammianus Marcellinus, who tells us that in the days of the Emperor Valens (A.D. 371), some Greeks wishing to form a society of theurgists were brought to trial for attempting to ascertain, through magical arts, who should succeed to the throne. They employed a small table shaped like a tripod, which was produced in court, and upon being put to the torture they confessed as follows: "We constructed this table of laurel-wood under solemn auspices. Having duly consecrated it, by pronouncing over it prayers as ordered in the treatises which we stole from a Grand Priest at Delphi, and by the use of magnetic manipulations, we succeeded in making it deliver oracles." Over the table hung suspended from the ceiling a large bronze ring, which swung hither and thither, and, striking the letters cut in the periphery of the tabletop, gave lengthy communications. Valens hated Theodorus, a man of virtue, and as the swinging ring spelt out the letters T-h-e-o-d and stopped, the Emperor, to make sure that the object of his displeasure

<sup>1</sup> See Ennemoser's *History of Magic*.

should not occupy the throne, had him put to death: but the murder proved a useless precaution, for *Theodosius* succeeded to the purple, and the prognostication of the table turned out correct.

There is this difference between the modern spiritualistic phenomena and the effects produced by the theurgists, that whereas no reliance can apparently be placed upon the spontaneous communications of the former without corroboration, the latter cannot be untruthful, since the adepts will not permit unprogressed spirits to approach or speak.

We are not representatives of the school of the Stoics, for "they thought the Universe to be made of matter, and to be some great animal which lives because there is nothing to interfere with it." Moreover, Zeno's pupils taught not only that men should be free from passion and unmoved by joy or grief, but also that they should submit to the unavoidable necessity by which all things are governed; and we found this Society in token of our discontent with things as they are and to endeavour to bring about something better.

Finally, we do not resemble the atomical atheists, who considered everything a congeries of atoms, because matter can be separated into particles, and that, therefore, there could be no indivisible incorporeal being; while the very title of our Society indicates that we hope to obtain knowledge of the existence of a Supreme Intelligence and of a world of spirits, by the help of physical processes.

No, we are neither of these, but simply investigators, of earnest purpose and unbiased mind, who study all things, prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good.

Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and the Neo-Platonists, all worked at theurgy separately, and at their meetings imparted to each other the results of their study and experiment. Their neophytes were obliged to follow this rule with strictness; and all were bound to protect and aid every philosopher, especially every theurgist, no matter whence he came or what school he represented.

The Hermetists of the Middle Ages were all Neo-Platonists, and learned their doctrines from them. In some respects we resemble them, and yet they had dogmas to impart, which under our by-laws we have not; and, further, they were all believers in Theosophy, while we are, with two or three exceptions, simply investigators, undertaking a task far more difficult than theirs, since we have no ready-made material for belief at our hand, but must create it for ourselves.

We are of our age, and yet some strides ahead of it, albeit some journals and pamphleteers more glib than truthful have already charged us with being reactionists who turn from modern light(!) to mediæval and ancient darkness! We seek, inquire, reject nothing without cause, accept nothing without proof: we are students, not teachers.

We should make ourselves familiar with the manifold powers of the human soul and test the claims for the potency of the human will. Mesmerism, spiritualism, Od, the astral light of the ancients (now called the universal ether) and its currents — all these offer us the widest and most fascinating fields of exploration. At our semi-monthly meetings, we shall have the researches and experiments of our members and of eminent correspondents in this and other countries read for our instruction, and we shall have tests, experiments, and practical demonstrations, as occasion offers. As our funds warrant, we will print and circulate our documents, and translate, reprint, and publish works by the great masters of Theosophy of all times.

But until our now somewhat incongruous elements are harmonized, and a common interest results from increased familiarity with our subject, I do not anticipate that at our general meetings we shall witness such theurgic phenomena as were exhibited in the ancient temples.

It is as impossible for these results to be obtained without perfect community of thought, will and desire, as it was for Jesus to work his wonders at Nazareth because of the prevalent unbelief, or Paul his at Athens where the populace knew how to check the subtle currents which he controlled by his will. A single very positive and unfriendly will is competent when introduced at a spiritual circle to utterly destroy the mediumistic power. If Professor Tyndall had known this law, he would not have written his nonsense to the Dialectical Society. Professor Stainton-Moses, of the University College, London, writes me that the mere entrance of such a person into the house — not even the room — has done this in his experience frequently. Mr. Crookes says that Florence Cook, his medium, has been spoiled for a season by a walk down Regent Street; each person who brushed against her depriving her of some portion of her medianic power. If she be in fact a medium and not an impostor, I do not doubt the possibility of this being the case. Everyone who has studied mesmerism is aware that no satisfactory results can be attained without perfect accord among those engaged in the experiment or standing nearby as spectators. These things being so, how can we expect that *as a society* we can have any

very remarkable illustrations of the control of the adept theurgist over the subtle powers of nature?

But here is where Mr. Felt's alleged discoveries will come into play. Without claiming to be a theurgist, a mesmerist, or a spiritualist, our Vice-President promises, by simple chemical appliances, to exhibit to us, as he has to others before, the races of beings which, invisible to our eyes, people the elements. Think for a moment of this astounding claim! Fancy the consequences of the practical demonstration of its truth, for which Mr. Felt is now preparing the requisite apparatus! What will the church say of a whole world of beings within her territory but without her jurisdiction? What will the academy say of this crushing proof of an unseen universe given by the most unimaginative of its science? What will the Positivists say, who have been prating of the impossibility of there being any entity which cannot be weighed in scales, filtered through funnels, tested with litmus, or carved with a scalpel? What will the spiritualists say, when through the column of saturated vapour flit the dreadful shapes of beings whom, in their blindness, they have in a thousand cases revered and babbled to as the returning shades of their relatives and friends? Alas! poor spiritualists — editors and correspondents — who have made themselves jocund over my impudence and apostasy. Alas, sleek scientists, overswollen with the wind of popular applause! The day of reckoning is close at hand, and the name of the Theosophical Society will, if Mr. Felt's experiments result favourably, hold its place in history as that of the body which first exhibited the "Elementary Spirits" in this nineteenth century of conceit and infidelity, even if it be never mentioned for any other reason.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT is greater than any society or organization. The latter are but temporal, changing with the nature and understanding of those who constitute them and influence their policies and ideals; they correspond to our physical bodies, whereas the Movement corresponds to the Soul. There are many kinds of bodies, and work has to be done in each, in accordance with the possibilities afforded by its nature. Those who pin their faith to *any* body are choosing a transitory guide, a frail support; most of them are looking for "authority." The human weakness that makes priestly domination possible leads to spiritual darkness in course of time.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

## HYPNOTISM—A WARNING

THERE IS A BIG AUDIENCE. The "operator" is elated. He calls volunteers from the public. There is no dearth of them. He waves his hand, and presto! — the volunteers fall into a state of hypnosis. He shows his complete control over them. He makes them do childish things, foolish things, as also things wondrous to behold. The audience claps in delight. The show ends on a triumphant note and each one wends his way home. Yet, after each show — be it on a seashore, in a street corner, an amusement park or an auditorium — crucial changes have taken place in the inner make-up of several people, though at the time they were totally unaware of it. The least that has happened is that unconsciously a part of the operator's passional or evil nature has passed, along with his magnetic fluid, into each of his subjects who received it under hypnosis. The worst that can happen is that the subject's body may remain disjointed from his soul and an undesirable entity may enter the body and take over possession. Maniacs are often thus produced. In between, there are degrees of evil effects which befall the subject and which will be examined later for their *raison d'être*.

When an operator makes passes with his hands and fixes his gaze upon his "subject," he throws off an actual fluid which is received by the subject in one of the inner departments of his being. This fluid creeps over the whole body of the subject, changes the polarity of the cells in every part and thus disconnects the outer from the inner man. A complete paralysis of the body supervenes. The rapidity with which hypnosis can be induced is due to the fact that the whole system of physical nerves is sympathetic. Therefore, where certain major sets of nerves are affected, others by sympathy fall into the same condition. By means of certain nerve points located near the skin, it is possible to alter the whole system of nerves in an instant. Even a slight breath from the mouth from as great a distance as eight feet can effect a change of polarity.

With hypnosis effected, the operator's will is now in complete control of his subject, and that not only of the outer body where he can cause blisters by suggesting that the ice he applies is a piece of live charcoal. It is his "suggestion" that is now potent and the laws which govern everyday life seem to have no effect on the subject. But the evil does not stop there. The power of the operator reaches deeper into the man's being and opens doors which normally remain shut during an average lifetime. He can now command the inner senses of the sub-

ject — those for which no barriers of distance exist. He can pick the inner brain for memories of this life and even of a prior one. How does the operator achieve all this? In most cases it is by blindly stumbling upon a power. The average man presses a button and a light appears. He hardly knows, except in rudimentary details, how this happens. But his ignorance is no bar to the exercise of his power. Man today speaks and walks without knowing how he accomplishes it. In similar manner, the ordinary hypnotist knows next to nothing of the force he uses, of its effects on himself and on his subject. His only ambition is to try to convert this force to his own advantage.

To understand, however, the grave danger to which he introduces his subjects, it is well to understand the mechanics of the process. Since he deals with men whom he throws into hypnosis or a cataleptic state, it is well to understand the several conditions through which his subject has to pass. Theosophy asserts that the Soul-man is too far removed in ethereal essence to have a direct perception of matter in its gross forms. Therefore, evolution has provided man with an intermediary or connecting link through and by which he may cognize and have experience. This link is an ethereal body around which nature builds the physical. It has parts, powers and organs and is capable of exerting a tremendous force. After the maturity of the child within the womb, this form is fixed and is coherent and will last with little alteration till death. This inner basic form alters only from life to life, being constructed at the time of reincarnation to last for that one whole existence. Death comes, only because the life-term of this inner body is reached, for it is then no longer able to hold the outer frame intact.

In the ordinary man, this ethereal body permeates the physical as colour does the bowl of water. Just as the outer body has a spine which is the column on which the being sustains itself, with the brain at the top, so also the astral body. It has organs which in a normal state function only through those of the body. These organs are more real and less subject to decay, for they remain almost unchanged from birth to death. These organs have their own currents and circulation and methods of receiving and storing impressions. In a second of time, these organs seize and keep the faintest trace of any object or word coming before the waking man. The real eyes and ears are therefore not the physical ones but those which lie behind and are the antetypes of the physical. Therefore when during hypnosis the outer eye and the outer ear are paralysed, the inner brain is made to report what is

seen and heard by the inner senses. And since these are not limited by time or space, they convey wonderful things. These inner senses are the direct inheritance of past incarnations and are not the product of family heredity. In the ordinary waking state of a normally healthy man, these inner senses are inextricably linked with the body and are therefore limited by the apparatus which the body furnishes. They act in sleep when they are free from the compelling force of the waking organism. They also act when hypnosis paralyses the body because the impressions which pour in from the physical cells are inhibited.

With all their heightened sensitivity and power, however, these inner senses are limited. Though they can reach out for information in a manner and to an extent that is denied their physical prototypes, still the information cannot be relied upon for the reason that the inner man is not by any means omniscient. He has an understanding that is limited by his own experience and therefore the views that he expresses when under hypnosis are coloured by his personal limitations. Similarly, his interpretation during hypnosis of things seen and heard is predominantly his and may even get coloured and distorted by the ideas and the limitations of the operator.

It therefore follows that hypnotism is neither a safe nor a sure guide to any useful knowledge. On the other hand, its evil effects are so vast and ramify in so many directions as to justify an embargo on hypnotic experimentation. Listed below are a few of the hazards that are inherent in hypnotic practices:

(1) The hypnotists inoculate their subjects with their own physical and mental ills and vices.

(2) Hypnosis is produced by the withdrawal of the nervous fluid from the capillary nerves which are the sentries which keep the doors of the senses open. The process thus becomes maleficent in its results.

(3) In hypnotism, the molecules are pressed from periphery to centre instead of being expended from the inside to the surface. This contraction is one of the symptoms of death. Hypnotism is a long step towards physical and moral death.

(4) In the wake of the hypnotist will be found a lot of hysteriacs.

(5) In hypnotism, the man's instincts develop in a most surprising fashion. The hypnotic lowers himself to the level of the animal.

(6) When the hypnotic process is submitted to, a disjunction is made between the Soul-man and the astral body. The latter is then deprived of will and becomes the sport of any suggestion. Sensitive-

ness to suggestion is thus established. The idea, thought or image of an act is impressed on the astral body by a suggestion. Then the patient is awakened. At the appointed time given by the suggester, a secondary hypnotic state automatically arises. The disjunction between the Soul and astral body comes about and the suggested act is done although in the normal waking state the subject might be strongly opposed to the selfsame act.

(7) Although the subject be dehypnotized, the influence of the author once thrown upon the subject will remain up to the day of the operator's death.

(8) The idea of a crime "suggested" during hypnosis is not removed merely by a reserved current of the will.

(9) The hypnotists dig with their own hands the graves of many an intellect. They enslave and paralyse free will in their subjects. They turn immortal men into senseless, irresponsible automatons and vivisect their souls.

(10) When a severance takes place between the Soul-man and his astral body, a different entity may enter the body and brain of the subject. In such a case, the subject becomes a maniac and his body comes to be inhabited by an entity that does not belong to it.

Dabblings in hypnotism are dangerous pursuits even though these are undertaken in a spirit of fun and with no ulterior motives of gain. How much more potent for mischief must then be the weapon of hypnosis in the hands of an unscrupulous operator! Secrets can be stolen with impunity, the pure can be defiled by a "suggestion" that must perforce lead to vile and sordid acts; and crimes can be planned and executed by the hands of innocent victims.

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SCIENCE is wisdom; conscience is a greater wisdom. If there should come a time when these should be divorced from each other, then Hell would be let loose on earth.

—RABELAIS

## WAITING IN THE DESERT

THE DESERT WINDS howled viciously throughout the day, and jackals laughed and sobbed when the sun went down. Night came, wild and savage, full of creeping things and dark with strange murmurs.

The traveller stood, as he was told to do, under a palmyra tree, waiting for the Guide who was to take him across the desert.

Sometimes he heard the sweet songs of a koel that gave the desert the garb of a garden. Sometimes wild elephants stampeded, where there ought to be none. Buzzing bees sang of springtime while the red-hot sands belied the song. Pitch-dark nights and burning days chased each other while he awaited the Guide whom he was asked to expect.

He heard the whispers of a bygone time, centuries old, when he was in another land, another clime. Echoes, faint and distant, came to him of melodies heard and felt, beauties beheld, raptures known. Vague memories of lessons learnt deep within the recesses of the self, of promises taken and given, came crowding into the mind. Anguish for the lost overcame him at these moments, and his tears fell, mingling with the sands of the desert.

Fear came upon him sometimes, fear of the lost and driven, knowing not where to turn. Then the Voice of the Guide spoken centuries ago would reach him along with the murmur of the tree-winds — “I WILL COME.”

Then he would hear close to him, as though his own shadow called, the words — “I have come.” And the desert would come alive with a sudden outburst — “I am come, I am come.”

But he waited for the silence to descend, to discern what he heard. And the voice came no more, so he knew it was not the voice that was to have come.

Then the winds would lie low, and a path would open in the burning sands. “This is the Path,” an invisible whisper would speak in his ears, and the desert would swallow it up, revealing to his gaze a multitude of paths that would beckon him to go across and reach the bright green verdure at the outskirts.

A cry would arise in his heart, “Is this it?” But he would wait, as enjoined, and soon the paths would recede and vanish from his gaze.

Sometimes he would witness the desert battles rage between brother and brother, and be tempted to step out from his appointed place, mingle with the dust of battles, and cry out, “Let peace be!”

But suddenly a voice from within himself would whisper, "You know no language which gibbering tongues can interpret." And the traveller in his invisible shackles would wait, knowing he has been given no tongue to speak until the arrival of the long-awaited Guide.

With the higher patience that comes to the lone and waiting, he knows that the Guide will come to take him across the uncharted ways of the fearful desert. And when strange yearnings of a long-lived past mingle with his helpless tears, the long-lost words echo across the desert:

"THEY ALSO SERVE WHO ONLY STAND AND WAIT."

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INACTIVITY from fear of committing a fault is the mark of a coward. O brother, by whom is food renounced for fear of indigestion?

It is not the fault of the post that a blind man cannot see it.

One lump of clay is moulded into vessels of many forms; one lump of gold is made into ornaments of many shapes; all cow-milk is one though yielded by many cows; so the one Supreme Soul resides in many bodies.

Through silence there is no quarrel; through vigilance there is no fear.

If a man's heart be impure, all things will appear hostile to him.

What will the *Shastra* do for him who has no sense of his own? What will a mirror do for him who has lost his eyes?

He truly lives by whom many live.

As is the perception, so is the fulfilment.

Non-injury is the highest religion.

They know not their own defects who search for the defects of others.

He who looks upon all living beings as upon himself, sees.

Trees loaded with fruit are bent down; the clouds when charged with fresh rain hang down near the earth; even so good men are not uplifted through prosperity. Such is the natural character of the liberal.

# STUDIES IN "LIGHT ON THE PATH"

## I

This little book — a true jewel — belongs to, and emanates from the same school of Indo-Aryan and Buddhist thought and learning as the teachings in *The Secret Doctrine*.

—H.P.B. (*Lucifer*, December 1888)

LIGHT ON THE PATH is indeed "a true jewel." Its real author was, as stated by H.P.B., an "old friend" of both Colonel Olcott and herself. It was dictated to and written down by M.C. The triangle on the title-page was, in the words of H.P.B., "the well-known seal of one who became an *adept* only in 1886." It is said that "no disciple can cross the threshold without . . . placing it on record in some fashion or other." *Light on the Path* is the record of its true author and inspirer. Such records serve, always, as signposts and guides for those disciples who come after.

*Light on the Path*, therefore, to be really understood, must be read and studied in that light, and with the attitude of mind which should be adopted when reading any devotional text, *i.e.*, an attitude of respect, as also of gratitude and reverence for the one who has taken the time and put forth the effort to make it a little easier for those who want to tread the path he has successfully trodden. These devotional books serve as stepping-stones from the outer world of form and matter to the inner world of spirit.

To reach that inner world, it is necessary to follow a certain discipline, so that it may become our real world, which it is even now, although we remain unaware of its existence. If one is to become a disciple, one must live in thought and feeling in the inner spiritual world, and not merely in the outer physical world, as most of us live today. So a disciple is one who subjects himself to a certain discipline. As the title-page of *Light on the Path* makes clear, it is "a Treatise written for the personal use of those who are ignorant of the Eastern Wisdom, and who desire to enter within its influence." This statement should call to our minds what another devotional book *par excellence*, *The Voice of the Silence*, states on its title-page, that it is meant "for the daily use of Lanoos (disciples)."

It is made clear in both books that they are addressed mainly to disciples. *Light on the Path* begins with the words: "These rules are written for all disciples: Attend you to them."

In beginning this study, then, that must be our approach. It must be taken as a book written for our private and personal use, to help us to find the way from our world of matter to the inner world of spirit; for, although this world of spirit is here, in and around us, we need to know how to approach it.

One way to begin to understand *Light on the Path*, we are told, is to read it “not between the lines but within the words,” that is, to find the inner meaning of what is said, because it is to the inner man with his developing inner sight and hearing — inner perception — that the words are addressed.

It is said that the book “is written in an astral cipher and can therefore only be deciphered by one who reads astrally.” By “astral” is not meant the lower astral or psychic world we generally associate with that term; it refers rather to the “divine astral,” or, in other words, to the development of the “higher *siddhis*” of *The Voice of the Silence*. We have to bear in mind that most of our Theosophical “text-books” were not in print when *Light on the Path* was published, so that the Theosophical terms in *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, *The Voice of the Silence* and *The Theosophical Glossary* which we use today cannot be applied exactly in the same sense when considering *Light on the Path*. “Astral” is used to mean “starry,” because the “stars . . . are luminous bodies which give light of themselves.” Therefore it is this inner, “starry” world which should stir, move and guide the outer. Until the disciple has developed to a certain extent the inner or “higher *siddhis*” he cannot understand fully all that is given.

The opening unnumbered rules are the basis for the whole book, and the numbered rules are simply ramifications and explanations or steps towards the application of the former. As one studies the book one can see that two great ideas emerge, and contain in essence all that the book is trying to emphasize. These are — “listening” and “speaking.” These two ideas must be kept in mind as a basis for understanding all that follows.

The disciple who studies these teachings soon learns that he is composed broadly of two natures. There is the personal, selfish, egotistic lower nature, composed of desires, likes and dislikes, the vehicle and container of the inner, real man; but because this vehicle has been coloured, soiled, and filled with false personal and selfish wants, there is no opportunity for the inner, impersonal man to shine through. The

doors, windows, and gateways of the personality that lead to the real man within have been closed. The whole discipline becomes one of purification — the making of the vehicle once more a shrine fit to house the god within.

Hence the first unnumbered rule: "Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears." The eyes, which are said to be the "windows of the soul," must be cleaned. *The Voice of the Silence* expresses the same idea: "Before the Soul can see, the Harmony within must be attained, and fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion."

Each has within himself a centre of peace and harmony, and that must be found and clung to. As it is, we swing from pleasure to pain and back again, swayed by our emotions, laughing one minute and crying the next, so that our mental sight is blinded. To be incapable of tears does not refer to physical tears, but it refers rather to the stage we reach when we can forget ourselves and our personal reactions in any situation. We are thus able to feel more keenly the enjoyment and suffering of others, because we are not personally involved. "To be incapable of tears is to have faced and conquered the simple human nature, and to have attained an equilibrium which cannot be shaken by personal emotions." The Buddha said of himself: "I, Buddh, who wept with all my brothers' tears . . ." Jesus also "wept," and *The Voice of the Silence* clearly states: "Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain, like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun." So, being incapable of tears does not imply any hardness of heart or indifference on our part; it means only that we must not be swayed by emotions and sensations.

As *Light on the Path* points out, every child that is born learns, unconsciously, by force of heredity, to use his various senses, but this is not so with the development of the inner senses in a disciple. We have paid so little attention to the inner eye, or to the development of real insight, that we have lost the power to "see," and so it is through pain and the destruction of pain that we must acquire the use of these inner senses. We live, move and have our being in matter, learning by effort, developing our physical sight, hearing and speech in an automatic manner, but the development of the inner senses is a different matter.

Along with insight, or "inner seeing," comes "inner hearing," which is one of the most, if not *the* most important of acquisitions, because from it springs all else. To become a real listener, a *Shravaka*, is the

*sine qua non* condition of discipleship, leading ultimately to adeptship. "Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness." It is said that "the voice of the Masters is always in the world; but only those hear it whose ears are no longer receptive of the sounds which affect the personal life." Therefore, the first stage in becoming a listener is to pay attention to what the ears hear. What sounds have they become accustomed to? In the words of *The Voice of the Silence*, is it "the silvery buzzing of the golden fire-fly" which is heard in the club, in small talk, in the other allurements of the outside world? Do these sounds bring enjoyment? If so, discipleship is not for such an one, because "before the soul can hear, the image (man) has to become as deaf to roarings as to whispers, to cries of bellowing elephants as to the silvery buzzing of the golden fire-fly."

The disciple must begin by training his ears to lose their sensitiveness to earthly sounds and to become more sensitive to the spiritual sounds which will arise from his own inner nature; this is the first step towards becoming a *Shravaka*. In other words, the sounds of the lower nature, the egotistic small talk and chit-chat, must be drowned out by lending one's ears and transferring one's attention to the teachings one is acquiring. This implies the opening of the doors and gateways of the soul, as the ears are called, the eyes being the windows. At present the sounds which come to our ears from the confusion of the world are both pleasant and unpleasant; it is only when these no longer disturb the inner consciousness, when we remain unaffected by them, that it is safe to open the doors of the soul.

The second step in the acquisition of inner hearing requires self-examination, the recognition on the part of the disciple that he is much more than his personal desire nature, which he has created by himself and which has become an unworthy vehicle. How does he know to what extent his ears have lost their sensitiveness? When the sounds of the outer, the disharmonious and jarring sounds of the world around, sicken him, only then will he begin to seek for the centre of peace and harmony within himself. When this happens, there comes an awareness that from this centre in time will spring the Voice of the Silence. The sure test is the wisdom which wells up within his own consciousness, convincing him without a doubt that the spirit in the body is the admonisher, the guide, and the instructor. When this happens, the disciple will know truly that "from within comes the only true guidance." Then he will begin to use his newly acquired inner hearing. The disciple thus comes slowly to the realization that the voice of the Masters

is always in the world, but unless his ears are accustomed to that voice, it will be lost to him. Unless and until the disciple achieves union with his own Inner God, he can hardly expect to hear the voice of the Master, for very often the Master speaks through that Inner God. So, unless there is perfect union within, there can be no discernment of the Voice of the Master. It is one thing to realize that the lower nature exists; quite another thing to begin to grapple with it. One must learn to walk before one can run, and so it is that the acquirement of inner hearing requires years and incarnations of discipline and struggle.

In beginning to realize that within himself there is not only an inner set of senses, but also an exhaustless fount of truth and knowledge, the disciple also recognizes that that which comes to him under Karma is not only deserved by him, but serves as a means for learning and experiencing, and ultimately becomes an aid in the purifying of the lower nature.

One of the first and hardest of lessons to learn is: "Kill out ambition"; yet, paradoxically, "Work as those work who are ambitious." In the article "The Three Desires" published by H.P.B. in *Lucifer* for February 1888, ambition is thus described:

Ambition pure and simple is the struggle of the mind upward, the exercise of a native intellectual force which lifts a man altogether above his peers. To rise — to be pre-eminent in some special manner, in some department of art, science, or thought — is the keenest longing of delicate and highly-tuned minds. It is quite a different thing from the thirst for knowledge which makes of a man a student always — a learner to the end, however great he may become. Ambition is born of no love for anything for its own sake, but purely for the sake of oneself. "It is I that will know, I that will rise, and by my own power." (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, June 1966)

It is therefore that the ambition for advancement or power is not only most undesirable in the disciple or any searcher for truth, but harmful, because he cannot serve two masters, his lower nature and mankind — and "to live to benefit mankind is the first step." At the outset all desire for power and advancement, whether it be to outstrip his fellow disciples or to shine by himself, must be killed. The motive with which one seeks for knowledge is important — is it for oneself, or for helping others?

We are told, "Kill out desire of life," and "Kill out desire of comfort," yet also, "Respect life as those do who desire it"; and further,

“Be happy as those are who live for happiness.” This does not mean killing out all sense of pleasure; one can be perfectly happy though free from all personal desires, taking more happiness in giving than in receiving, because then there is no question of being afraid or disappointed. Such an one can have pleasure pure and simple because there is no “personal craving or desire”; therefore he is in a position to “enjoy” equally those things which give happiness to others as to himself. *The Voice of the Silence* makes this clear when it points out:

Kill love of life; but if thou slayest Tanha, let this not be for thirst of life eternal, but to replace the fleeting by the everlasting.

It goes on to add:

Desire nothing. Chafe not at Karma, nor at Nature’s changeless laws. But struggle only with the personal, the transitory, the evanescent and the perishable.

*Desire* of life and *desire* of comfort are both, in the above-quoted words from *The Voice of the Silence*, “personal, transitory, evanescent and perishable.” Comfort means different things to different people. External forms of religious practice may bring “comfort” to those observing them. One may feel that external hatha-yogic practices, bringing as they do physical “discomfort,” will help to get rid of the desire for physical comfort. This is a misconception. Because, in time, even the torturing of the body may become “comfortable.” It makes no difference whether one lives in a mansion or in a shack so far as facing one’s lower personal nature is concerned. It is the inner thoughts, inner motives, which are important, and the killing of the lower desires can and must be accomplished, no matter what the external form of living is. The personality must be faced, cleansed and purified of all evil; this requires strength, energy and endurance. The amount of strength brought to the task will depend on the earnestness and seriousness of the one attempting the discipline. If he is determined at the outset to fight and conquer, then he will centre all his energies on that task. In so doing he must fix his gaze on the goal in the distance, far ahead, because it is this that will draw forth his strength and energy.

“Live neither in the present nor the future, but in the eternal,” and in so doing the disciple realizes that all life is transitory. All his co-disciples and companions form part of this transitory existence, all are fragments of the great whole, all struggling, all sons of “one sweet mother.” There is in reality no such thing as “separateness”; no one

"can rise superior to his individual failings, without lifting, be it ever so little, the whole body of which he is an integral part." The concept of separateness arises with the personality, and must be killed out; it is a "selfish state." It is well to "remember that the soiled garment you shrink from touching may have been yours yesterday, may be yours tomorrow."

It is only when the lower desires, whether for growth, sensation, comfort or ambition, are killed out by the disciple that the ear, which up to this point has been attuned to the outer world, will become sensitive to the voice of the Inner God. Before he is able to speak, he must have established some sort of order within his lower nature and personality, because only then can the third stage of listening be reached, and the disciple begin to speak.

He who learns to listen also learns to speak. In fact it is because he can speak that the Masters allow and enable the chela to hear. One of the ways, and a highly important way, in which the Great Ones sustain Their Voice in the world of mortals is by using the speech of Their devoted disciples pledged to serve Orphan Humanity. (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, September 1937)

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HE WHO LEARNS and makes no use of his learning is a beast of burden with a load of books. Does the ass comprehend whether he carries on his back a library or a bundle of faggots!

—SAADI

## LANDMARKS IN THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

H.P.B. wrote in the article "Le Phare de l'Inconnu" (*The Theosophist*, July, August, September and October 1889; reprinted in *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*, May, June, August and September 1947, and in *She Being Dead Yet Speaketh*):

Theosophy is a descendant in direct line of the great tree of universal GNOSIS, a tree the luxuriant branches of which, spreading over the whole earth like a great canopy, gave shelter at one epoch—which biblical chronology is pleased to call "antediluvian"—to all the temples and to all the nations of the earth. That gnosis represents the aggregate of all the sciences, the accumulated wisdom (*savoir*) of all the gods and demi-gods incarnated in former times upon the earth.

She further stated that "Theosophy is synonymous with *Gnana-Vidya* and with the *Brahma-Vidya* of the Hindus, and again with the *Dzyan* of the trans-Himalayan adepts, the science of the *true* Raj-Yogis, who are much more accessible than one thinks." She reminds us that there are many schools of this science in the East and the offshoots of it are numerous. These offshoots have ended by separating from the parent stem, the "true Archaic Wisdom," and vary in form, but we must remember that

while these forms varied, departing further with each generation from the light of truth, the basis of initiatory truths remained always the same. The symbols used to express the same idea may differ, but in their hidden sense they always do express the same idea. . . . There exists a sacerdotal language, the 'mystery language,' and unless one knows it well, he cannot go far in the occult sciences.

She quotes Professor Alexander Wilder as saying that "the names of . . . different divinities seem often to have been invented with little or no regard to their etymological meaning, but chiefly on account of some particular mystical signification attached to the numerical value of the letters employed in their orthography." And H.P.B. adds that "this *numerical* signification is one of the branches of the *mystery language*, or the ancient sacerdotal language." This was taught in the olden days in the "Lesser Mysteries," but the language itself was taught only to the high Initiates.

H.P.B. gives us an example of how different symbols have been used to convey the same truth:

According to Ragon "to build or found a town" meant the same thing as to "found a religion"; therefore, that phrase when it occurs in Homer is equivalent to the expression of the Brahmins, to distribute the "Soma juice." It means, "to found an esoteric school," not "a religion" as Ragon pretends. Was he mistaken? We do not think so. . . . It is certain that he had made at least an elementary study of "THE MYSTERY LANGUAGE."

H.P.B. refers to the spread of this Ancient Wisdom, its "direct continuation." From ancient India it was transmitted to Egypt, from Egypt to the Philaletheans and the Neo-Platonists. "The Christian Quietists, the Musulman Soufis, the Rosicrucians of all countries, drink the waters of that inexhaustible fountain."

Authenticity for the idea that Egypt owed its knowledge to India is given by Homer and Herodotus, for they "tell us, in fact, that the ancient Egyptians were 'Ethiopians of the East,' *who came from Lanka or Ceylon.*" H.P.B. adds that they were "a colony of very dark-skinned Aryans, the Dravidians of Southern India, who took an already existing civilization with them to Egypt . . . during the prehistoric ages . . . (before Menes)." She further states that "pre-Assyrian Babylonia was the home of Brahmanism, and of the Sanskrit as a sacerdotal language."

H.P.B. refers to Ammonius Saccas, the precursor of our own embodiment of this Truth:

Encouraged in the Church by Clement of Alexandria and by Athenagoras, protected by the learned men of the synagogue and of the academy, and adored by the Gentiles, "he learned the *language of the mysteries* by teaching the common origin of all religions and a common religion." To do this, he had only to teach according to the ancient canons of Hermes which Plato and Pythagoras had studied so well, and from which they drew their respective philosophies. Can we be surprised if, finding in the first verses of the gospel according to St. John the same doctrines that are contained in the three systems of philosophy above mentioned, he concluded with every show of reason that the intention of the great Nazarene was to restore the sublime science of ancient wisdom in all its primitive integrity?

What, then, is this ancient wisdom? How shall we reach it?

The Beacon-light upon which the eyes of all real Theosophists are fixed is the same towards which in all ages the imprisoned human soul has struggled. This Beacon, whose light shines upon no

earthly seas, but which has mirrored itself in the sombre depths of the primordial waters of infinite space, is called by us, as by the earliest Theosophists, "Divine Wisdom." That is the last word of the esoteric doctrine; and, in antiquity, where was the country, having the right to call itself civilized, that did not possess a double system of *Wisdom*, of which one part was for the masses, and the other for the few, the exoteric and the esoteric? This name, *Wisdom*, or, as we say sometimes, the "Wisdom Religion" or Theosophy, is as old as the human mind.

The end and aim is "the union of the divine spark which animates man with the parent-flame, which is the Divine *All*." This can come about for those "who devote themselves entirely to the service of humanity." But there are others "who are not yet ready to sacrifice everything." These "may occupy themselves with the transcendental sciences...."

The INFINITE cannot be known to our reason — which can only distinguish and define — but it can be conceived as an abstract idea, thanks to our intuition, or the spiritual instinct. But there is much that can be gained by a study of the metaphysical philosophy.

Theosophy being the way that leads to truth, in every religion as in every science, occultism is, so to say, the touchstone and universal solvent. It is the thread of Ariadne given by the master to the disciple who ventures into the labyrinth of the mysteries of being; the torch that lights him through the dangerous maze of life, for ever the enigma of the Sphinx. But the light thrown by this torch can be discerned only by the eye of the awakened soul — by our spiritual senses; it blinds the eye of the materialist as the sun blinds that of the owl....

Theosophy... examines the reverse side of every apparent truth. It tests and analyses every fact put forward by physical science, looking only for the essence and the ultimate and occult constitution in every cosmical or physical manifestation, whether in the domain of ethics, intellect or matter. In a word, Theosophy begins its researches where materialists finish theirs.

It is because of this that "each person who enters the Theosophical Society can find therein a science and an occupation to his taste."

An astronomer could make more scientific discoveries by studying the allegories and symbols relating to each star, in the old Sanskrit books, than he could ever make by the aid only of Academies. A doctor who had intuition would learn more from

the works of Charaka, translated into Arabic in the eighth century, or in the dusty manuscripts to be found in the Adyar Library — not understood like all the rest — than in modern works on physiology. Theosophists interested in medicine, or *the art of healing*, might do worse than consult the legends and symbols revealed and explained through Asclepios or Æsculapius. For, just as Hippocrates consulted the votive tablets at the temple of Epidaurus (surnamed the Tholos) at Cos, so could they find therein prescriptions for compounding remedies unknown to the modern pharmacopœia. From thenceforth they might perhaps cure, instead of killing.

Finally, “the Beacon-light of Truth is Nature without the veil of the senses.” We can see why “the investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man” was one of the objects of the Theosophical Society.

Every one of us possesses the faculty, the interior sense, that is known by the name of *intuition*, but how rare are those who know how to develop it! It is, however, only by the aid of this faculty that men can ever see things in their true colours. It is an *instinct of the soul*, which grows in us in proportion to the employment we give it, and which helps us to perceive and understand the realities of things with far more certainty than can the simple use of our senses and exercise of our reason. . . . “We begin with *instinct*, we end with omniscience,” says Professor A. Wilder.

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THE SEPARATION of the laws of nature among the different sciences is a human conceit: A nuclear test explosion is usually regarded as an experiment in engineering and physics, but it is also a vast — if poorly controlled — experiment in environmental biology. . . . There is a web of relationships that ties animal to plant, prey to predator, parasite to host, and all to air, water, and soil. . . . a small intrusion in one place in the environment may trigger a huge response elsewhere in the system. . . . Sooner or later, wittingly or unwittingly, we must pay for every intrusion on the natural environment.

—BARRY COMMONER

## SELF-RULE IS SELF-SHINING

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vol. I, p. 41,  
for September 1931.—EDS.]

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE of the word *Sva-Raj* — Self-Rule — is submerged in its political application. Similarly, in the West, Democracy, the strength of the people to rule themselves, has been taken to mean the power to vote and to legislate. Again, Home-Rule, the power of the home to lead us aright, has now only a political interpretation, as has *Sva-Desh* — the Place of the Self.

Among his numerous tasks, the Theosophical student has that of restoration of their Soul significance to great words. The Soul of words is submerged in their current usage as at present the human soul is entombed in flesh, *Sva-Desh*, *Sva-Raj*, Home-Rule, Democracy, are bhuts or ghosts from whom the Soul has departed.

*Sva-Raj* is the power of the Self to shine; where the Self shines there is *Sva-Raj*. When the Light of the Soul directs our steps on the path of life we have gained *Sva-Raj*.

It is often said that once *Sva-Raj* is obtained India will be happy ever after. This is true if the word is used in its primary sense; but if, as is most generally the case, it is fancied that political changes will bring about health, wealth, and happiness, then the dreamer is living in a fool's paradise and he would be better off in the hell of the disillusioned who live in their millions in London, Moscow, New York and Paris.

Bliss, *Ananda*, is the energy of Truth or Rhythm, *Sattva*. The *Gita* teaches that when Wisdom, the Bright Light, emerges at every gate of the body there arises Peace within and the power to do true works without. Almost universally, the energy of discontent and of indolence is manifest, producing mistakes and even crimes. Discontent wanders aimlessly. Indolence sits irresponsibility incarnate. Both hope. As most men and women are a mixture of discontent and irresponsibility, in them the Light of the Inner Self is obscured. If we were to use the motion of our discontent on our own indolence we would verily kill two birds with one stone — but we must possess that philosopher's stone. As we seek the divinity hidden in our discontent we unfold the sense of responsibility to all that lives and breathes.

Be discontented with your own indolence and the first glimmer of Light will become manifest.

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## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The rising rate of violence has become a poser for present-day society. In the United States, a team of medical scientists attached to Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston City Hospital are currently exploring what has come to be known as the psychobiology of violence. The roots of violence, these researchers believe, may be psychiatric — the result, for instance, of upbringing or social environment; or they may be biological, perhaps caused by some disorder of the brain or nervous system; or they may most frequently be a combination of these and other factors.

Albert Rosenfeld, in his article "The Psychobiology of Violence" (*Life*, Asia Edition, July 8), states that this new approach "is gaining adherents so fast that it might almost be called a movement. It is an interdisciplinary, many-pronged assault that involves not only psychologists and biologists but also psychiatrists, sociologists, surgeons, neurologists, geneticists, pharmacologists, other biomedical specialists, and even students of animal behaviour."

The shooting of Robert Kennedy increased the concern and the debates over the possible effects of the climate of violence that pervades today's world, where real life and fictional — as in some popular movies — are filled with images of brutality. The casual acceptance of violence creates a climate which can arouse susceptible people to violent acts.

One group of researchers, that at Boston, working under Dr. Frank R. Ervin, a psychiatrist, gives its principal attention to individual acts of violence and to the possibility that the cause may often be found in some malfunction of the body or brain. In the 50-odd cases they have so far had the opportunity to study in some depth, they claim that they have already found a startling frequency of correlation between deviant behaviour and brain damage.

The researchers feel, however, that the causes of violence are not simple to pinpoint. Though the impulses to rage and aggression have always been intimately linked with frustration, yet frustration alone cannot account for them. In a family of brothers and sisters raised by the same parents under the same frustrating circumstances, some will be violent and some not. In a slum neighbourhood, everyone may live under the same frustrating set of pressures and tensions, but only a small minority will engage in rioting, and even among the rioters only a handful will actually burn down a building or assault another person.

In many experiments, the centres in the brain that spur us to anger and violence have been precisely located; stimulating them electrically or chemically can turn on rage and violence. Most psychiatrists, however, hesitate to put forth a theory based solely on the presence of brain damage. Traditionally, the key to the problem of violence is believed to lie in a patient's personality traits, which are shaped by his past experience. Also the social climate he lives in affects his behaviour. In crowded cities, something catastrophic is happening all the time, and with instant communication, we come to know every catastrophe right away. The stresses that most of us can somehow manage to live with are simply too much for the more susceptible brains and nervous systems.

Though the precise reasons why particular individuals resort to violent behaviour are not easy to pinpoint, researchers in this field miss much by not taking reincarnation into consideration. There is the added factor of our responsibility to the youth. We implant ideas and pictures of crime in the minds of children by giving them toy weapons to play with, by making available to them crime comic books which are avidly read, by portraying and glorifying violence in motion pictures and other media popular with children. The immediate effect is seen in the increase in juvenile delinquency, but the full impact comes only in later years, when these youngsters surfeited with ideas of violence and crime reach the age of manhood and responsibility.

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In the Unesco-sponsored *Journal of World History (Cahier d'Histoire Mondiale)*, V. V. Ramana Murti of the University of Rajasthan, writing on "Satyagraha as an Indo-British Dialogue," provides a new interpretation of a much-discussed subject. According to the writer, "the Gandhian technique sought to transform a conflict between two nations into a *dialogue*." The spirit of a genuine dialogue, he claims, is embodied in the historic encounter of India with England. Further, "the non-violent method of Gandhi is notable for changing India's struggle with a foreign government into a meaningful communication between the two countries." Non-violence was "a corollary to the idea of a dialogue." "A dialogue transforms the posture of a confrontation into a condition of reconciliation. This leads to a peaceful relationship that outlives a conflict."

Ramana Murti's views are not strictly original, but he provides a new twist to what is already known. Non-violence, he says, replaces, in the language of Buber, an "I-It" relationship by an "I-Thou" relationship. A stimulating discussion to start the Gandhi Centenary Year with.

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*Unesco Courier* for May 1968 is a special issue devoted to the growing menace of the abuse of drugs. This is an age-old problem, but it has taken on new dimensions in recent times. Most countries have now taken steps to combat the non-medical use of opium, cannabis, coca and their derivatives (morphine, heroin, hashish, cocaine and other drugs). But fresh problems have arisen today with the appearance of a wide range of synthetic drugs.

The U.N. Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in an official report prepared in January 1968, pointed to the growing danger of these psychotropic substances not under international control. These include barbiturates, certain tranquillizers, amphetamines (or "booster" drugs) and "psychedelic" or hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD. The non-medical consumption of these substances, the report stated, has already become a "serious social and public-health problem in a number of countries and is tending to assume increasing proportions in others." It foresaw the growth of the problem and the possibility that "epidemic abuse will clearly be a very real danger in countries which are unprepared to meet it."

A special committee established by the U.N. Commission singled out LSD "as presenting the most acute problem and showing signs of such spread as to demand immediate action." Few drugs have sparked off as much discussion and controversy or given rise to so many misconceptions.

In one of the articles in the *Unesco Courier* special issue, Karl Evang, Director-General of Public Health in Norway, states:

How can we explain the cult of LSD and the eager publicity given to its "prophets"?

The answer seems simple: there is no limit to human curiosity, to the lust for new sensations of any kind. All of us feel more or less frustrated by social conventions, tied to hierarchical values not of our making which put us in situations where we feel ill at ease. Then there is our work which for the most part is a dull routine.

Throughout history there have been intoxicants to break these bonds, either for short periods or long ones..

LSD and similar substances like psilocybin, mescaline, Indian hemp, and other hallucinatory drugs can free a person from all constraints by intoxicating the sensory faculties. For a moment there may be a feeling of liberation, renewal, freedom from the bonds of life. But afterwards one quickly finds that everything

was an illusion. Drunkenness is no liberation; it is a dungeon immuring its prisoner.

The so-called "prophets" have predicted that important new knowledge concerning the human soul will come from experiments carried out with psychedelic drugs such as LSD. So far nothing remotely like this has happened. Not one single fundamental new thing has appeared. The only result has been to confirm the grave dangers which the ignorant invite when they tamper with the volcano which is the subconscious mind.

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Ancient science has always taught that the poles of the earth are continually perambulating, and modern scientists are now veering round to this view. In an article, "North Pole is Moving" (*The Sunday Standard*, September 29), Charles Hillinger states:

The fact that the geographic North Pole never stays put is one of those unsolved mysteries that has baffled scientists for generations.

In each 14-month period the North Pole wanders about in a mostly counterclockwise manner in a 72-foot square. And since 1900 the North Pole has been moving towards Greenland at more than half a foot a year.

Some scientists say the meanderings of the North Pole may have some connection with earthquakes. Others believe the shifting movement may have something to do with the melting of the icecaps, with the unevenness of the earth's land masses or the movements of the seas.

But scientists in the United States, Russia, Italy and Japan have been watching with keen interest the daily movement since 1899, the year the International Polar Motion Service was set up. Ten astronomers in the world are manning five tiny "backyard" observatories — keeping track of the North Pole's zigzag path in an area the size of a baseball diamond on top of the world. . . .

R. L. Dubois, a consultant at California Institute of Technology's jet propulsion laboratory, reported five years ago that the North Pole lay in the vicinity of Southern California 1,500 million years ago. He said he arrived at that conclusion by charting movements of the continents from the Precambrian Age to the present.

We may recall here H.P.B.'s statement that inversion of the poles has occurred three times and has changed the face of the Zodiac. (*S.D.*, II. 436)

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An essay in *Time* magazine (September 27) on "That New Black Magic" states:

Westerners laugh at the benighted superstitions of their Asian and African brothers. . . . In fact, Westerners themselves seem to be on the way to becoming the most superstitious people on earth. For all his faith in scientific reason, Western man is so baffled by complex social and economic problems that he is increasingly attracted to irrational solutions — to all kinds of new black magic.

Superstition is a natural human reaction to overwhelming dangers or baffling situations. The word stems from the Latin *superstitio*, meaning "a standing still over," and connotes amazement or dread of supernatural forces beyond one's control. Rationalists scorn superstition as a hangover of primitive man's obsolete interpretations of the world. Indeed, nothing seems sillier nowadays than rituals like knocking on wood or chanting "God bless you!" (to prevent the sneezer's soul from flying away). Even so, modern behavioural scientists respect superstition as an enduring expression of the human need to master the inexplicable. "One man's superstition is another's religion," contends Anthropologist Sol Tax. Says Margaret Mead: "Superstition reflects the keenness of our wish to have something come true or to prevent something bad from happening. The half acceptance and half denial accorded superstition give us the best of both worlds." . . .

To be sure, modern life is already rife with ancient superstitions that will probably never go out of style. But the new phenomenon is the upsurge in new superstitions. . . . Even scientists are highly susceptible to superstitious beliefs. . . . Nothing so demonstrates modern man's need for myth as the superstitions created by "rational" technology itself.

All sorts of old superstitions have re-emerged in a new era, sometimes in new guises. One Chicago dealer in magical objects reports that "crystal balls are selling like popcorn." New York's TBS Computer Centers Corp. now cranks out 20-page personal horoscopes. . . . Necromancy, the art of communication with the dead, has undergone a rebirth, abetted by California's Episcopal Bishop James Pike, who engaged in a séance at which he claims to have talked with his suicide son.

A mystical renaissance is evident everywhere from television to department stores. This year three TV series deal with witches and ghosts. . . . Hippies, with their drug-sensitized yen for magic, are perhaps the prime movers behind the phenomenon. Not only do they sport beads and amulets that have supposed magical

powers; they also believe firmly and frighteningly in witchcraft. . . .

The danger of overindulgence in superstition is that it breeds a kind of shortcut thinking. . . . Superstitions, like Occam's razor, cut both ways. Before Western man gets any more mystical, perhaps he should distinguish between superstitions that destroy tranquillity and those that enhance it. If he succeeds, the rest of the world will not have to keep its fingers crossed.

What should give us pause in branding all popular ideas as superstitions is the undeniable fact that the same beliefs occur among widely separated peoples whose origins, according to scientific theory, at least, can hardly be traced to a common stock except in the remotest of pre-historic times. The only explanation of the identity of these ideas, from this point of view, is that they arise from practical experience. Many of the theories of the ancients, long regarded as mere "superstitions," have lately been found to be well grounded in scientific fact. While we do not claim a basis in fact for *all* the traditional beliefs, wholesale denial of truth in *any* of them is hardly "scientific."

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The human nose can often analyse smells better than the most sophisticated analytical equipment (*Daily Telegraph*, London, August 23). According to Dr. Roland Harper, a research scientist on the human senses, the nose is ten to 100 times better at detecting odours, such as that of an aspirin, than the gas chromatograph, a highly sensitive analytical tool.

Experienced people can identify fungi from their odours and there are electricians who smell porcelain domestic fuses to see whether they are burned out. A blind man can tell when the manhole covers are off in the pavement from the smell of coal. And there are physicians who can diagnose disease by smelling the patient.

Every disease has its characteristic odour, just as races do, and physicians should attempt to regain the lost art of smelling for diagnosis. Diagnosis by odour was one of the qualifications of ancient medicine, just as it is with the jungle medicine man to this day.

It is well known that individuals losing one or more senses often develop increased sensitivity in the remaining ones. Many blind people, for instance, have an acute sense of smell.

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