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TO
"THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT"

VOLUME 42: NOVEMBER 1971 - OCTOBER 1972

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?

[In *The Theosophist* for August 1882, H.P.B. published the following definitions written by “A Paramahansa of the Himalayas.” The editorial note says:

“*Paramahansas* are the order of the highest Yogi-Sannyasis, who alone are allowed to throw off the yoke of the Hindu caste superstitions. While all the others have to perform, more or less, the daily exoteric ceremonies of their respective *Ashrams* or orders, no rules of action can be assigned to these.”

The definitions were last reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for November 1959.—EDS.]

1. Theosophy is that branch of human perfection, by which one may establish himself with the eternal cause of invisible nature, to which this physical effect is a visible bubble.
2. Theosophy is that knowledge which leads one from animalism to Divinity.
3. Theosophy is that branch of human philosophy, which theoretically teaches one what he really is beyond *mind and personal individuality* (Ego).
4. Theosophy is that branch of chemistry, by which one begets IMMORTALITY.
5. Theosophy is that branch of painting (one's self) which time cannot efface.
6. Theosophy is that branch of husbandry (agriculture) by which one may preserve the seed without rearing the tree.
7. Theosophy is that branch of optics, which magnifies one's view to see beyond physical nature.

8. Theosophy is that branch of human surgery, which separates physical nature from the spiritual.
9. Theosophy is that branch of Masonry, which shows the universe in an egg.
10. Theosophy is that branch of music, which harmonizes physical nature with spirit.
11. Theosophy is that part of gardening, which teaches one how to rear trees out of charcoal.
12. Theosophy is that branch of sanitation, which teaches one how to purify nature by means of cause and effect.
13. Theosophy is that branch of engineering, which bridges the gulf between life and death.
14. Theosophy is that warlike art, which teaches one how to subdue (subjugate) time and death, the two mightiest foes of man.
15. Theosophy is that food, which enables one to taste the most exquisite sweetness in his own self.
16. Theosophy is that branch of navigation, which teaches one the starting point and the final goal of human life.
17. Theosophy is that branch of commerce, which makes one fit to select unerringly the commodities for both lives.
18. Theosophy is that branch of politics, which unites past and future into one present, and establishes peace with the most tumultuous off-shoots of debased nature.
19. Theosophy is that branch of mineralogy, by which one may discover the source of eternal wealth, combining life, knowledge and eternal joy into one.
20. Theosophy is that branch of astronomy, which proves that spirit is the only fixed star which sets not throughout the revolutions of nature.
21. Theosophy is that branch of gymnastics, which invigorates the mind, expands the intellect, unites the thoughts *with the tie of breath*,¹ removes the heat of lust, and produces a balmy calmness, which is the heart's eye, to penetrate the mysteries of nature.
22. Theosophy is that branch of mental philosophy, by which one may know the exact centre of his individual Self and its identity with the entity of the second principle of the Vedantists, or the seventh

¹ This relates to occult practices.—Ed. [*The Theosophist*]

one of the present Theosophists,² or what is commonly known by the name, God.

23. Theosophy is that branch of medicine by which one may rid himself of his sins from time immemorial.

24. Theosophy is that branch of natural philosophy, by which one may watch and witness nature in her birth — chastity — *adultery* and the present old age.

25. Theosophy is that occult branch of the Christian church, on which the groundwork of that church was originally planned — *i.e.*, the essential non-difference of God with the individual witness.

26. Theosophy is that branch of Christianity, which eliminates the spiritual Christ from the corporeal one of the orthodox generation.

27. Theosophy is that part of the Christian theology, which shows that the present churches of the West are abusing the Bible by misinterpretations.

28. Theosophy is that part of the Aryan independence, by which one may exist without the help of nature.

29. Theosophy (to be brief) is the sum total of the wisdom of the Aryan Bramha — the happiness eternal — and the life everlasting. It is Theosophy which taught the Aryans how to soar far beyond the region of Shakti and to be in *perpetual joy* — (the playground of Shakti). In short, it is the basis of all the knowledge that exists in the eternity.

THEOSOPHY is not a belief or dogma formulated or invented by man, but is a knowledge of the laws which govern the evolution of the physical, astral, psychical and intellectual constituents of nature and of man.

—W. Q. JUDGE

² *Jivatma*, in the sense of the Vedantin, is the Soul of all life, and in that of the Theosophist it is *Jiva*—vital principle.—Ed. [*The Theosophist*]

THEOSOPHY AND ITS MISSION

EACH YEAR when November 17 comes round, students of Theosophy the world over think of the Movement started by H. P. Blavatsky in 1875 to spread broadcast the Message of Theosophy. Today, we can ask ourselves again: What does this Message mean to us at present? How can it be made applicable to the conditions obtaining today? For whom is it meant? For us who call ourselves students of Theosophy, or for humanity in general, or for both? Where did what we call Theosophy come from, and why was a Society formed to spread it to the world?

If we are familiar with the history of the Theosophical Movement we know that it was launched because the time was ripe, cyclically, for the resuscitation of the Message of Theosophy. We are told that the great 14th-century Tibetan Adept, Tsong-kha-pa, conferred with other adepts and it was decided that at the close of each century an effort should be made to enlighten particularly the Western world, which was then beginning to come out of its "Dark Ages." And so, since then, during the last quarter of every century a resuscitation of the Ancient Wisdom has taken place, sometimes through a society or movement, and sometimes through and with individuals. The history of these cyclic attempts can be traced. In the last quarter of 1875, the Messenger to carry out this work was Madame H. P. Blavatsky. She, aided by H. S. Olcott and William Q. Judge, founded a society in New York to study this age-old Wisdom. Since then, it has spread all over the world. In the last quarter of this century, we are to watch for a continuation of the Movement inaugurated by H.P.B.

Why was a Society founded? Because, in the words of one of the Great Ones, "The *Chiefs* want a 'Brotherhood of Humanity,' a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds." How is this Brotherhood to be attained? It can only be attained when based on true knowledge. That is to say, we must understand great Nature and her laws, we must have knowledge of ourselves, knowledge of the goal and purpose of life. And where can we get this knowledge?

Here is one of the most important ideas students of Theosophy try to spread: knowledge of these facts already exists. How could it be otherwise when the age of the world is being pushed back further and further and the findings of archaeology reveal that some of the most ancient

nations had far superior knowledge to ours! These things are provable and proven facts. Indeed, much of the knowledge they possessed is still not known to us. Must we truly think that we are the only wise race? Ancient legends refer to Wise Men who received knowledge of the workings of Nature from those who knew, and tested it for themselves. A record was made and it exists today. It is from this record that Theosophy is derived. As pointed out in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, this knowledge has always existed and was handed down from one Sage to another, as Krishna was handing it on to his disciple Arjuna.

One point has to be noted: even though the return of the cycle brings back the same truths, they fall on different ground. The thought-environment of the times is different century by century. Therefore it is that only that portion of the Truth is presented which can be understood by the civilization of the time and is necessary for man's next step or advancement. Today, mental development is to the fore and we are beginning to find out what can be achieved by the mind of man. Science and technology have progressed enormously of late. The danger is that the knowledge gained by the mind can be applied with or without a moral basis. One can see the need for a Brotherhood of Humanity to prevent the use of discoveries for personal advancement at the expense of our neighbour. Through the advances made in various spheres, things formerly accepted as true are shown as incorrect. We are entering a new era of morals, good and bad, a new era of ideas. Not only in the realm of science, but also in that of religion we find that many ideas of bygone days are no longer accepted today. Man's sense of self-responsibility is growing. He is learning that he is the master of his fate, that he can compel Nature to obey him, that he himself is the final authority and none other. But we cannot break Nature's laws with impunity. Only for a time do we succeed, and then chaos or destruction ensues. But we learn too late.

Therefore, one of the main ideas that the Message of Theosophy stresses is — "Help Nature and work on with her." Man will in time learn all her laws as he has learnt some, and he can help her to greater success and growth.

Science, materialistic science, is today faced with a dilemma which can only be solved when it acknowledges and finds proof of the invisible side of Nature, the astral counterpart of the physical. When this is taken into consideration, the understanding of the mind in man can also be gained, and all the mysteries of so-called spiritualism, magic, etc., can

be cleared up. Hence one of the objects of the Theosophical Society was to study the unknown laws of nature and of man. Note the word *study*. Experiment should follow knowledge; experiment should be performed on a scientific basis and not only with a view to finding out what happens.

With regard to the purpose and goal of life, we must learn about Reincarnation and Karma. Only on those two pillars can any sure foundation be built. They are rooted in the concept of immortality of the Spirit and of man's evolution to the goal of perfection. This perfection can only be attained by changing our character. We have to understand that brotherly love means mutual tolerance and charity. Our minds must be thoroughly impregnated with these truths.

H.P.B. wrote in *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 133):

Supported on the one hand by that science which shows us progressive development and an internal cause for every external modification, as a law in Nature; and, on the other hand, by an implicit faith in the wisdom . . . of the universal traditions gathered and preserved by the Initiates, who have perfected them into an almost faultless system — thus supported, we venture to state the doctrine clearly.

“It is not alone for the esoteric philosophy that we fight,” she says; “nor for any modern system of moral philosophy, but for the inalienable right of private judgment, and especially for the ennobling idea of a future life of activity and accountability.”

Theosophy, therefore, has to fight for recognition, recognition of its teachings, of its antiquity, of its necessity. Our duty is to spread the Message as we have received it.

WHAT we do ask, and most decidedly, is that people should study, compare and think for themselves before they definitely accept anything upon second-hand testimony.

—*The Theosophist*, December 1881

THOUGHTS ON KARMA AND REINCARNATION

[Reprinted from *Lucifer* for April 1889.—Eds.]

In man there are arteries, thin as a hair split a 1,000 times, filled with fluids blue, red, green, yellow, etc. The tenuous involucre (the base or ethereal frame of the astral body) is lodged in them, and the ideal residues of the experiences of the former embodiments (or incarnations) adhere to the said tenuous involucre, and *accompany it in its passage from body to body.*

—*Upanishads*

“JUDGE of a man by his questions rather than by his answers,” teaches the wily Voltaire. The advice stops half-way in our case. To become complete and cover the whole ground, we have to add, “ascertain the motive which prompts the questioner.” A man may offer a query from a sincere impulse to learn and to know. Another person will ask eternal questions, with no better motive than a desire of caviling and proving his adversary in the wrong.

Not a few among the “inquirers into Theosophy,” as they introduce themselves, belong to this latter category. We have found in it Materialists and Spiritualists, Agnostics and Christians. Some of them, though rarely, are “open to conviction” — as they say; others, thinking with Cicero that no liberal, truth-seeking man should ever impute a charge of unsteadiness to anyone for having changed his opinions — become *really* converted and join our ranks. But there are those also — and these form the majority — who, while representing themselves as *inquirers*, are in truth *carpers*. Whether owing to narrowness of mind or foolhardiness they entrench themselves behind their own preconceived and not unseldom shallow beliefs and opinions, and will not budge from them. Such a “seeker” is hopeless, as his desire to investigate the truth is a pretext, not even a fearless mask, but simply a *false nose*. He has neither the open determination of an avowed materialist, nor the serene coolness of a “Sir Oracle.” But —

You may as well
Forbid the sea for to obey the moon,
As, or by oath remove, or counsel shake,
The fabric of his folly....

Therefore, a “seeker after truth” of this kind had better be severely left alone. He is intractable, because he is either a skin-deep sciolist.

a self-opinionated theorist, or a fool. As a general rule, he talks re-incarnation before he has even learnt the difference between *metempsychosis*, which is the transmigration of a human Soul into an animal form, and Reincarnation, or the rebirth of the same Ego in successive human bodies. Ignorant of the *true* meaning of the Greek word, he does not even suspect how absurd, in philosophy, is this purely exoteric doctrine of transmigrations into animals. Useless to tell him that Nature, propelled by Karma, never recedes, but strives ever forward in her work on the physical plane; that she may lodge a human soul in the body of a man, morally ten times lower than any animal, but she will not reverse the order of her kingdoms; and while leading the irrational monad of a beast of a higher order into the human form at the first hour of a Manvantara, she will not guide that Ego, once it has become a man, even of the lowest kind, back into the animal species — not during that cycle (or *Kalpa*) at any rate.¹

The list of queer “investigators” is by no means exhausted with these amiable *seekers*. There are two other classes — Christians and Spiritualists, the latter being in some respects more formidable than any. The former having been born and bred believers in the Bible and supernatural “miracles” on *authority*, or “thirty-seventh hand evidence,” to use a popular proverb, are often forced to yield in the face of the first-hand testimony of their own reason and senses; and then they are amenable to reason and conviction. They had formed *a priori* opinions and got crystallized in them as a fly in a piece of amber. But that amber has cracked, and, as one of the signs of the times, they have bethought themselves of a somewhat tardy still sincere search, to either justify their early opinions, or else part company with them for good. Having found out that *their* religion — like that of the great majority of their fellow men — had been founded on *human* not *divine* respect, they come to us as they would to surgical operators, believing that theosophists can remove all the old cobwebs from their bewildered brains. Sometimes it does so happen; once made to see the fallacy of first accepting and identifying themselves with any form of belief, and then only

¹ Occult Science teaches that the same order of evolution for man and animals—from the first to the seventh planet of a chain, and from the first to the end of the seventh round—takes place on every *chain* of worlds in our Solar system from the inferior to the superior. Thus the highest as the lowest Ego, from the monads selected to people a new chain in a Manvantara, when passing from an inferior to a superior “chain” has, of course, to pass through every animal (and even vegetable) form. But once started on its cycle of births no human Ego will become that of an animal during any period of the seven rounds.—*Vide* SECRET DOCTRINE.

seeking, years later, for reasons to justify it, they very naturally try to avoid falling again into the same mistake. They had once to content themselves with such interpretations of their time-honoured dogmas as the fallacy and often the absurdity of the latter would afford; but now, they seek to learn and understand before they believe.

This is the right and purely theosophical state of mind, and is quite consistent with the precept of Lord Buddha, who taught never to believe merely on authority but to test the latter by means of our personal reason and highest intuition. It is only such seekers after the eternal truth who can profit by the lessons of old Eastern Wisdom.

It is our duty, therefore, to help them to defend their new ideals by furnishing them with the most adequate and far-reaching weapons. For they will have not only to encounter Materialists and Spiritualists, but also to break a lance with their ex-coreligionists. These will bring to bear upon them the whole of their arsenal, composed of the pop-guns of biblical casuistry and interpretations based on the dead-letter texts and the disingenuous translation of *pseudo* revelation. They have to be prepared. They will be told, for instance, that there is not a word in the Bible which would warrant belief in reincarnation, or life more than once on this earth. Biologists and physiologists will laugh at such a theory, and assure them that it is opposed by the fact that no man has a glimpse of recollection of any *past* life. Shallow metaphysicians, and supporters of the easy-going Church ethics of this age, will gravely maintain the injustice there would be in a posterior punishment, in the present life, for deeds committed in a previous existence of which we know nothing. All such objections are disposed of and shown fallacious to anyone who studies seriously the esoteric sciences.

But what shall we say of our ferocious opponents, the Kardecists, or the reincarnationists of the French school, and the *anti*-reincarnationists, *i.e.*, most of the Spiritualists of the old school? The fact that the first believe in rebirth but in their own crude, unphilosophical way, makes our task the more heavy. They have made up their minds that a man dies and his "spirit," after a few visits of consolation to the mortals he left behind him, may reincarnate at his own sweet will, in whom and whenever he likes. The Devachanic period of no less than a 1,000, generally 1,500 years, is a vexation of mind and a snare in their sight. They will have nothing of this. No more will the Spiritualists. These object on the highly philosophical ground that "it is *simply impossible*." Why? Because it is so unpalatable to most of them, especially

to those who know themselves to be the personal Avatar, or the re-incarnation of some historically great hero or heroine who flourished within the last few centuries (rebirth from, or into, the scums of White-chapel, being for them out of question). And "it is so cruel," you see, to tell fond parents that the fancy that a *still-born* child, a daughter of theirs, who, they imagine, having been reared in a nursery of Summerland, has now grown up and comes to visit them daily in the family séance-room, is an absurd belief, whether reincarnation be true or not. We must not *hurt their feelings* by insisting that every child who dies before the age of reason — when only it becomes a responsible creature — reincarnates immediately after its death — since, having had no personal merit or demerit in any of its actions, it can have no claim upon Devachanic reward and bliss. Also that as it is irresponsible till the age of, say, seven, the full weight of the Karmic effects generated during its short life falls directly upon those who reared and guided it. They will hear of no such philosophical truths, based on eternal justice and Karmic action. "You hurt our best, our most devotional feelings. Avaunt!" they cry, "we will not accept your teachings."

Eppur si muove! Such arguments remind one of the curious objections to, and denial of, the sphericity of the earth used by some clever Church Fathers of old. "How can the earth, forsooth, be round?" argued the saintly wiseacres — the "venerable Bedes" and the Manichean Augustines. "Were it so the men *below* would have to walk with their heads downward, like flies on a ceiling. Worse than all, they could not see the Lord descending in his glory on the day of the second advent!" As these very logical arguments appeared irrefutable, in the early centuries of our era, to Christians, so the profoundly philosophical objections of our friends the *Summerland* theorists appear as plausible in this century of Neo-Theosophy.

And what are your proofs that such series of lives ever take place, or that there is reincarnation at all? — we are asked. We reply: (1) the testimony of every seer, sage and prophet, throughout an endless succession of human cycles; (2) a mass of *inferential* evidence appealing even to the profane. True, this kind of evidence — although not seldom men are hung on no better than such *inferential* testimony — is not absolutely reliable. For, as Locke says: "To infer is nothing but by virtue of one proposition, laid down as true, to draw in another as true." Yet, all depends on the nature and strength of that first proposition. The Predestinarians may lay down as true their doctrine of

Predestination — that pleasant belief that every human being is pre-assigned, by the will of our “Merciful Father in Heaven,” to either everlasting Hell-fire or the “Golden Harp,” on the pinion-playing principle. The proposition from which this curious belief is inferred and laid down as true, is based, in the present case, on no better foundation than one of the nightmares of Calvin, who had many. But the fact that his followers count millions of men does not entitle either the theory of total depravity, or that of predestination, to be called a universal belief. They are still limited to a small portion of mankind, and were never heard of before the day of the French Reformer.

These are pessimistic doctrines born of despair, beliefs artificially engrafted on human nature, and which, therefore, cannot hold good. But who taught mankind about soul transmigration? Belief in successive rebirths of the human *Ego* throughout the cycles of life in various bodies is a universal belief, a certainty innate in mankind. Even now, when theological dogmas of human origin have stifled and well-nigh destroyed this natural inborn idea from the Christian mind, even now hundreds of the most eminent Western philosophers, authors, artists, poets and deep thinkers still firmly believe in reincarnation. In the words of George Sand, we are

cast into this life, as it were into an alembic, where, after a previous existence which we have forgotten, we are condemned to be remade, renewed, tempered by suffering, by strife, by passion, by doubt, by disease, by death. All these evils we endure for our good, for our purification, and so to speak, to make us perfect. From age to age, from race to race, we accomplish a tardy progress, tardy but certain, an advance of which, in spite of all the sceptics say, the proofs are manifest. If all the imperfections of our being and all the woes of our estate drive at discouraging and terrifying us, on the other hand, all the more noble faculties, which have been bestowed on us that we might seek after perfection, do make for our salvation, and deliver us from fear, misery, and even death. Yet, a divine instinct that always grows in light and in strength helps us to comprehend that nothing in the whole world wholly dies, and that we only vanish from the things that lie about us in our earthly life, to reappear among conditions more favourable to our eternal growth in good.

Writes Professor Francis Bowen, as quoted in *Reincarnation, a Study of Forgotten Truths*² — uttering a great truth:

² We advise every disbeliever in reincarnation, in search of proofs, to read this ex-

The doctrine of metempsychosis may almost claim to be a natural or innate belief in the human mind, if we may judge from its wide diffusion among the nations of the Earth and its prevalence throughout the historical ages.

The millions of India, Egypt, China, that have passed away, and the millions of those who believe in reincarnation today — are almost countless. The Jews had the same doctrine; moreover, whether one prays to a *personal*, or worships in silence an impersonal deity or a Principle and a Law, it is far more reverential to believe in this doctrine than not. One belief makes us think of "God" or "Law" as a synonym of Justice, giving to poor little man more than one chance for righteous living and for the atoning of sins whether of omission or commission. Our disbelief credits the Unseen Power instead of equity with fiendish cruelty. It makes of *it* a kind of a sidereal Jack the Ripper or Nero doubled with a human monster. If a *heathen* doctrine honours the Deity and a Christian dishonours it, which should be accepted? And why should one who prefers the former be held as — an *infidel*?

But the world moves on now as it has always moved, and along with it move the ideas in the heads of the fogies. The question is not whether a fact in nature fits, or not, some special hobby, but whether it is really *a fact* based on, at least, inferential evidence. We are told by those special *hobbyists* that it is not. We reply, study the questions you would reject, and try to understand our philosophy before you dismiss our teachings *a priori*. Spiritualists complain, and with very good reasons, of men of science who, like Huxley, denounce wholesale their phenomena whilst knowing next to nothing of them. Why do they do likewise with regard to propositions based on the psychological experiences of thousands of generations of seers and adepts? Do they know anything of the laws of Karma — the great Law of Retribution, that mysterious, yet, in its effects, quite evident and palpable action in Nature, which, sooner or later, brings back every good or bad deed of ours to rebound on us, as the elastic ball thrown against a wall rebounds back on the one who throws it? They do not. They believe in a personal God, whom they endow with intelligence, and who rewards and punishes, in their ideas, every action of ours in life. They accept this *hybrid* deity (finite, because they endow it most unphilosophically with conditioned attributes, while insisting on calling it Infinite and Absolute),

cellent volume by Mr. E. D. Walker. It is the most complete collection of proofs and evidences from all the ages that was ever published.

regardless of, and blind to, the thousand and one fallacies and contradictions in which the theological teachings concerning that deity involve us. But, when offered a consistent, philosophical and quite logical substitute for such an imperfect God, a complete solution of most of the insoluble problems and mysteries in human life — they turn away in idiotic horror. They remain indifferent or opposed to it, only because its name is KARMA instead of Jehovah; and that it is a tenet which emanates from Aryan philosophy — the deepest and profoundest of all the world philosophies — instead of from the Semitic cunning and intellectual jugglery which has transformed an astronomical symbol into the “one living God of Gods.” “We do not want an *impersonal* Deity,” they tell us; “a negative symbol such as ‘Non-Being’ is incomprehensible to Being.” Just so. “The light shineth in darkness; but the darkness comprehendeth it not.” Therefore they will talk very glibly of their *immortal* spirits; and on the same principle that they call a personal God *infinite* and make of him a gigantic *male*, so they will address a human phantom as “Spirit” Colonel Cicero Treacle, or “Spirit” Mrs. Amanda Jellybag, with a vague idea that both are at least sempiternal.

It is useless, therefore, to try and convince such minds. If they are unable or unwilling to study even the broad general idea contained in the term *Karma*, how can they comprehend the fine distinctions involved in the doctrine of reincarnation, although, as shown by our venerable brother, P. Iyaloo Naidu of Hyderabad, Karma and Reincarnation are, “in reality, the A B C of the Wisdom-Religion.” It is very clearly expressed in the January *Theosophist*: “Karma is the sum total of our acts, both in the present life and in the preceding births.” After stating that Karma is of three kinds, he continues:

Sanchita Karma includes human merits and demerits accumulated in the preceding births. That portion of the *Sanchita Karma* destined to influence human life . . . in the present incarnation is called *Prarabdham*. The third kind of Karma is the result of the merits or demerits of our present acts. *Agami* extends over all your words, thoughts, and deeds. What you think, what you speak, what you do, as well as whatever results your thoughts, words, and acts produce on yourself, and on those affected by them, fall under the category of the present Karma, which will be sure to sway the balance of your life for good or for evil in your future development (or reincarnation).

Karma thus is simply *action*, a concatenation of *causes and effects*. That which adjusts each effect to its direct cause; that which guides

invisibly and as unerringly these effects to choose, as the field of their operation, the *right person in the right place*, is what we call *Karmic law*. What is it? Shall we call it the hand of Providence? We cannot do so, especially in Christian lands, because the term has been connected with, and interpreted theologically as, the *foresight* and *personal design* of a personal god; and because in the active laws of Karma — *absolute Equity* — based on the Universal Harmony, there is neither foresight nor desire; and because, again, it is our own actions, thoughts and deeds which *guide that law*, instead of being guided by it. “Whatever a man soweth, that shall he reap.” It is only a very unphilosophical and illogical theology which can speak in one breath of *free will*, and grace or damnation being *pre-ordained* to every human *from* (?) eternity, as though eternity could have a beginning *to start from!* But this question would lead us too far into metaphysical disquisitions. Suffice it to say that Karma leads us to rebirth, and that rebirth generates new Karma while working off the old, *Sanchita* Karma. Both are indissolubly bound up, one in the other. Let us get rid of *Karma*, if we would get rid of the miseries of rebirths or — REINCARNATION.

To show how the belief in Reincarnation is gaining ground even among the unintuitional Western writers, we quote the following extracts from an Anglo-Indian daily.

METEMPSYCHOSIS

“Dissatisfaction with the results of missionary enterprise in India is the most prominent feature of cultivated Christian sentiment in these days, and it must force attention both to the mistake of assailing Hinduism with the mock-culture of cram . . . and to the intellectual weakness of many of the benevolent persons entrusted with the operation. The mistake has already been painfully illustrated in the incidents of the Madras Christian College disturbance, and it is not difficult to find an illustration of the attendant misfortune. In a missionary production of some pretensions an attempt is seriously made to confute the theory of the ‘Transmigration of Souls,’ which betrays an incapacity for metaphysical presentments and an ignorance of psychology that are unfortunate in any person undertaking such a task. Yet this effusion finds admission into a recognized missionary organ, and will perhaps be regarded by young missionaries as a triumphant display of intellectual strength to be coveted for the present and, if possible, imitated afterwards. And people wonder in the face of this sort of thing that the

subtle Hindu mind laughs at Christian assaults on its stronghold! The arguments put forward in the paper referred to are worth looking into one by one.

“The first is that metempsychosis ‘disregards the evidence of memory.’ Proof of this presumption is, of course, not attempted. It so happens that psychologists from Plato downward have called attention to the familiar mental phenomenon in which persons placed, for the first time in their lives, in peculiar circumstances, are suddenly invaded by the conviction that they have gone through the same experience before. Most big schoolboys remember the explanation that this phenomenon may be attributable to the reduplicative property of consciousness resulting from the double lobing of the brain. But even such boys can hardly forget that the phenomenon has also been regarded as evidence of a pre-existent state; and reflecting men must see that one hypothesis is as moral, as reasonable, and as scientific as the other. It may, indeed, be said that the latter hypothesis finds better corroboration than the former in the moral analogies of our nature. There is nothing inconsistent with the highest philosophical teaching, or with the moral lessons or the actual experience of Christ; in the occlusions of memory Christ himself, even in adult manhood, under the stress of physical entanglements, sometimes entirely forgot his pre-existent state, and, what is more to the point, some of its radically inseparable convictions, such as that He had ‘seen the Father,’ and ‘dwelt in the bosom of the Father,’ and held communion with Him ‘before the foundation of the world,’ and had ‘come down from heaven,’ and should ‘lose nothing.’ On any other supposition some of Christ’s most forcible sayings, and especially some of his most earnest prayers, would be unmeaning. If Christ, then, because of his temporary incarnation in human nature, sometimes became so oblivious of His antecedent conditions — of His inseparable oneness with God, with its ineradicable accompaniments and its predestined results — as to be able earnestly to cry out ‘My God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ and, ‘If it be possible, let this cup pass from me’: things which *neither could be nor were truly desired by himself* — why may not any other human nature, not inlaid with an essential divinity, forget for longer or shorter periods its state of pre-existence, if it had one? Is it contended that such infirmity, unattainable by fallible man, was possible only to the infallible Son of God? Once admit the possibility of occlusion of memory, and the duration of the interval and even its character become matters of detail. Theologians may attribute to immaturity of intelligence that apparent uncon-

sciousness of infants, which a keener insight may recognize as the inevitable hiatus between distinct conditions of a human consciousness. The babe being as perfectly human as any man --- and indeed being, according to Christ, in the highest natural moral condition of humanity --- the theory of a temporary occlusion of memory is not less philosophical, nor is it less moral, than the theory of undeveloped consciousness. No doubt the rank and file of religious teachers, perhaps because they have been so taught and fear to think for themselves, have decided on teaching differently. But this may only show that the rank and file of religious teachers are incapable of balancing philosophical equations and are not qualified for their great office. May it not also account for the melancholy fate of the religion taught by them in its conflict with Hinduism?

“It is gravely urged that ‘spirit exists *only* as it acts or suffers in feeling, thinking, willing. Spirit in any other sense is a meaningless abstraction.’ If this means that while spirit exists anywhere its experience must be registered somewhere, it is superfluous platitude. If it means either that temporary unconsciousness, in whole or in part, is an impossibility, or that every spirit must in every moment of its existence be fully conscious of all experiences registered in every other moment of its existence, it assumes what is contradicted in the daily experience of all human beings but idiots. Admit the possibility of a hiatus, and its width and depth are mere questions of degree.

“The second argument is that metempsychosis involves a ‘libel on divine justice.’ The alleged belief of the Hindus, that suffering in one state of being expiates sin in another, which is not essentially unjust, nor a whit less moral than the dogma of inherited or imported sin, may or may not be unfounded; but the first question is --- is the atonement of Christ incompatible with transmigration? If so, why? A single scripture text in support of this unwarranted assumption would be useful, for if transmigration is not inconsistent with the atonement of Christ, it is a waste of time trying to find out how or why it disagrees with any self-constituted religious teacher’s ideas of divine justice. It is easy for omniscient sages to settle definitely what divine justice ought to be. . . . For any unprepossessed mind there is certainly much in the Christian scriptures which is compatible with, and nothing that contradicts, the doctrine of a pre-existent state. In what conceivable way can the theory of a man’s being a fallen spirit or a risen animal, or both, conflict with what Christ actually said? When, for instance, a group, who evi-

dently believed in a former state of existence, actually asked him (*John*, ix. 2 and 3) whether a particular man was 'born blind' because of his own sin or that of his parents, he answered, *not* that they were harbouring a mischievous delusion — which was what he did in an unmistakable way when men in difficulty sincerely submitted real delusions to his scrutiny — but that they were mistaken in their opinion in the particular case. His teaching here may be fairly claimed, not merely as not being antagonistic to, but as being in harmony with, and even lending colour to, the transmigration of souls. If religious teachers choose to decide that Christ knew less about 'divine justice' than they, the issue must be left to awakening Christendom.

"The third argument is that metempsychosis 'is contrary to all sound psychology.' Nine out of ten of the religious teachers who glibly dogmatize in this fashion are such indifferent psychologists that they have no intelligent conception even of the scripture teaching — leave alone any more abstruse presentments — on the differing spheres of body, soul and spirit in the threefold nature of man,³ and would be sorely puzzled to explain in what way many of the higher human responsibilities are adjusted between their own psychic and pneumatic natures; and also what becomes of the unity of individual responsibility in the face of this tripartite allotment. And yet such persons are put up to grapple with pantheistic Brahmans on the mysteries of Vedantism! The first step in comparative psychology is to show in a reasonable way that Christian psychology (as taught by its former and immediate disciples, and not as excogitated by low-pitched ecclesiastical afterthought) is unfavourable to metempsychosis. This step has not been taken. The difficulty of taking it seems insuperable, and bland assumption of its ease can only be regarded as the audacity of ignorance.

"The fourth argument against transmigration is that it 'is opposed to sound ethics.' This is another of those almost comical assumptions cheerfully made by self-sufficient men, who begin by regarding themselves as the oracles of God and sole repositories of his mind, and naturally end by treating all they feel inclined to say as inspired; but for which, it is well to remember, there is no particle of authority in scripture, and no particle of proof anywhere else. All that any system of sound ethics can demand surely is that personal responsibility shall

³ The Christian scripture really teaches a *fourfold* nature in man—speaking of the natural body, the spiritual body, the soul, and the spirit. It is so far in close accordance with ancient Oriental ideas on the subject.

be attached to every intelligent exercise of individual will. How any conflict with this condition or any of its logical inferences can arise from the necessity for a future state of existence, it is obviously incumbent on those to point out who fling forth arbitrary assertions right and left. Every thinking man must be aware of a growth in his own moral consciousness by which a gulf has intervened between his present and his past: while his personality has survived to identify him, he is aware of distinct stages in his moral nature to which very different degrees of responsibility attach. How does this fact militate against sound ethics? Wherein, moreover, does the innocence of the ignorant child, who retains individual identity while sustaining differing burdens of responsibility involve any danger to sound ethics? In what sense, in which such innocence does not also do so, can a pre-existent state, of all whose burdens of responsibility a human mind may not be uniformly or continuously conscious in that region of understanding in which impression and expression constantly react on each other, 'annihilate the distinction between virtue and vice, right and wrong'? Any mind not determined to retain foregone conclusions must perceive that the words quoted are solemn nonsense. It is hardly a whit more silly to maintain that any hypothesis of the evolution of the photosphere must 'annihilate time and space.' The difficulty of disproving either statement of course arises from the utter absence of any connection between premise and conclusion.

"The fifth contention against metempsychosis is that 'it is not in accord with science.' Religious teachers are for the most part so imperfectly equipped in science that it is amusing to find any of them stepping out of the region of confused and confusing theology, in which detection is not always sure, into the domain of science, where exposure is certain, to lay down the law as from the 'unanswerable pulpit.' Only a generation ago Darwin tickled the scientific world and convulsed the religious by inventing 'natural selection,' by which animals passed on their types, so to speak, to the next of kin. No assumption of recent years partakes more of the character of metaphysical delusion; nor perhaps does any other scientific fad conflict more with the Bible doctrine that every animal and every tree is self-contained, having 'its seed in itself.' Every true physiologist ought to understand this profound truth and its striking confirmation in scientific analogies which cannot be explained here. Nevertheless nearly all the prophets — all but a thinking few — employed what wit the theory of Darwin left them in reconciling their religious sense (it cannot be called a religious conscience) to the

unproved hypothesis, apparently for no better reason than that it was greatly affected by clever infidels. But what is there in science that negatives the idea, if it can be sustained by evidence of a natural selection by which if there be any soul at all, the individual soul of a lower organism may pass by stages into higher organisms? Science, of course, refuses to accept anything unproved, and from this point of view a religious man's begetting another in the spiritual hope, or the spirit of God causing a man to be born from above, are out of the range of physical science equally with the incarnation of Christ. But if such a thing as a physical life independently of a body, or a spiritual life independently of a soul, can exist at all, it is not more unscientific to imagine the soul of a monkey passing at some time after death into some higher type of animal, than it is to imagine either a spiritual birth on the one hand or a mutation of species on the other." — (Allahabad *Pioneer*)

A THOUGHT properly employed, possesses a healing property; our life is what our thoughts make of it.

Nothing is so scandalous as a man that is proud of his humility.

Your manners will depend very much upon the quality of what you frequently think on; for the soul is tinged and coloured with the complexion of thought.

Such as are thy habitual thoughts, so also will be the character of thy mind.

When anything brings trouble, remember this maxim: this accident is not a disaster, but bearing it well may turn it into an advantage.

Our anger and impatience often prove much more mischievous than the things about which we are angry or impatient.

—MARCUS AURELIUS

THE WHY OF MORALS

Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. Use them as they will thee, for if thou sparest them and they take root and grow, know well, these thoughts will overpower and kill thee.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

BOTH science and reason have been the bane of 20th-century thought. Faulty processes of reasoning from particulars to universals have helped in the downfall of ideals. Since the spirit and soul of man cannot come under microscope and scalpel, their presence is doubted and oftentimes denied. Indulgence, so long as it causes no visible or violent upheaval, has become permissible. Society no more stigmatizes the departure from time-honoured rules. The thief, the racketeer, the trader of souls is welcome company, and the *élite* have in consequence become corrupt. A lie is not only tolerable under certain circumstances, it is permissible and even laudable as where nations break treaties and violate pledges. Thus, rights come to be trampled under foot, gratitude is considered a handicap born of sentimentality, and at each turn virtue is made to beg pardon of vice. Yet, a show of piety and virtue is not abandoned. It is still found to be a valuable cloak to hide the ugliness within.

A falling away from the paths of rectitude occurs when man feels that somehow he can get away with it, and that vice and sin do not necessarily bring their own chastisement. If, despite all that religion and morals say, a tyrant and a killer enjoys high status, enjoys life and dies a normal death without *namesis* overtaking him, why cannot such an instance be multiplied a thousandfold? Why can this instance not be held up as proof positive that there is no such thing as a moral law that has within it the power to enforce its decrees? When large masses of men come to lose faith in the spiritual and the divine, it behoves those who know even a little of the Wisdom-Religion to engage in its constant and steady propagation lest a sore-beset soul in its anguish point its finger at them and accuse them of failing in their duty to warn.

Since the correct method of proceeding in any study is to understand the theorem first and then apply it to corollaries and problems, it is always right to proceed from general principles to particulars and only thereafter and with the full knowledge gained, to complete the

circle and go back to principles. When the study of man is taken up, we cannot view him as a unit separate from other men or from any aspect of nature. We have to know him in his beginnings and acquaint ourselves with the powers that reside in one or the other aspect of his complex make-up.

Morals are laws which govern the behaviour of man in regard to one or another aspect of himself as also with other men and the kingdoms above and below him. However, before a study of these laws can be entered upon, the student of life has to trace man from his early beginnings and then, taking his various aspects for study, see how best he can conform himself in his relation to the whole.

Man is but an incarnation, partial or fragmentary, of a being of Light that has yet to gather its harvest on earth in order to reach immortality. Being too far removed from matter, this Being can only send its reflection or shadow in the capsule of the animal-man. It is this dweller within the body which, being left to itself for the whole course of an incarnation, forgets its source and origin, acquires a false sense of "I"-ness, and weeps and laughs by turns. This "I" of an existence with which all men are familiar is, as said, a reflection or a ray from the divine being who is its "Father." At death, it returns to its source, carrying back a rich or a poor harvest. During moments when it is freed of the millstone of matter, this lesser "I" basks in the warmth and closeness of its Father. During those moments it enjoys bliss, for divinity wraps it around to the extent that its uprightness permits. In moments when this "I" forgets its divine origin, it remains a mere animal of desires with a hundred times the power of the animal, for it can draw upon the forces which reside in it and which it derives from the fact that the reflection of its Father carries, albeit in miniature, the potency of that Father.

What is the mission of this incarnated and, for the moment, the separated ray? It has a purpose and a programme to fulfil. Like any ambassador or viceroy of a distant king, he is an agent bound by the policies of his sovereign, yet free at the same time to choose such avenues as he finds suitable to express and implement those policies. Every act, word and thought that departs from the policy is reprehensible to the king and therefore cannot be brought before his august presence. These departures at best represent the personal reactions of the earthly ambassador and must be jettisoned and left as the flotsam of an incarnation. It therefore follows that in order to enrich his king the ambassador must

at the close of his ambassadorship carry only that which is pleasant and acceptable to his Lord and Master.

It often happens that the ambassador gets enamoured of the sights and sounds of the kingdom to which he is sent. He neglects his briefing, reduces the volume of communication with his King to a trickle, and, forgetting the purpose and programme of his stay, entangles himself in pursuits alien to the king's wishes. When it is time for him to return, he cannot carry with him the fruits of his divagations. He may return empty-handed and will not be able to account for himself, in which case his sojourn has to be counted as a failure.

Once that the earnestness of life is understood, the questing soul has to find a new anchorage for his faith. For him the question is: Where is the stable, unshakable bed-rock; where the ultimate in Truth? To answer this, he has to reach out to fundamentals and verities which remain basic in both time and space. He has to assure himself that, if from the One Flame all the minor lights emanated, each differentiated point of light carries the essence of the One and rebecomes that One on the day of its reunion.

When the white light is broken up into its prismatic constituents, the white is no longer perceptible and to the uninitiated can never be recalled from out of the plethora of colours. Yet, science demonstrates that these same variegated colours can be made to merge back into the white from which they emanated. So too in nature and man. Man belongs to a ray which itself is a sub-ray from yet another hierarchy of — shall we say — colour. This same man can raise his consciousness above the mundane and, taking the colours — not missing any — clear them of all dross and then mix them into the pure, the synthesizing white. The re-constituted white is the same, and yet not the same, as the primary white that, entering the prism, emanated the seven distinct rays or colours. It is the same white but it has now stored within it the experience of each separate colour-ray. Call that ray by the name of a prismatic colour or call it by the name of a human principle — *Kama* (desire), *Manas* (mind), *Buddhi* (discrimination), etc., and the result is the same. The separated aspects when withdrawn into the parent luminary become that luminary, but carry back into it the tribute they gathered in their sojourn as separate entities.

Man knows not this because the old Wisdom has been forgotten and the new knowledge is becoming more and more entangled in the denser forms of matter. It is for this reason that he no longer knows of colours

and hierarchies, of rays and flames. He acts as does the child — dips his brush in any colour that pleases his passing fancy and produces a mixture that defies any colour definition. Can the man, by some self-devised process, precipitate each separate colour, make it primitive pure and then remerge the seven colours so that they lose their distinctive existence in the One which is also the Light and the Flame? It is not difficult to understand that if any colour retains an impurity alien to its nature, it is useless and the grand experiment must be held up till all the constituents have been made ready.

It is here that reincarnation proves most beneficent, for with a new body and brain and fresh vigour (checked by Karma) the process of purification or of precipitating the true colour can be continued without the haunting memory of past failures. Each incarnated Soul has this one purpose. All else is incidental. Each thus is a brother working in his own laboratory, yet dependent on the researches of others. Each may be a sub-ray of the same ray to which several belong, and unless the efforts of all — none excluded — are co-ordinated in harmony, the process may halt and be delayed over long incarnations till the lesson is learnt. In such a programme as this, harmony is not the mere achieving of a brotherhood of sorts. It can be attained where, even in the midst of intense personal activity, each unit lends a helping hand to the others lest the breakdown of one may retard the progress of the many.

To produce a pattern of behaviour which facilitates this, the Wise of old laid down norms of Duty or *Dharma* or Law. It is incumbent on each one that he keep his own body and mind in perfect health such as is ideal or suited to his work for the Great Cause. No glowing complexion and pleasing looks; no muscular development or exuberent energy — just the pure rhythmic vibration of mind and body that synchronize their purpose for carrying out their assigned duties for the incarnation. The body must not only be tuned to the correct pitch; it must moreover be made so responsive that it does not rebel when the Soul tries to mould it to its desires. All desires that are enjoyed at the expense of the life-energy are therefore to be avoided. They but drain away the strength and tenacity required for the lifetime's effort and must be recognized as deterrents on the path. Any thought, word, or deed, overt or covert, that hurts another or hinders or delays his work in the inner laboratory of his being becomes a sin — a hewing at one's legs and limbs, a shutting of the door against the vital contribution which it was the other's duty to offer.

As the student begins to understand the purpose of his own life, he begins to readjust the moral code and make it conform more to the pattern of his Soul's behaviour. A lie becomes reprehensible because it cheats another out of a truth, and primarily because a cause for conflict is created between parts of the one whole. Greed is the hugging to oneself of nature's bounty and therefore lessening the share of others who by right of brotherhood can have an equal share. Nursing one's grievances is the act of one who builds a wall around himself and cuts himself off from friend and foe alike. He refuses to take the bitter experience and thus misses the pleasanter. He vegetates and his life's laboratory receives nothing and contributes nothing.

Judged from the point of view of a purposeful life, many a law and convention of the day is found applicable to the particular society or era. A few centuries more and the law may become obsolete through disuse. The student who lives among the people of his era has to conform to their conventions and not provoke them to needless hostility. He must render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. The outer pattern of behaviour has to be adjusted to the prevailing circumstances. It is the inner attitude, the motive that governs thought and action which will determine the intrinsic worth of the experience. It is this and this alone which will help or hinder the effort to keep open the channel of communication with the higher spiritual spheres.

To bend life's activities to this purpose, special sets of laws exist — laws for which the physical brain can find no rationale. *Yagna* (sacrifice), *Dana* (charity) and *Tapas* (austerity) are rules as rigid in their application as any that deal with mundane living. Yet, they seem out of place in this age, for they are of little help either in amassing earthly things or in raising the pitch of sensual enjoyments. When even the presence of the Soul is questioned, how can people be taught the meaning of laws that pertain to planes where alone the Soul can act?

If the student of Theosophy is earnest and desires to serve the Cause, it becomes incumbent on him to preach and popularize a knowledge of these laws of the higher life. He has to demonstrate by reason and analogy the necessity for the moral code. He has to show by easy, understandable stages the purpose of life and the forces which are permissible to be used to reach the goal and the supreme consummation. The humblest can help in this as the most learned. The motive must count in this as in all things, for whatever is done in the name of the good LAW is bound to turn out right.

WORDS OF LIGHT

IN that priceless gem, *The Voice of the Silence*, the disciple is told at the very outset:

When he has ceased to hear the many, he may discern the ONE — the inner sound which kills the outer.

The very coming of that “inner sound,” that Voiceless Voice, seems to create a pure essential silence, a silence which, while it lasts, is, as it were, a state of *being*. (One tries to define this, but cannot.) And the words received in it have a bell-like clarity, yet are mute.

There is another Golden Precept:

The light from the ONE MASTER, the one unfading golden light of Spirit, shoots its effulgent beams on the Disciple from the very first. Its rays thread through the thick, dark clouds of matter.

The “great Master,” H.P.B. explains in a footnote to another verse (p. 3),

is the term used by Lanoos or Chelas to indicate one's “HIGHER SELF.” It is the equivalent of *Avalokitesvara*, and the same as *Adi-Budha* with the Buddhist Occultists, ATMAN the “Self” (the Higher Self) with the Brahmans, and CHRISTOS with the ancient Gnostics.

To hear the Voice of the Silence — the Voice of the “great Master,” the “*inner* God” — is to understand that from within comes the only true guidance. But to hear, one must first learn to listen. The Voice which enlightens and blesses needs the friendship of listening ears.

THE MASTER

*As the coming of light to the eastern sky,
so is the word of the Master to the awakening soul.*

1. THIS IS MY WILL

This is My will for thee: study My word; learn of Me therein; consider thy *dharma*.

Come thou freely unto Me.

Delight thyself in thought, meditation and inward turning.

Cease from vain talk.

Live by the light that is in thee.

Husband the resources of thy mind.

Thou must find Me in the light of common day; and yet is no day "common" that giveth Me to thee.

Dedicate thy tree of life to Me, the fruitful Sun.

Look long upon My word, until My truth break upon thee through it.

Seek Me and serve Me.

In all things seek Me and serve Me.

Doubt not; doubt destroys. Doubt dulls the hearing.

Trace the way by which thou camest hither, and thou shalt see the workings of My will.

Nourish in thee those shoots that have life.

Prune away the dead.

Learn well the lessons thou hast been given. Meditate thereon.

So shalt thou find knowledge which shall be to thee as fuel for the kindling of a fire.

In the cleansing of the heart is My will; in that and in the stilling of the mind.

Live by My light.

Listen for My voice.

Preserve thou those things which of old have been dear to Me—compassion, unity, indwelling, truth.

I seek not the fruits of thy *doing*.

Offer Me the one golden fruit of thy *being*.

Desireless, passionless, unseeking, pure, come to Me that I may give thee all.

Thou must live *wholly* to live aright.

Leave all lower thought. Reach up, reach up, as thou reachest up a rock-face, even though thou fearest that thou canst not find a foothold therein.

In the fruit-bearing season thou must bring forth, that thy blossom may be renewed.

Hinder not the Self by the self.

Cease from self-seeking, self-desiring, self-will; yea, and from judging others thereby — judging from the centre of thy “self” instead of from the centre of the Whole.

Come to Me wholly and thou shalt find rest.

Dwell in Me and thou shalt be fruitful.

Seek Me in the mirror of nature, till thou find Me in the fullness of My light.

Merge thy will with Mine; so shall all thy living be in Me. My will is as purifying flame. So shall all sense of separateness be dissolved away.

How shalt thou be clothed if thou wilt not cast off thy present garment?

Thou hast not raised the ladder of thy thoughts, the Golden Ladder linking thee to Me.

The Path is manifest. Walk thereon.

I will bring thee to the land which thou hast seen afar off.

Rest in My promise and prepare thyself for the journey.

Seek to know better thy Guide and thy fellow-travellers.

Thou must desire before thou canst partake, and must partake before thou canst enter into union.

Slay in thee all that is contrary to My will.

Cultivate all things in accordance with it.

What is Thy will, O my Master?

That thou seek for My light within thee.

When thou hast that, thou shalt see all.

Meanwhile, be as a keeper of My temple. Prepare that place wherein My light shall shine.

•
(To be continued)

If you like to slide down, you must like to push up.

—OLD RUSSIAN PROVERB

SLEEP AND DREAMS—A SUBLUNAR MYSTERY

V.—THE HUMAN PSYCHE

WHAT exactly is the human psyche, the theatre of our dreams, which has formed the main theme of debate by psychologists and psychoanalysts all these years? A major common feature in all their interpretations of dreams, it will be observed, is that in each and all of them there is the presentation of a problem — how to solve his Oedipus complex (Freud), his power urge (Adler), or how to integrate the forces of his racial unconscious appearing as *archetypes* (Jung). In each case the dream deals with an unsolved problem, and in whichever way we interpret it there is a movement to solve that problem, whether we regard it as a wish-fulfilment, a compensating power urge, or as dealing with a more deep-rooted moral problem.

But in all these approaches, dreams have no significance apart from indicating emotional disturbance. Of course, there has been great interest in the content and symbolism of dreams in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis particularly; but until recently the ancients' view that dreams may be *really saying something to us*, that we may be speaking to ourselves significantly through dreams, has been one to which we have not been accustomed.

One of the most trustworthy exponents of this view is the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm. In his book *The Forgotten Language* he holds that it is impossible to construct a single theory of interpreting dreams. The soul must interpret itself to itself and its relationship to its environment, which includes the personality. Dreams are "letters to be opened," since they must be made comprehensible to us by our own efforts. True, certain basic symbolisms, in the Freudian sense, do occur. But the basic consideration in respect to knowing ourselves through dreams is our willingness to accept the fact that we are like the iceberg; our psychological nature contains complexities, buried memories, impulses, and also moments of clear vision and inspiration that we do not bother to study, not having the faith necessary that all this is worth while to know more about.

It is a fairly common experience to have a dream suggesting that for *once* the soul within is able to see everything clearly; we are able to make a beautiful synthesis of all the discordant chords in our lives. We are able to see how everything should be, as in "the light of ever-

lasting right, and fitness of all things"; we are confident and feel able to understand all our problems; yet we can bring through nothing of this, in terms of specific thought, on waking. All this should reveal to us a power of the higher levels of our mind which, though we have not prepared the way for it to manifest, is nonetheless present. We cannot translate it in terms of our waking language, because we have not made ready the connecting link, namely, the *Antaskarana*, which in a footnote in *The Voice of the Silence* is defined as "the Path of communication or communion between the personality and the higher *Manas* or Human Soul."

This alone is sufficient proof to indicate to us that dreams are not mere hallucinations, but are significant as self-revelations of the human psyche. In the absence of a proper understanding about the nature of the human psyche, even Havelock Ellis finds the phenomena of dreams very puzzling and mysterious. In his book *The World of Dreams* he writes:

Our dreams are real while they last, but the interests of our waking life absorb us so entirely that we rarely have leisure and still less an inclination to subject our sleeping adventures, trivial and absurd as they must really seem, to the careful tests which waking intelligence is accustomed to subject more obviously important matters to.

The only way by which this difficulty or obstacle which learned scholars and savants face in the true comprehension of dreams can be overcome, lies in the gaining of the knowledge about the psyche which, it may be emphasized, is that portion of the Mind in nature and in man that lies between the purely spiritual and the purely physical. It is the *plastic* state or aspect of universal and individual LIFE, as distinguished from that which is fixed, whether by means of its perfection as Spirit, or because of its imperfection as Matter. The human psyche is the active agency of all progress as of all retrogression. It ranges all the way from seeming automatism, as witnessed in the forces of nature and chemical affinity, through the sympathetic and involuntary systems of plants, animals and men, through instinct, impulse, habit, up to the highest forms of intellection. Would it be too much to say that it is the "connecting link" as well as the "missing link" of evolution?

When writers refer to Spirit, Matter and Mind as three distinct entities, they are only speaking of the three great conditions of LIFE, the One Reality; and any Life in these stages may be perfectly organized,

partially organized, or unorganized. In man, all three conditions of Life are present. His Spirit or Self-consciousness, of which the ancient scriptures often speak, is alone eternal and indestructible. His Mind, or shall we say, the human psyche in this specialized sense, is partly evolved and, therefore, capable of perfection or dissolution. Finally, his body, composed of chemical and physical constituents, must on its dissolution return to its natural condition of "matter." Will science come to recognize that the human psyche is the name for the active middle principle of man's true being which links his self-consciousness with "embodied existence"?

What some thinkers have failed to realize is that the dreamland is not only part of the subject's universe but opens up a fuller and wider universe than that of the waking state. Because he is divorced from activity in relation to the objective universe, it is fallacious to conclude that the subject is unconscious. Even from the scientific point of view it will be seen that sleep is not merely for physical rest and for charging the weakened human battery, but is Nature's means of restoring the broken equilibrium in the psychic and mental spheres as well. The purpose of sleep was explained in the first work of H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* (I. xxvi):

Night rests humanity from the day's activity, and restores the equilibrium of human as well as of cosmic nature.

Nor is the world of the psyche, encountered every night, sharply cleft from the world of waking. Here in this practical world of objectivity must come about the right ordering and regulation of the human psyche. It is here that our contacts are forever made, ties of liking and hating, of sympathy and of repulsion. The psyche in us is expressed through our feeling nature — the nature that responds to joy and pain, to noble or ignoble ideas. However clean in life and pure in heart the aspirant may be to walk successfully through the mazes of this terrestrial sphere, cleaner by far and purer by many degrees must be the Soul eager to walk through the Hall of the Psyche, where the "Soul will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower a serpent coiled."

How many are the wrecks seen of too bold walking through the psychic world of supersensuous perceptions and of deceptive sights! How many have defiled the one "temple in the Universe" which is *within* each one!

Our body and mind have been too defiled by both Sin and Science to be outwardly *now* anything better than a fane of iniquity and error. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 651)

The Hall of the Psyche may be dangerous, but even as one must dive deep to get pearls, it is necessary for one to go into the inferno of one's own consciousness before one can discover and understand the meaning of life, which is the main theme of Dante's immortal classic. Ulysses was sent by Circe to the same Hall to get the necessary instructions before he could proceed in life's journey to his long-lost home. There he would find Persephone, Queen of the Shades, but also the blind Theban prophet, "whose understanding even death has not impaired." For, deaf though the prophet was, Persephone had left him a mind to reason with. Thus, Homer recognized the dangers of the unconscious, but also the functions of reason even in the unconscious, blind though it be. The descent into the unconscious is a necessary prelude to further progress in life.

It will be evident, therefore, that the human psyche is a double-edged sword capable of being sharpened to an intensity which, conquered, makes the aspirant go forward, but which, "ruling instead of being ruled," drives him headlong to every species of excess. Sleep, then, is like Ulysses' journey to Hades, an adventure into a far country, to which we may go as the wastrel or the animal goes, or the already hallucinated. In which case we return none the wiser for all our nocturnal wanderings. Having "gotten away from ourselves," we may come back more or less refreshed to resume our waking state, so-called, but which so far as our minds are concerned, is in large part day-dreaming, a kind of somnambulism of the soul not yet so considered by ourselves or even by our psychologists.

Although we may not know the real meaning, the psychological values, of the dreaming and deep-sleep states, whether in themselves or in their relation to normal human waking consciousness, and although our interest and our experience alike are intermittent and fragmentary, we can learn much by analogy and correspondence. The same is true of mental and moral life as of the physical. What the biologists and physiologists call metabolism goes on all the time, but is most beneficial during the period of repose — and who will question that, viewed from this side, sleep is at least the nearest to perfect repose of soul, mind and body with which we are acquainted?

Even as, during sleep, the body is automatically recuperating and restoring itself from the fatigue of the day, the process of restoration of our emotional life is working towards a state of readjustment and equilibrium. There is in the psyche an automatic movement towards a

readjustment, towards a restoration of the balance of personality. This automatic adaptation of the organism is one of the main functions of the dream, as indeed it is of bodily functions and of the personality as a whole. Such an automatic, self-regulating process is a well-known phenomenon in physics and physiology, for example the governor in the engine, the thermostat system and the whole gamut of cybernetics. This shows the extremely interesting principle that not only does a cause produce an effect, but this can in turn affect the cause by the process known as the "feed-back."

There are innumerable instances of the automatic regulating mechanisms in our personalities, which need, of course, to be guarded zealously if they are to be in perfect order. The protecting safeguards are inherent in valid ethical norms which have been formed by man's reason alone, and not received in golden tablets from the heavens above. Man is capable of discerning and making value judgments as valid as all other judgments derived from reason. The great tradition of humanistic ethical thought has laid the foundations for value systems based on man's autonomy and reason. These systems were built on the premise that, in order to know what is good or bad for man, one has to know the nature of man. They were, therefore, also fundamentally psychological inquiries. In the words of Erich Fromm:

It is impossible to understand man and his emotional and mental disturbances without understanding the nature of value and moral conflicts. The progress of psychology lies not in the direction of divorcing an alleged "natural" from an alleged "spiritual" realm and focusing attention on the former, but in the return to the great tradition of humanistic ethics which looked upon man in his physico-spiritual totality.

The Greeks seem to have fully understood the psychological implications of ethics as is evident in their myth about Cupid and Psyche, which represents the tribulations of the human soul (Psyche) prepared for initiation, after purification of passions and misfortunes. But many are the short-cuts taken to the land of Persephone by those who have been deluded in the belief that

Only by looking low, ere looking high,
Comes penetration of the mystery.

Among most uncivilized populations, as also among civilized people, certain ecstatic conditions are regarded as union with the divine. These states have been induced by means of drugs and in nearly every savage

tribe narcotic plants are used to induce strange dreams or hallucinations. De Quincey admits in pathetic terms the pernicious effects of opium on sleep. He writes in the most memorable parts of his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*:

My dreams are not calm; the dread swell and agitation of the storm have not wholly subsided; the legions that encamped in them are drawing off, but not departed; my sleep is still tumultuous; and, like the gates of Paradise to our first parents when looking back from afar, it is still (in the tremendous line of Milton):

With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.

How almost identical is this with the description of the state of mind of a drunkard during sleep, given in the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*:

It is no real sleep, but a heavy stupor; no physical rest, but worse than sleeplessness, and kills the drunkard as quickly. During such stupor, as also during the waking drunken state, everything turns and whirls round in the brain, producing in the imagination and fancy horrid and grotesque shapes in continual motion and convolutions.

A group of doctors from the State University of New York have recently been studying the effect of alcoholism on normal sleep patterns, and have discovered that drunkenness prolongs the dream state of Stage II from the normal 25 per cent of sleeping time to 100 per cent, depriving the sleeper of the deep-sleep stage. Thus the entire cycle of sleep is disturbed. One of the group, Dr. Milton Gross, suggests that "sleep disruptions may even be the cause of the alcoholic's psychotic behaviour. . . . When dreaming overwhelms deep sleep, the patient experiences the hallucinations of pink elephants and crawling insects instead of the less bizarre normal dream content." Dr. Gross speculates that the length of time that dreaming sleep dominates and holds back deep sleep may be an accurate indicator of the severity of the alcoholic's condition.

A drunken stupor is not sleep, and EEG records show why: alcohol, amphetamines and barbiturates may completely prevent deep sleep. When the amphetamines are taken in combination with alcohol and barbiturates, they may also bring on a temporary psychosis, or, on occasion, cause death. Even doctors have but recently been alerted to the fact that sleep disorders which look very much alike on the surface may

be caused by totally different physiological and psychological conditions, so that a drug does not necessarily have the same effect on one person as it has on another, nor on the same person at different times. Hence the need for caution against indiscriminate use of these drugs.

“Of all the means the psychologist commands to transform the genius of his mental life, none seems more inviting than the permit to enter other worlds by the magic of a potent drug,” remarks Joseph Jastrow in *The Subconscious*. From the fakirs of old to the hippies of today, this has been an easy way of escape from the humdrum round of flat and stale experience. A few whiffs of a gas, or a slight injection under the skin, or the chewing or smoking of a vegetable preparation is enough to transform character and personality completely and also to transport the individual to another mental world. Different drugs produce different effects and different hazards; but they all tend to lead to alienation and enslavement as they become a daily habit, and their impact upon a person’s psychological make-up shows itself in an impairment of his consciousness, his alertness and lucidity.

(*To be continued*)

WHEN the body sleeps people see the playground of the soul, but It they never see; therefore let no one wake a man suddenly, for if the soul gets not rightly back to his body it is not easy to remedy.

—*Upanishads*

I have communicated my word to thee in three ways: in dreams, in dozing, and when thy soul passeth above the heavens.

—*The Desatir*

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In our age, religion is no longer the predominating factor that it once was, and this is true not only of religion in the West. A probing study of the prevailing trends in Hinduism appears in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* for September 26, under the caption "Will Hinduism Survive?" The results of a random survey are revealing: The Hindus of today are ignorant of their religion and indifferent to their basic scriptures. They practise rites without knowing their meaning. Vaguely proud of their religious heritage, but without any clear notion of the true teachings of their ancient scriptures, they go through life with no religious commitment. The festivals they observe have no meaning to them beyond fun and feasting. Unconsciously, however, they are influenced by certain ingrained beliefs, which are all there is to their Hinduism. "In times to come," we are told, "maybe a new Hinduism will emerge, for Hinduism is not a 'religion' but *dharma* or a way of life that must be suited to changing situations." The article goes on:

Temple-going is still common among Hindus, giving the impression that they are all religious. But one has the feeling that people go to temples more in the sense of a social outing. . . . Sickness, financial insecurity, domestic trouble and litigation are some of the reasons for temple-going and for making votive offerings to deities. Such temple-going has developed into a cult in the South. . . . From all this it is wrong to conclude that Hindus are a religious people. . . .

Why are Hindus ignorant of their religion? Hinduism has grown like a vast forest over the centuries and one gets lost in it. The scriptures are so many and the commentaries, and the commentaries on the commentaries, are so numerous that a lifetime is not enough to be acquainted with them. Moreover Hinduism embraces everything from animism to monism and a Hindu does not care where he stands in all this. He has many alternatives before him, but surprisingly he does not exercise his choice — maybe because the alternatives are too bewildering for him to make up his mind. . . .

Apparently Hindus are no more "spiritual" than Westerners caught in the rat race of money and the infinite *maya* of sex. But paradoxically, despite the degeneration and hypocrisy, there still remains a substratum of spirituality in India. For Hindus cannot erase what is deeply imprinted in their Racial Uncon-

sciousness. Their spirituality is not expressed in any active quest for truth or *moksha*. It exists in the midst of rascality and lechery, in the midst of meanness and simulation — it exists like a lotus in the mire (to use a favourite Hindu image). And it is conveyed by Hindus in numerous subtle, indescribable ways. Karma and reincarnation are to them more than a dogma: they are like the air that they breathe. And Hindus cannot help themselves feeling that they are part of a cosmic scheme that is perpetually in a whirl. And their attitude of acceptance makes for harmony with nature and the world around them....

There is a growing awareness of the challenges faced by Hinduism today. Many people want a break with the iniquities of the past and feel the need to accentuate the higher aspects of the religion like meditation and the quest for the highest joy (*paramananda*).... This new awakening has touched even those who have been trained in modern science.... A new Hinduism may emerge in the days to come — that is, a Hinduism with all its lofty ideals of the past translated to the needs of modern man. Hinduism will survive as long as the *Bhagavadgita* is understood by people. The *Gita* has integrated a life of action with a life of renunciation. It has accomplished the impossible. And that is what life demands of us — reconciling *dvandvas*, or pairs of opposites.

India's great tragedy was the loss of the power of soul-expression through her own errors — sacerdotal and psychic; through her own sin of omission — non-attention to and non-application of the true teaching of great teachers like Krishna, Buddha, Shankara. India's great books from the Vedas down are obscured. Sacerdotalism veils the soul; *mantrams* have become mummeries; *pranayama* has degenerated into lung-breathing. Today *dhyana* is attention to worldly objects, *dharana* attachment to Kama-passion, and *samadhi* is vacuity. True Knowledge gone, false teachers rule. Corrupt philosophy has impoverished the soul and therefore also the body. What India sorely needs is practice of Soul-Knowledge as anciently taught, for this alone will help to restore the glory of this ancient land.

In the world of today, not only is war becoming such an everyday part of life that we hardly know what peace is, but it is getting more devastating and cruel. Many panaceas to end war have been tried — arbitration, world courts, mediation, prohibiting it, cooling-off, disarm

ment, neutrality, balance of power, leagues of nations and alliances — but with no visible sign of peace. It is becoming more and more evident that mere surface palliatives such as these will not end wars, and that something more basic is required.

Writing on "The Alternative to War" in *Gandhi Marg* for April 1971, James Warren Gould submits that to prevent war what is required is a fundamental shift in the attitudes of the entire culture. He goes on to show how love can be applied to international relations, for the basic attitude underlying a peaceful culture must be love. The three ways of knowing — intuition, reason and observation — all tell us, he states, that hate makes war, not peace; only love can create peace and abolish war.

In spite of all the theoretical support for the idea that our culture as a whole needs pacification, many do not see how it can be made to work in practice. We are constantly pressed back to the necessity of reforming ourselves, for love must begin with the individual. Unless we practise it in everyday life we cannot transform the institutions to which we belong, let alone our culture as a whole. To bring about such a change of heart is no easy task. Mr. Gould writes:

I feel that the most critical problem is the science of teaching love. Let me outline a few of the essentials. First of all, we must increase our studies of peace. We know too little about it, for our warring culture has studied war for ages in its war colleges and academies. Where are the Universities of Peace? For that matter, where can a student major in peace? Until recently it was even hard to find a course on peace in any university. Little wonder that we have few persons who can teach about it in high school or mothers who can tell their children about it. Clearly what is needed is a great expansion of the knowledge and teaching about peace at every educational level, from the nursery to adult education. We need world-oriented texts, we need peace curricula, research in altruism, and a Peace University. We need teacher training for peace and love. . . .

Among the things we need to educate about is learning tolerance, the art of peace through love. Far more effort must be directed towards eliminating racial bigotry, to teaching universal history and the unity of humanity. We know pitifully little about the techniques of peacemaking. Ask any diplomat where to find information and he will tell you it is an art that one learns, and few do. This is not deliberate evasion; the diplomat hasn't time to tell how he makes peace, and only a few scientists have

studied it. The linguistic analyst could contribute much by showing the role of speech in peacemaking. In fact every discipline in the university could contribute a great deal to the understanding of peace and love if research efforts were turned to that. Above all we need attention to practical training in the application of love to political change. The experiments of Gandhi and King opened the way and many of our young people are applying the method and finding new insights into the possibilities of love. The study needs to be used against the inevitable violence that will come with the breakdown of the old culture.

I am persuaded that peace is possible and not some utopia. I believe that it can be established if we apply and extend the knowledge that we already have in the social sciences which prove that love can bring peace. . . . Basic to all is the reform of our own selves. When we have adopted love in our own lives we will suddenly find that the rest of society has been transformed into one of love and peace.

As part of its programme for the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, Unesco organized a series of lectures on the subject "The Race Question and Modern Thought" (*Unesco Chronicle*, June 1971). In an address inaugurating the series, the Director-General declared that

racism and racial discrimination are among the major evils of our time. They have been — and still are — the cause of massacres. They are often a factor leading to conflict between nations or within nations. They are always the source of countless personal tragedies which are an affront to human dignity and an insult to the brotherhood of man.

Though the international community has formally committed itself in the texts of the United Nations Charter signed in June 1945, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted on December 10, 1948, and in Unesco's Constitution, the violations of these texts are so many and varied, so brutal and insidious, and their consequences so serious that they call for constant vigilance on the part not only of governments but also of individuals and institutions which in one domain or another are dedicated to this task.

Unesco's efforts have been directed not only to making an objective study of the causes and promoting practical measures to combat racism

and racial discrimination, but against all forms of discrimination. Besides this, there is yet another aspect of Unesco's action which, in the words of the *Unesco Chronicle* article,

consists in efforts tending to make culture in all its diversity a factor of harmony among men. To give the world's peoples the opportunity of appreciating each other's cultural values is one of the surest as well as one of the noblest means of dispelling the prejudices that divide them. Moreover, such mutual appreciation is a source of enrichment, since each culture is a unique and distinctive view of life and its significance for man. Racism, because it denies the contribution to universal culture of certain ethnic groups, certain civilizations, impoverishes mankind's common heritage.

It is generally agreed that our sense of humour is one of our most valuable faculties. Many thinkers have declared that the ability to look on the light side of things and to laugh at ourselves and our troubles is a great asset. It can help us contend with adversity, derive great joy out of living, and maintain our sanity.

An article adapted from Harvey Mindess' recent book, *Laughter and Liberation*, appears in the *Saturday Review* for August 21 under the caption "The Sense in Humour." The author is among the few psychologists and psychiatrists who have begun to explore the possibilities of using humour therapeutically. They are attempting to encourage their patients' sense of the ridiculous as an antidote to emotional distress.

It is not merely enjoying jokes or delivering original witticisms that constitutes the kind of humour that deserves to be called therapeutic. As stated by Professor Mindess:

- The extent to which our sense of humour can help us to maintain our sanity is the extent to which it moves beyond jokes, beyond wit, beyond laughter itself. It must constitute a frame of mind, a point of view, a deep-going, far-reaching attitude to life.

A cluster of qualities characterizes this peculiar frame of mind: *flexibility*, in this case an individual's willingness to examine every side of every issue and every side of every side; *spontaneity*, his ability to leap from one mood or mode of thought to another; *unconventionality*, his freedom from the values of his time, his place, and his profession; *shrewdness*, his refusal

to believe that anyone — least of all himself — is what he seems to be; *playfulness*, his grasp of life as a game, a tragicomic game that nobody wins but that does not have to be won to be enjoyed; and *humility*, that elusive quality. . . .

Each of these six qualities plays its part in the drama of the humorous outlook. The starring role, however, is reserved for another characteristic. We may call it the *enjoyment of the ironies that permeate our lives*. In order to command a therapeutic sense of humour, we must become acutely aware of the anomalies that run through all human affairs. We must come to know, not theoretically but practically, that the happiest relationships are larded with suffering, that the greatest accomplishments are anti-climatic, that rational acts are motivated by irrational drives, that psychotic thinking makes excellent sense. We must know that assertiveness is the mask of fearfulness, that humility is a kind of pride, that love is a euphemism for lust, that truth is the pawn of fashion, that we cherish our misery, and that we all are more irrational than we acknowledge. . . .

In order to encourage a humorous outlook in each other, we need most of all to keep such an outlook alive within ourselves. As love begets love and hate begets hate, the most powerful stimulus toward a self-engendered sense of humour in one person is such a sense of humour in his neighbour. So if we can perceive and accept the irony and ridiculousness of our own positions, whatever they may be, our perceptions will permeate our behaviour and help to expand the self-comprehension and self-acceptance of our relatives, friends, or patients. . . .

Because it raises us above our usual level of comprehension and allows us to accept what would ordinarily be unacceptable, our sense of humour is a coping mechanism of the very highest calibre.
