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“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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OUR NEW VOLUME IT CONTINUES ITS WORK

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, November 1951.—EDS.]

THE IMPERSONAL Divine Presence shines everywhere; in endless variety it reveals the invisible, makes music which numberless ears hear, and creates myriad forms of life to attract the human mind. It appeals to us all to feel the power of that Presence and to understand its message, at least partially.

Human mind in this civilization is so enamoured of surface appearances that it fails to sense the inner core of the Real. The outgoing process is predominant and overwhelms most of us. The human mind is not taught how to look within, is not aware of the indwelling half, without which the process of evolution could not be. The mind glides forth from its secure retreat, its refuge, the Spirit-Soul. It breaks loose from the protecting shrine, expands its web, rushing onwards; thickens its prison walls; then, beholding its material handiwork, says, “This is I.” The mind thus deluded tries to evaluate the radiance of the Divine Presence, and — fails.

The mission of Theosophy is ever to remind men of the Presence of Deity whose radiance in the great Without should be used for seeking its Source in the unrecognized Within. In the study of the manifested lives we fail to register the action of the One Life Divine. In following the dictates of the senses we miss out the presence of the Soul.

Even in the reading of books, and in handling the source material for reflection, the human mind is enamoured of the showy and the trivial, is fascinated by the glitter of the tinsel, is infatuated with the apparel and the make-up which hide the weak or the ugly body. People

look for truth, goodness and beauty, seek peace and joy, without asking what beauty is, where truth abides, why goodness should be practised. Feeling that peace is of the Within, still they go out seeking to obtain the joy which they fancy might perchance bring bliss!

Peace and joy, light and wisdom, virtue and power are of the Within. The Path of Return (*Nivritti*) to these is not far away; we miss out its existence as we move and move on the Path of Forthgoing (*Pravritti*). Every step of the Path of Wisdom is dual. We do not see this because we are sense-beings who move from North to South to East to West, always fast-bound to the surface of the earth. But we are Soul-beings in reality and should move from Nadir to Zenith with every furlong of Knowledge we traverse with the thinking-personality.

In increasing numbers men and women are longing for a settled life of security, of quietude, of harmony. Many, many feel the truth of the Within and grope after it. The outer man must seek knowledge of the Inner Ruler, learn that his true home is celestial, that his real powers are divine, and that he has incarnated on earth to contact the without in a compact form, a concrete sphere. He will not, by forgetting the Divine and fancying himself to be the sensuous.

The existence of the Inner Ruler recognized, the nature of its powers glimpsed, conviction will be born and force him to know more, to feel correctly, to will divinely.

These verities which the Elect of every clime and every season have always taught have to be repeated continuously. And the Soul of these verities is the Divine Instructors who, in endless succession, teach us to repeat, "Thus Have I Heard."

And so in the New Volume which we begin with this issue we will continue to repeat words which can bring to birth devotion. We must learn and teach that Devotion to human brotherhood and to the Divine Masters has a dual potency — it is the parent of virtue and of knowledge alike.

NAMASTAE!

[We reprint here, as of historical interest, the opening article from H. P. Blavatsky's *Theosophist*, Vol. I, p. 1, for October 1879.—Eds.]

THE FOUNDATION of this journal is due to causes which, having been enumerated in the Prospectus, need only be glanced at in this connection. They are — the rapid expansion of the Theosophical Society from America to various European and Asiatic countries; the increasing difficulty and expense in maintaining correspondence by letter with members so widely scattered; the necessity for an organ through which the native scholars of the East could communicate their learning to the Western world, and, especially, through which the sublimity of Aryan, Buddhistic, Parsi, and other religions might be expounded by their own priests or pandits, the only competent interpreters; and finally, the need of a repository for the facts — especially such as relate to Occultism — gathered by the Society's Fellows among different nations. Elsewhere we have clearly explained the nature of Theosophy and the platform of the Society; it remains for us to say a few words as to the policy of our paper.

It has been shown that the individual members of our Society have their own private opinions upon all matters of a religious, as of every other, nature. They are protected in the enjoyment and expression of the same; and, as individuals, have an equal right to state them in the *Theosophist*, over their own signatures. Some of us prefer to be known as Arya Samajists, some as Buddhists, some as idolators, some as something else. What each is, will appear from his or her signed communications. But neither Aryan, Buddhist, nor any other representative of a particular religion, whether an editor or a contributor, can, under the Society's rules, be allowed to use these editorial columns exclusively in the interest of the same, or unreservedly commit the paper to its propaganda. It is designed that a strict impartiality shall be observed in the editorial utterances; the paper representing the whole Theosophical Society, or Universal Brotherhood, and not any single section. The Society being neither a church nor a sect in any sense, we mean to give the same cordial welcome to communications from one class of religionists as to those from another; insisting only that courtesy of language shall be used towards opponents. And the policy of the Society is also a full pledge and guarantee that *there will be no*

suppression of fact nor tampering with writings, to serve the ends of any established or dissenting church, of any country.

Articles and correspondence upon either of the topics included in the plan of the *Theosophist* are invited; and while, of course, we prefer them to be in the English language, yet if sent in Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, or Gujarati, or in French, Italian, Spanish or Russian, they will be carefully translated and edited for publication. Where it is necessary to print names and words in Hebrew, Greek, and other characters (except Sanskrit and the Indian vernaculars) unlike the Roman, authors will kindly write also their phonetic equivalents in English, as the resources of our printer's office do not appear great in this direction. Manuscripts must be written legibly, upon one side of the sheet only, and authors should always keep copies at home as we will not be responsible for their loss, nor can we obligate ourselves to return rejected articles. Statements of fact will not be accepted from unknown parties without due authentication.

It is designed that our journal shall be read with as much interest by those who are not deep philosophers as by those who are. Some will delight to follow the pandits through the mazes of metaphysical subtleties and the translations of ancient manuscripts, others to be instructed through the medium of legends and tales of mystical import. Our pages will be like the many viands at a feast, where each appetite may be satisfied and none are sent away hungry. The practical wants of life are to many readers more urgent than the spiritual, and that it is not our purpose to neglect them our pages will amply show.

One more word at the threshold before we bid our guests to enter. The first number of the *Theosophist* has been brought out under mechanical difficulties which would not have been encountered either at New York or London, and which we hope to escape in future issues. For instance: We first tried to have Mr. Edward Wimbridge's excellent design for the cover engraved on wood, but there was no wood to be had of the right sizes to compose the block, nor any clamps to fasten them together; nor was there an engraver competent to do justice to the subject. In lithography we fared no better; there was not a pressman who could be trusted to print artistic work in colours, and the proprietor of one of the best job offices in India advised us to send the order to London. As a last resort we determined to print the design in relief, and then scoured the metal markets of Bombay and Calcutta for rolled metal plate. Having finally secured an old piece, the artist

was forced to invent an entirely novel process to etch on it, and to execute the work himself. We mention these facts in the hope that our unemployed young Indian brothers may recall the old adage, "Where there is a will, there is a way," and apply the lesson to their own case. And now, friends and enemies, all — *Namastae!*

Q.—If it is true that to ascertain the truth of the doctrines put forward by Theosophy many lives will be required after one has started on the Path, how and where am I to find that Path and to know it when I do?

W.Q.J.—Do not look at this matter as if you had never been on the path before. It is more than likely in every case where an inquirer asks this question, either mentally or of some other person, that he has trod the path in another life. Some hold that all Theosophists were on this path hitherto. Each life is a step on the path, and even though we may make many and huge mistakes, we can still be on the way. One should not be anxious to know if he is on the path by reason of a constant conformity to some set rules or regulations about a path. That anxiety is mechanical. Nature and the path of true wisdom are not mechanical, but for each soul there is a way and means suitable to it and to none other. By watching these mechanical ways mistakes are made. For instance, one becomes a vegetarian from a secret desire to get nearer the astral world thereby, and not because it is deemed a sin to take life. The rule will not be violated. Great inconvenience is undergone and much watching indulged in so as to keep the rule, and much attention and energy given to it which is taken from some other duty. All this is a mistake, for the kingdom of heaven is not gained by eating meat or by refraining from it. This mistake is due to too much desire to be sure one is on the path.

But it is not necessary one should know that he is on the path. If he uses his best reason, best intuition, and best effort to find out his duty and do it, then one may be sure the path is there without stopping to look for it. And the path for one persons may be the carting of packages, while for another it may lie in deep study or contemplation. On this the *Bhagavad-Gita* says that the duty of another is full of danger, and it is better to die in the performance of one's own duty than to perform most wonderfully the duty of another.

—*The Theosophical Forum*, May 1895

A YEAR OF THEOSOPHY

[At this time, when the Theosophical Movement of our era enters its 99th year, it is appropriate for all sincere students of Theosophy to review the guiding principles and Karmic currents that stirred the Theosophical endeavours carried forward by H. P. Blavatsky in 1880. This article, written nearly 93 years ago (*The Theosophist*, January 1881), provides a basis for a re-examination of the lines of work laid down by the Mighty Founders of the Movement and for a re-assessment of the efforts of those of us who are striving to follow in the footsteps of the Wise Teachers of pure Theosophy.—EDS.]

THE DIAL OF TIME marks off another of the world's Hours. . . . And, as the Old Year passes into Eternity, like a rain-drop falling into the ocean, its vacant place on the calendar is occupied by a successor which — if one may credit the ancient prophetic warnings of Mother Shipton and other seers — is to bring woe and disaster to some portions of the world. Let it go, with its joys and triumphs, its badness and bitterness, if it but leave behind for our instruction the memory of our experience and the lesson of our mistakes. Wise is he who lets "the dead Past bury its dead," and turns with courage to meet the fresher duties of the New Year; only the weak and foolish bemoan the irrevocable. It will be well to take a brief retrospect of those incidents of the year 1880 (A.D.) which possess an interest for members of the Theosophical Society. The more so since, in consequence of the absence from Bombay of the President and Corresponding Secretary, the anniversary day of the Society was not publicly celebrated.

It will not be necessary to enter minutely into those details of administration which, however important in themselves as links, weak or strong, in the general chain of progress, and however they may have taxed the patience, nerves, or other resources of the chief officers, do not at all interest the public. It is not so much explanation as *results* that are demanded, and these, in our case, abound. Even our worst enemy would be forced to admit, were he to look closely into our transactions, that the Society is immeasurably stronger, morally, numerically, and as regards a capacity for future usefulness, than it was a year ago. Its name has become most widely known; its fellowship has been enriched by the accession of some very distinguished men; it has planted new branch societies in India, Ceylon, and elsewhere; applications are

now pending for the organization of still other branches, in New South Wales, Sydney, California, India and Australia; its magazine has successfully entered the second volume; its local issues with the Government of India have been finally and creditably settled; a mischievous attempt by a handful of malcontents at Bombay to disrupt it has miserably failed.¹ It has made official alliances with the Sanskrit Samaj of Benares, that is to say, with the most distinguished body of orthodox Sanskrit pandits in the world, with the other Sabha of which Pandit Rama Misra Shastri is Manager, and with the Hindu Sabha of Cochin State; while, at the same time, strengthening its fraternal relations with the Arya Samajas of the Punjab and North-Western Provinces. Besides all this, we can point with joy and pride to the results of the late mission to Ceylon where, within the space of fifty-seven days, seven branch societies of Buddhist laymen — one Ecclesiastical Council of Buddhist priests, and one scientific society were organized, and some hundreds of new fellows were added to our list.

All this work could not be accomplished without great labour, mental anxiety, and physical discomfort. If to this be added the burden of a correspondence with many different countries, and the time required for making two journeys to Northern India and one to Ceylon, our friends at a distance will see that whatever other blame may properly attach to the Founders, who have never claimed infallibility of any sort, that of laziness assuredly is not to be cast in their teeth. Nor, when they learn that the work done since leaving America, the travelling expenses and the fitting and maintenance of the Headquarters establishment have cost some twenty thousand rupees, while the cash receipts of the Treasurer (exclusive of those from Ceylon, Rs. 2,440, which sum is set aside as a special fund to be used in the interests of Buddhism) have been only *one thousand two hundred and forty rupees*, all told, including one donation of two hundred from the universally respected Maharanee Surnomoyee, and another of twenty rupees from a well-wisher in Bengal — will those who direct the Society's affairs be regarded by them as making money out of their offices? And these figures, which may most readily be verified, are our only answer to the calumnies which have been maliciously circulated by some who did not, and others who *did*, know the truth.

¹ Secret letters by former members denouncing its Founders, sent to Parisian and other Theosophists and pretending that the Bombay Society was virtually extinct (its *best* members having resigned), were sent back to us with new protestations of friendship and loyalty and expressions of scorn for the conspirators.— ED. [*The Theosophist*]

sible obstacle that a selfish, sensuality-loving world puts in the way. What either of them has heretofore been, or either or both may in the future become, is quite a different affair. At present they only claim to be trying honestly and earnestly, so far as their natural infirmities of character permit, to enforce by example and precept the ideas which are embodied in the platform and rules of the Theosophical Society. Once or twice, ill-wishers have publicly taunted us with not having given practical proofs of our alleged affection for India. Our final vindication must be left to posterity, which always renders that justice that the present too often denies. But even now — if we may judge by the tone of our correspondence, as well as by the enthusiasm which has everywhere greeted us in the course of our journeyings — a palpably good effect has been produced by our appeals to the educated Indian public. The moral regeneration of India and the revival of her ancient spiritual glories *must exclusively be the work of her own sons*. All we can do is to apply the match to the train, to fan the smouldering embers into a genial warmth. And this we are trying to do. One step in the right direction, it will doubtless be conceded, is the alliance effected with the Benares pandits and attested in the subjoined document:

*Articles of Union between the Sanskrit Sabha, of Benares, and
the Theosophical Society, in the interest of Sanskrit
Literature and Vedic Philosophy.*

At a special meeting held this day — the President, Pandit Bapu Deva Shastri, in the chair — the Sanskrit Samaj, after listening to an address from Col. H. S. Olcott, President of the Theosophical Society, in which a proposal was made for co-operation between the two societies, unanimously adopted the following preambles and resolution:

1. *Whereas* the interests of Sanskrit Literature and Vedic Philosophy and Science will be eminently promoted by a brotherly union of all friends of Aryan learning throughout the world; and

2. *Whereas* it is evident that the Theosophical Society is sincerely devoted to the accomplishment of this most worthy object, and possesses facilities which it is desirable to secure; therefore,

3. *Resolved* that this *Samaj* accepts the offer made on behalf of the Theosophical Society and hereby declares itself in friendly union with the said Society, for the purpose specified, and offers to render whatever assistance it can for the carrying out of such

plans as may be agreed upon between the governing officers of the two *Samajas*.

Provided, nevertheless, that this act of union shall not be understood as making either of the two societies subordinate to the rule or jurisdiction of the other. . . .

These custodians of Sanskrit learning have promised to put in writing the precious treasures of Aryan philosophy, and to co-operate with us to give the facts a world-wide circulation.

The London *Spiritualist* remarked, the other day, that we were doing much for Spiritualism in India. It might rather be said we are doing much to make known the importance of mesmeric science, for wherever we have been we have spared no pains to show the close and intimate relationship that exists between our modern discoveries in mesmerism, psychometry, and odic force, and the ancient Indian science of Yoga Vidya. We look forward with confidence to a day when the thorough demonstration of this connection will give to both Asia and Europe the basis for a perfect, because experimentally demonstrable, science of Psychology.

MEN cannot all be Occultists, but they can all be Theosophists. Many who have never heard of the Society are Theosophists without knowing it themselves; for the essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his godlike qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, good-will to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to one's self, are its chief features. He who teaches Theosophy preaches the gospel of good-will; and the converse of this is true also — he who preaches the gospel of good-will, teaches Theosophy.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

ASOKA

THE FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE

For eight and twenty years Asoka worked sanely for the real needs of men. Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than have ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne.

—H. G. WELLS: *The Outline of History*

TRADITION speaks of Divine Kings, and it is a universal tradition that Sages and Seers incarnated as Sovereign Rulers to guide the steps of infant humanity. The further we go back into the history of any ancient people, the nearer we come to their era. In India, Ramachandra, and in Iran, Jamshed, are well-known examples of Divine Rulers. Egypt had her own; so also had China. They ruled not by the doctrine of Divine Right but by the recognition of Divine responsibility to early humanity. Their justice was compassionate and the people were happy and contented because the whole administration was born of deep spiritual wisdom.

This universal tradition has a basis of truth. Myths are not fanciful conjectures; they have a historical aspect and are therefore valuable.

Tradition speaks of such Divine Kings as the Fathers of their people; they not only ruled, they also taught by precept and example, arousing in the people the first feeling of devotion, and imparting to them the necessary great knowledge of agriculture, cooking, architecture and so on. Surrounded by love and tender care, early humanity grew up into virile young manhood.

Because they were not autocrats, the Divine Fathers gradually withdrew when those they taught claimed their birthright of standing on their own feet. Those Divine Fathers were confident that the impress of wisdom made on the very consciousness of child humanity would come to its rescue at difficult times and influence its growth at other periods. Aware of the workings of the Law of Cycles, they knew that in order to appreciate and utilize spiritual light and peace, mankind

has to pass through the darkness of pain. Cycles of life follow those of darkness, just as the morning dawns after every night.

At present our civilization is in a cycle of darkness. Mostly blind leaders of the blind occupy the seats of the mighty. But even in this dark and hard age called *Kali Yuga* — and even in what are called historical times — there have been Rulers and Kings who have resembled, however faintly, those early Divine Monarchs. Although not the embodiments of perfect Wisdom and Power, they have yet sufficiently blazoned their own soul-fire so that they readily remind us of the Rulers of the Golden Age. Such are only a few. An Asoka or a Marcus Aurelius does not arise often. But whenever these truly great rulers have arisen they have borne a common mark — the stamp of religious and mystical wisdom has been upon them. Inspired by deep intuitive vision, energized by the wisdom of the Sages, such rulers have tried to serve their kingdoms by helping their subjects to walk the path of Duty — not duty as we understand it ordinarily, but as we perceive it in our highest and holiest moments.

Some three hundred years before the Christian era, Asoka ruled a vast empire in India. Other empires, it is true, have been great also, but which can compare with Asoka's in the grandeur of its ideals and the magnificence with which these were realized?

Our concern in this article is neither with the history of that reign, nor with the life of that ruler. We are here concerned only with the inspiration which made Asoka the ideal Emperor and won for him the title of Dharmasoka (righteous Asoka). He was a Buddhist, but other Buddhist rulers, some of them well known, were not like him. That he was a staunch Buddhist and laboured for the propagation, far and wide, of the teachings of his Master, the Enlightened One, is well known. But what was the real spring of inspiration which made him so outstanding a figure in history? It was his inner perception that Religion did not begin, nor would it end, with the teachings of Gautama, the Buddha. He perceived that the Inner Religion of man, the Soul, was far more potent than the outer creed into which his body was born. He freed himself from the limitations of his own creed, righteous and grand as that creed was.

Between Asoka's own Inner Religion, Bodhism, and his outer Buddhism there was a difference which he ably reconciled. Buddhism was an aspect of Bodhism, and so were all other creeds. He did not try to make a new religion out of the truths of all existing religions as

Akbar tried to do. Asoka saw that Religion was one and indivisible, the different creeds being but the remnants of that One Religion which the Buddhas before Gautama had taught, trying to bring the world to Duty; and so, he realized, would it be hereafter. Therefore he endeavoured to bring his subjects to Duty and Righteousness through the use of their own creed — teaching them to go from outer rites to inner practices. All this must have been in his vision when he inscribed the following on the Rock at Girnar:

His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King is honouring all sects, both ascetics, and householders; by gifts and offering of various kinds is he honouring them. But His Sacred Majesty does not value such gifts or honours as that how should there be the growth of the essential elements of all religious sects. The growth of this genuine matter is, however, of many kinds. But the root of it is restraint of speech, that is, *that there should not be honour of one's own sect and condemnation of others' sects without any ground*. Such slighting should be for specified grounds only. On the other hand, the sects of others should be honoured for this ground and that. Thus doing, one helps his own sect to grow, and benefits the sects of others, too. Doing otherwise, one hurts his own sect and injures the sects of others. For *whosoever honours his own sect and condemns the sects of others wholly from devotion to his own sect, i.e., the thought, "How I may glorify my own sect" — one acting thus injures more gravely his own sect on the contrary*. Hence concord alone is commendable, in this sense that all should listen and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others. This is, in fact, the desire of His Sacred Majesty, *viz., that all sects should be possessed of wide learning and good doctrines*. And those who are content in their respective faiths, should all be told that His Sacred Majesty does not value so much gifts or external honour as that there should be the growth of the essential elements, and breadth, of all sects.

For this purpose are, indeed, employed the *Dharma-Mahamatras* [Ministers of Religion or Morals], *Stri-adhyaksa-mahamatras* [Ministers in charge of, or the superintendents of women], the officers in charge of pastures and other bodies. And the fruit of this is that the promotion of one's own sect takes place as well as the glorification of the Dharma.

The reader will note the institution of the "Great Ministers" (*Mahamatras*) for various departments, ministers who were not mere administrators but advisers, guides and instructors. But more particularly

should be noted (for it pertains to the matter of this short article) the distinction between “the promotion of sect” and “the glorification of Dharma” — the essence or vital element, the *sara* of each sect. What a boon and a blessing it would be to the India of today if the spirit of this Girnar Edict were taken to heart by the people, or at least by their educated leaders! “Concord alone is commendable . . . all should listen and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others.”

The aspects of the Buddhistic religion which appealed to Asoka most and which he recommended as helpful for the living of the life are not the well-known Four Truths, the Five Precepts or the Eight-fold Path. An Edict naming his favourite ideas — one of the Minor Rock Edicts — runs as follows:

His Gracious Majesty, King of Magadha, saluting the Sangha, and wishing them all health and happiness, addresses them as follows:

Known is it to you, Reverend Sirs, to what extent is my reverence as well as faith in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

Whatever has been said, Reverend Sirs, by the Lord Buddha, all that has of course been well said. But of such, what has been selected by me that the True Dharma may be everlasting I may be privileged to state.

The following, Reverend Sirs, are the passages of the scripture:

1. The excellent treatise on Moral Discipline (*Vinaya-samukasa*).
2. The course of conduct followed by the sages — modes of ideal life (*Aliya-vasani*).
3. Fears of what may come about in future (*Anagata-bhayani*) — dangers threatening the Sangha and the doctrine.
4. Poem on “Who is a hermit?” (*Muni-gatha*).
5. Discourse of Quietism (*Mauneya-sute*).
6. The Questions of Upatisya (*Upatisa-pasine*).
7. The Sermon to Rahula beginning with the Sermon on Falsehood, as delivered by the Lord Buddha (*Laghulovade musavadam adhigichya*).

These sections of the Dharma, Reverend Sirs, I desire that most of the reverend monks and nuns should repeatedly listen to and meditate upon, and in the same way, the lay-disciples, male as well as female, should act.

For this reason, Reverend Sirs, am I causing this to be inscribed that they may know of my intention.

The texts mentioned deal with the practical way in which life should be lived — the life not of the full-blown Monk, not even of the Probationer of the Order of Monks, but of the Householder.

The first outlines the Ideal Discipline for the householder. Asoka aimed at the purity of domestic life, for he well knew that the Family is the basis and the foundation of the State and that a corrupt family-life would rot the State in no long time.

The second outlines such personal discipline as each should exercise in regard to food, clothing, housing, etc.; and the practice of meditation necessary for such personal discipline.

The third gives instruction to avert future dangers — a kind of knowledge which fortifies us against fears of all sorts.

The fourth and the fifth hold out ideals of a high form of spiritual life in which control of speech and radiation of peace play important roles — ideals which are very likely to occur to pious, right-minded and right-practising householders, and these answers may arouse in such householders the desire for the mendicant life of service.

The sixth and the seventh give hints and information about self-examination, so very necessary for the living of a decent life. Our internal mental and moral hindrances have to be overcome and a purity of perception has to be attained, and for this guidance is given in the texts.

For those who vision human happiness in terms of physical standards of life, of political freedom and of social comfort only, the following from a Pillar Edict has a message:

On the high roads, too, banyan trees were caused to be planted by me that they might give shade to cattle and men; mango-gardens were caused to be planted, wells were caused to be dug by me at each half-kos, and rest-houses were caused to be built; many watering stations were caused to be established by me, here and there, for the comfort of cattle and men. Slight comfort, indeed, is this. For by various kinds of facilities or comforts, the people have been made happy by previous kings and myself. But, that the people might strictly follow the path laid down by Dharma, was this thus done by me.

THE SAGE WHO SAW THE OBVIOUS

I.—THE UNSOWN SEEDS

THERE was once a venerable old man who had a remarkable knack of giving good advice to all and sundry. Dim though his eyes might be outwardly, he always saw clearly to the heart of any problem and could offer exactly the right solution, thus bringing comfort to many troubled souls. Because of this he was called a sage, little as he wanted the title, being humble and under no illusions about himself, whatever others might say of him. "Nay," he would protest, "I am no sage. It is not wisdom that the Devas have given me. I will tell you what it is, friend—common sense. I have been blest with the ability always to see the obvious."

This was very well, and the Sage told no lie, for he spoke in all sincerity, not realizing that his mind was brimful of wisdom derived from his lifelong study of one little book. He had pored over it so deeply and constantly that, inevitably, when confronted with a problem, he heard the Voice of the Silence guiding him, and so was never at a loss what to say.

It had become an accustomed thing for troubled folk to seek him out in his little house, which was wonderfully well placed at the cross-roads, so that there was easy access to it from all the neighbouring villages. Sometimes even town dwellers came to him, often with business problems which the Sage found very dull, but often, too, with human difficulties such as even the wealthy and the cultured are not spared. To all he lent a willing ear, and none ever returned home disappointed. "Such wisdom!" they would tell their friends. "A true sage! What he doesn't know can't be worth knowing." But when they had gone, and the room was quiet again, and the old man sat musing in a shaft of golden sunlight, he would shake his head a little sadly at remembrance of the praise that had been heaped on him, and looking down at his folded hands would murmur softly, "*Thus have I heard!*"

"I am much perplexed, sir," said a young merchant, coming to him one evening. "Will you do me the kindness of advising me? One of my friends has profited greatly by your wisdom."

"What troubles you?" asked the Sage. (It would be foolish not to use a name so well merited.) "You may take it for granted that I will help you if I can, my son, but of wisdom I have little."

"I thank you," said the young man gratefully. "Well, sir, it is a problem to do with gardening. I know nothing about it, and the flowers I hope for may not grow. But, tired as I am with the hurly-burly of city life, I long for them ardently."

"Do not they thrive?" the Sage asked kindly.

"Well, no," said the young man, biting his lower lip. "And you know, sir, one needs some relief from the world of business. 'Tis a very hard, drab world."

"'Tis as men make it," the Sage said quietly. "But tell me a little more about the flowers. Was the seed you bought good? And when did you sow it?"

"Er — well," said the young man, looking not at the sage but down at his own sandalled feet, "Now you ask me, sir, the fact is — well — er — frankly, I have not sown them yet."

"Dear me!" rejoined the Sage, in a tone of mild amusement. "There is surely some error of judgment here, some slight oversight. Ah, but I am forgetting. Naturally your mind would be on your business."

"To be sure!" said the young man hastily, gladly snatching at this excuse, for it struck him now that he had been rather foolish, though in that same business he was always noted for his shrewdness. "I have dreamt of them so long, I almost thought. . . . But no, it seems I *have* overlooked the actual sowing. So —" He gave a shrug and an apologetic little laugh. "My fine blooms are non-existent as yet — mere figments in the void."

The Sage closed his eyes. Always, he closed his eyes when he was listening. Words seemed to form themselves within him. "*The seeds of Wisdom cannot sprout and grow in airless space.*" Then, opening his eyes, he surveyed his visitor, and could not but smile at the sheepish look the young man wore. "You ask my advice," he said quietly, "and here it is. Go away and sow your seeds."

"I will," replied the other, and as he spoke his expression changed. Quite suddenly he looked manly and resolute and met the dim old eyes frankly. "I am most grateful to you, revered sir," he said earnestly, "not for your advice alone, but for showing me my weakness. I have been an off-putter all my life, I know well, in things that matter more than business."

"Be so no longer," the Sage adjured him, "if you would hold the balance aright between your future weal or woe. I speak to you as a

business-man, you see," he added whimsically, "while at the same time wishing you success as a good gardener."

"I will do my best," said the young merchant. "I only hope, sir, that the seed I sow will be reliable. For once sown, it needs must grow. Can one count on it to flower as one expects?"

"Every seed, my son, will unfailingly fulfil its *dharma*," quoth the Sage. His voice was low, his eyelids drooped again. He listened, and once more, softly sounding in the cave of the heart, words formed themselves harmoniously and echoed the assurance:

"The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn."

"Accept my thanks, sir," said the young merchant.

The old man did not seem to hear.

"He has dropped off to sleep," thought the other, tiptoeing away. "Helping so many, doubtless as foolish as myself, must be a strain at his great age."

The old man continued to rest quietly, the sunlight falling warm on his thin folded hands. And the Voice of the Silence spoke on: "*Sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future harvests.*"

The old man smiled as though he saw them. "So much," he thought, half dreaming, "from seeds. But one must sow them. Without that, no future harvests. Sow *now*, my friends, sow *now* — the seeds of merit."

I HAVE lived in the pursuit of a vision, both personal and social. Personal: to care for what is noble, for what is beautiful, for what is gentle; to allow moments of insight to give wisdom at more mundane times. Social: to see in imagination the society that is to be created, where individuals grow freely, and where hate and greed and envy die because there is nothing to nourish them.

—BERTRAND RUSSELL

SUPERSTITION

[The following is extracted from an article published by H.P.B. in *The Theosophist*, December 1881.—Eds.]

OWING to the fanciful reports of superficial and prejudiced travellers, to their entire ignorance of Asiatic religions and — very often their own — Western nations are generally labouring under the strange impression that no people in the world are as stupidly superstitious as the non-Christian populations of India, China and other “heathen” countries. Unblessed with the light of the Gospel, they say, these poor pagans groping in the dark attribute mysterious powers to the most unseemly objects: they will stake the future happiness or woe of their father’s soul, upon the hopping crow’s accepting or rejecting the rice-ball of the “Shraddha” ceremony; and will believe, as the now famous Kolhapur conspirators did, that “owls’ eyes” worn as an amulet will make the wearer invulnerable. Agreed — all such superstitions are as degrading as they are ridiculous and absurd.

But greatly *mistaken*, or as grossly unjust, is he who affirms that such strange beliefs are limited to paganism, or that they are the direct result of the heathen religions alone. They are international; the cumulative production and necessary effect of countless generations of the arts of an unconscientious clergy of *every religion* and in every age. Adopted by the archaic priestly hierarchies, the policy of subjecting the ignorant masses, by working on the untutored imaginations and credulous fears, with the object of getting at their purse *via* the soul, was found effectual and was universally practised by the priest upon the layman from the first dawn of history down to our own modern times. Everything in nature, whether abstract or concrete, has two sides to it as every poison must have its antidote somewhere. Religion or belief in an invisible world being based upon a dual principle — God and Satan, or GOOD and EVIL, if PHILOSOPHY — the outflow of true religious feeling — may be likened to a filtered stream, on the other hand, SUPERSTITION is the cloaca of all dogmatic creeds that are based upon blind faith. Literally speaking, it is the sewer carrying off the putrid waters of the Chaldeo-Noachian deluge. Unstemmed, it ran in a straight course, through Paganism, Judaism and Christianity alike, catching up with its current all the garbage of human dead-letter interpretations; while on its muddy banks have crowded the priesthood of all times and creeds and offered its unwholesome waters to the adoration of the

credulous as the "holy stream" — calling it now Ganges, anon the Nile or Jordan.

Why, then, should the Western people accuse the non-Christian nations alone of such beliefs? Little does the "truth of God" abound through *such* lies, and it is showing poor respect to one's religion to introduce it to the stranger's notice under false pretences. History shows us that, while seemingly occupied in destroying every trace of heathenism, and condemning belief in ancient folklore and the effects of "charms" as the work of the devil, the Christian proselytizers became the keepers of all such superstitions, and, adopting them gradually, let them loose again upon the people, but under other names. It is useless for us to repeat that which was said, and better said, and proved by the statistical records of crimes perpetrated through superstition, in every Christian country. Beliefs of the grossest, as the most dangerous, character, are rife in Catholic France, Spain, Italy and Ireland, in Protestant England, Germany and Scandinavia, as in Greek Russia, Bulgaria and other Slavonian lands, and they are as alive among the people now, as they were in the days of King Arthur, of the first Popes, or the Varyago-Russian Grand Dukes. If the Higher and middle classes have civilized themselves out of such absurd fancies, the masses of rural populations have not. The lower classes being left to the tender mercies of the rural priest — who, when he was not himself ignorant, was ever cunningly alive to the importance of his holding the parishioner in mental slavery — they believe in charms and incantations and the powers of the devil *now*, as much as they did *then*. And, so long as belief in Satan and his legion of fallen angels (now devils) remains a dogma of the Christian Church — and we do not see how it could be eliminated, since it is the corner-stone of the doctrine of (now devil) salvation — so long will there exist such degrading superstitions, for the whole superstructure of the latter is based upon this belief in the mighty rival of the Deity.

There hardly came out one number of our *Journal* without it contained some proof of what we say. . . .

You can rob an army of its general, but you cannot rob the least of men of his will.

—CONFUCIUS

BE *IN* THE WORLD BUT NOT *OF* THE WORLD

FOR all student-practitioners of the Wisdom-Religion the words which form the title of this article are very important and significant. Theosophy exists today to enable men and women to live *in* the world but above and beyond the ways *of* the world. Theosophy condemns the idea of running away from the world, neglecting all duties and obligations in the belief that thus one may be free from the yoke of karma. This is an entirely wrong notion, for such a selfish choice can never bring true spiritual freedom. Theosophy always emphasizes the right performance of every duty, to be free from the subjection of the lower, personal consciousness and kamic propensities; for this alone can free one from the bondage of personal existence. Otherwise as soon as one returns to the world from his seclusion he would have to face again the enemies within and without. So it is best to live wherever and however one happens to be situated, follow the true precepts of the ageless wisdom, and fulfil one's responsibilities to the best of one's ability.

St. Paul advised his followers to "come out from among them and be . . . separate." This does not mean a sense of superiority over others, nor isolation from them; it rather implies the giving up of a mode of thinking and of living which is world-oriented. *The Voice of the Silence* teaches us: "Give up thy life, if thou would'st live." One has to change completely one's mode, one's attitude, one's way of life, and adapt oneself to the spiritual precepts given by all the great Teachers down the ages. Living *in* the world but not being *of* the world means becoming thoroughly detached from the lower self and living more and more in communion with the Divine Parent, the Higher Self, the ray of the Supreme Self. The lower self has to become a perfect instrument, a proper channel for the work of the Spirit within, for then only can it become the friend of the Higher Self and the conflict between the two will stop. What higher Lord can there be to give true guidance, solace and comfort?

It is essential to kill out all sense of separateness through a right understanding of the unity of the One Life, so naturally we look upon a criminal, a drunkard, or a wicked person as an unfortunate brother; but brotherliness does not mean that one has to follow their habits. Similarly, a priest with his rituals and ceremonies, and a rank materialist denying spirit and soul in man, though brothers, are entirely opposed in their ideas. Similarity of aim, purpose and teaching is the necessary

basis for the formation of a true brotherhood of those who live *in* the world yet are not *of* the world.

An excellent exemplar of such an attitude to life was King Janaka, who, though outwardly engaged in the affairs of State, was so detached from the worldly ways that he could lead the spiritual life of a Rajarishi. "He too, while *in* the world, was not *of* the world." (See *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 12*, pp. 5-6.)

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"The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real." So the beginning must be with the mind. It can enable one to go forward or backward, to be constructive or destructive, to do good or evil, etc. The seeds of karma are generated in the mind, peace and war start in the mind. Therefore in the human kingdom it occupies an important position. The gift of mind was given to mindless men by the mind-born sons of Brahma in order that human beings may become divine beings, fully illuminated and enlightened, with hearts open to the suffering of others. The roots of suffering are in *trishna-tanha*, thirst for personal existence. When that is put out, the mind can occupy its own place in the human constitution, and with the divine light of Buddhi can become a power by itself.

Emerson says: "It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude." It is usual with the majority of people to live after the world's opinion, whether it be right or wrong, without any serious thinking or positive choices, just behaving like a flock of sheep. So one has to question the why and wherefore of any step and then make a decision. It is also easy to be in solitude and lead a quiet life according to one's own ideas. The difficulty comes when one lives in the world, amidst pleasure and pain, tests and trials, contacting other human beings, facing conflicts, disturbances of one kind or another, and yet keeping perfectly calm and independent. Then it is that we live *in* the world but are not *of* the world. Where is the merit in keeping calm and peaceful in solitude? When everything is pleasant, it is easy to keep happy, but one has to be of good cheer in spite of the difficulties in the way.

This earth is known as the Hall of Sorrow and also as the Hall of Ignorance. It is in such a world that one is born, lives and dies. Herein are laid the traps to ensnare one's Ego by various types of delusions, the chief of which is the sense of separateness; therefore it is also known as the Hall of Ignorance. People are not aware of the true nature of

the Ego and of the human constitution, and therefore they do not distinguish between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the transitory, the immortal and the mortal. Thus moves the wheel of life from the cradle to the grave, man ever following impulses from without instead of following the true guidance from within in accordance with the principles of the divine Instructors. Through deliberate ideation and action the Hall of Sorrow can be transformed into the Hall of Joy, and the Hall of Ignorance into the Hall of Wisdom. These are states of consciousness and the man of mind alone can change, can raise his consciousness to a higher level, advancing step by step to the snow-capped mount of purity eternal. This cannot be done overnight; the great task is to be performed steadfastly and diligently through sustained daily efforts, and therefore are patience and perseverance so essential for the spiritual aspirant. This is what is meant by living *in* the world without being *of* the world.

To help nature and work on with her, understanding her great laws — the law of cause and effect, the law of cycles, the law of unity and harmony, the law of necessity — means to live *in* the world yet not be *of* the world. To rise above the pairs of opposites — success and failure, love and hate, heat and cold, pain and pleasure — and keep oneself equipoised, well balanced, is not to be *of* the world, though living *in* it.

Each one at his own stage, in his own circumstances, with his own make-up, physical, mental, moral, spiritual, can come out and leave behind this world of darkness and try to live in the world of light and truth, of wisdom and compassion, of peace and joy.

SAY ON, sayers! sing on, singers!
 Delve! mould! pile the words of the earth!
 Work on, age after age, nothing is to be lost,
 It may have to wait long, but it will certainly come in use,
 When the materials are all prepared and ready, the
 architects shall appear.

—WALT WHITMAN

THE TELL-TALE PICTURE GALLERY

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, June 1889, where it appeared over the signature of Bryan Kinnavan, one of the pen-names of Mr. Judge.—EDS.]

ALTHOUGH the gallery of pictures about which I now write has long ago been abandoned, and never since its keepers left the spot where it was has it been seen there, similar galleries are still to be found in places that one cannot get into until guided to them. They are now secreted in distant and inaccessible spots — in the Himalaya mountains; beyond them, in Tibet; in underground India; and such mysterious localities. The need for reports by spies or for confessions by transgressors is not felt by secret fraternities which possess such strange recorders of the doings, thoughts, and condition of those whom they portray. In the brotherhoods of the Roman Catholic Church or in Freemasonry, no failure to abide by rules could ever be dealt with unless someone reported the delinquent or he himself made a confession. Every day mason after mason breaks both letter and spirit of the vows he made, but, no one knowing or making charges, he remains a mason in good standing. The soldier in camp or field oversteps the strictest rules of discipline, yet if done out of sight of those who could divulge or punish he remains untouched. And in the various religious bodies, the members continually break, either in act or in thought, all the commandments, unknown to their fellows and the heads of the Church, with no loss of standing. But neither the great Roman Church, the Freemasons, nor any religious sect possesses such a gallery as that of which I will try to tell you, one in which is registered every smallest deed and thought.

I do not mean the great Astral Light that retains faithful pictures of all we do, whether we be Theosophists or scoffers, Catholics or Freemasons, but a veritable collection of simulacra deliberately constructed so as to specialize one of the many functions of the Astral Light.

It was during one of my talks with the old man who turned into a wandering eye that I first heard of this wonderful gallery, and after his death I was shown the place itself. It was kept on the Sacred Island where of old many weird and magical things existed and events occurred. You may ask why these are not now found there, but you might as well request that I explain why Atlantis sank beneath the wave or why the great Assyrian Empire has disappeared. They have had their day, just as our present boasted civilization will come to its

end and be extinguished. Cyclic law cannot be held from its operation, and just as sure as tides change on the globe and blood flows in the body, so sure is it that great doings reach their conclusion and powerful nations disappear.

It was only a few months previous to the old man's death, when approaching dissolution or superior orders, I know not which, caused him to reveal many things and let slip hints as to others. He had been regretting his numerous errors one day, and turning to me said,

"And have you never seen the gallery where your actual spiritual state records itself?"

Not knowing what he meant I replied, "I did not know they had one here."

"Oh yes; it is in the old temple over by the mountain, and the diamond gives more light there than anywhere else."

Fearing to reveal my dense ignorance, not only of what he meant but also of the nature of this gallery, I continued the conversation in a way to elicit more information, and he, supposing I had known of others, began to describe this one. But in the very important part of the description he turned the subject as quickly as he had introduced it, so that I remained a prey to curiosity. And until the day of his death he did not again refer to it. The extraordinary manner of his decease, followed by the weird wandering eye, drove the thought of the pictures out of my head.

But it would seem that the effect of the floating, lonely, intelligent eye upon my character was a shadow or foretoken of my introduction to the gallery. His casual question, in connection with his own shortcomings and the lesson impressed on me by the intensification and concentration of all his nature into one eye that ever wandered about the Island, made me turn my thoughts inward so as to discover and destroy the seeds of evil in myself. Meanwhile all duties in the temple where I lived were assiduously performed. One night after attaining to some humility of spirit, I fell quietly asleep with the white moonlight falling over the floor, and dreamed that I met the old man again as when alive, and that he asked me if I had yet seen the picture gallery. "No," said I in the dream, "I had forgotten it," awakening then at the sound of my own voice. Looking up, I saw standing in the moonlight a figure of one I had not seen in any of the temples. This being gazed at me with clear, cold eyes, and afar off sounded what I supposed its voice,

"Come with me."

Rising from the bed I went out into the night, following this laconic guide. The moon was full, high in her course, and all the place was full of her radiance. In the distance the walls of the temple nearest the diamond mountain appeared self-luminous. To that the guide walked, and we reached the door now standing wide open. As I came to the threshold, suddenly the lonely, grey, wandering eye of my old dead friend and co-disciple floated past looking deep into my own, and I read its expression as if it would say,

"The picture gallery is here."

We entered, and, although some priests were there, no one seemed to notice me. Through a court, across a hall, down a long corridor we went, and then into a wide and high roofless place with but one door. Only the stars in heaven adorned the space above, while streams of more than moonlight poured into it from the diamond, so that there were no shadows nor any need for lights. As the noiseless door swung softly to behind us, sad music floated down the place and ceased; just then a sudden shadow seemed to grow in one spot, but was quickly swallowed in the light.

"Examine with care, but touch not and fear nothing," said my taciturn cicerone. With these words he turned and left me alone.

But how could I say I was alone? The place was full of faces. They were ranged up and down the long hall; near the floor, above it, higher, on the walls, in the air, everywhere except in one aisle, but not a single one moved from its place, yet each was seemingly alive. And at intervals strange watchful creatures of the elemental world moved about from place to place. Were they watching me or the faces? Now I felt they had me in view, for sudden glances out of the corners of their eyes shot my way; but in a moment something happened showing they guarded or watched the faces.

I was standing looking at the face of an old friend about my own age who had been sent to another part of the island, and it filled me with sadness unaccountably. One of the curious elemental creatures moved silently up near it. In amazement I strained my eyes, for the picture of my friend was apparently discolouring. Its expression altered every moment. It turned from white to grey and yellow, and back to grey, and then suddenly it grew all black as if with rapid decomposition. Then again that same sad music I had heard on entering floated past

me, while the blackness of the face seemed to cast a shadow, but not long. The elemental pounced upon the blackened face, now soulless, tore it in pieces, and by some process known to itself dissipated the atoms and restored the brightness of the spot. But alas! my old friend's picture was gone, and I felt within me a heavy, almost unendurable gloom as of despair.

As I grew accustomed to the surroundings, my senses perceived every now and then sweet but low musical sounds that appeared to emanate from or around these faces. So, selecting one, I stood in front of it and watched. It was bright and pure. Its eyes looked into mine with the half-intelligence of a dream. Yes, it grew now and then a little brighter, and as that happened I heard the gentle music. This convinced me that the changes in expression were connected with the music.

But fearing I would be called away, I began to carefully scan the collection, and found that all my co-disciples were represented there, as well as hundreds whom I had never seen, and every priest high or low whom I had observed about the island. Yet the same saddening music every now and then reminded me of the scene of the blackening of my friend's picture. I knew it meant others blackened and being destroyed by the watchful elementals who I could vaguely perceive were pouncing upon something whenever those notes sounded. They were like the wails of angels when they see another mortal going to moral suicide.

Dimly after a while there grew upon me an explanation of this gallery. Here were the living pictures of every student or priest of the order founded by the Adepts of the Diamond Mountain. These vitalized pictures were connected by invisible cords with the character of those they represented, and like a telegraph instrument they instantly recorded the exact state of the disciple's mind; when he made a complete failure, they grew black and were destroyed; when he progressed in spiritual life, their degrees of brightness or beauty showed his exact standing. As these conclusions were reached, louder and stronger musical tones filled the hall. Directly before me was a beautiful, peaceful face; its brilliance outshone the light around, and I knew that some unseen brother — how far or near was unknown to me — had reached some height of advancement that corresponded to such tones. Just then my guide re-entered; I found I was near the door; it was open, and together we passed out, retracing the same course by which we had entered. Outside again the setting of the moon showed how long I had been in the

gallery. The silence of my guide prevented speech, and he returned with me to the room I had left. There he stood looking at me; and once more I heard as it were from afar his voice in inquiry, as if he said but

“Well?”

Into my mind came the question, “How are those faces made?” From all about him, but not from his lips, came the answer,

“You cannot understand. They are not the persons, and yet they are made from their minds and bodies.”

“Was I right about the idea that they were connected with those they pictured by invisible cords along which the person’s condition was carried?”

“Yes, perfectly. And they never err. From day to day they change for better or for worse. Once the disciple has entered this path his picture forms there; and we need no spies, no officious fellow disciples to prefer charges, no reports, no machinery. Everything registers itself. We have but to inspect the images to know just how the disciple gets on or goes back.”

“And those curious elementals,” thought I, “do they feed on the blackened images?”

“They are our scavengers. They gather up and dissipate the decomposed and deleterious atoms that formed the image before it grew black — no longer fit for such good company.”

“And the music — did it come from the images?”

“Ah, boy, you have much to learn. It came from them, but it belongs also to every other soul. It is the vibration of the disciple’s thoughts and spiritual life; it is the music of his good deeds and his brotherly love.”

Then there came to me a dreadful thought, “How can one — if at all — restore his image once it has blackened in the gallery?”

But my guide was no longer there. A faint rustling sound was all — and three deep far notes as if upon a large bronze bell!

—BRYAN KINNAVAN

MORAL education is impossible without the habitual vision of greatness.

—A. N. WHITEHEAD

AWAITING THE DAWN

Until a man has become, in heart and spirit, a disciple, he has no existence for those who are teachers of disciples. And he becomes this by one method only — the surrender of his personal humanity.

—*Light on the Path*

THE PRESENT Theosophical Movement was started on the 17th of November 1875. It was the successor of similar movements made century by century as far as detailed historical records extend. Madame Blavatsky was the accredited messenger from the Lodge of White Adepts for the 19th-century effort. In 1889 she wrote:

During the last quarter of every hundred years an attempt is made by those "Masters," of whom I have spoken, to help on the spiritual progress of Humanity in a marked and definite way. Towards the close of each century you will invariably find that an outpouring or upheaval of spirituality — or call it mysticism if you prefer — has taken place. Some one or more persons have appeared in the world as their agents, and a greater or less amount of occult knowledge and teaching has been given out. (*The Key to Theosophy*, "Conclusion")

Continuing the subject, Madame Blavatsky spoke of the effort of the 20th century and how, because of the impulse of the 19th century, men's minds would have been prepared for the message of the new torch-bearer of Truth.

As 1975 draws near, there is a spurt of conjecture among students. Will their particular Society, Lodge, Association (by whatever name called) be the one which will be used by the great Initiate? There are those who worry themselves over the question whether they have advanced far enough for themselves to be chosen as helpers and companions during the period of the new effort. Then, there are the weak in faith who feel that they would lose face if 1975 came and went with nary a sign of the new Messenger.

The initial caution to be exercised is not to read into the words of H.P.B. anything more than what they imply. The last quarter of a century consists of 25 years. During these years, there is the promise that the effort of the 20th century will be made. Whether it will be in 1975 or in any succeeding year, is not stated by H.P.B. in her *Key to*

Theosophy. But she does affirm that the effort will be in line with those of the past. She says: "If you care to do so, you can trace these movements back, century by century, as far as our detailed historical records extend." As for the other cases of apprehension, the anxiety is more about the personal position, the personal vanity, the personal humiliation or the personal achievement. The impersonal Self within each aspiring heart is a star, a ray of light which is immaculate within. To it, one thing and only one thing counts—that it reach to the ineffable flame and at the same time become able to shed the warmth of that Light on those whose life is steeped in profound gloom. To such an aspiring heart, the advent of Masters' Agent is an event for rejoicing for it brings to him further knowledge to adore and the added strength and opportunity to serve. The presence of the Messenger is a proof and a promise to him that he too may some day achieve and that he too may become a grain of incense destined for the same great altar. If he is chosen for service, he can bask in the warmth of a nearness to the great Agent. If he is not chosen, he can still carry on, still hold down a place, for he knows that "they also serve who only stand and wait." Organizations, societies and Lodges are but the ephemera of a day. If they become examples of unity and fraternal sympathy within and without, they serve a purpose. Otherwise, they are houses where mischief broods and uncharitable deeds foster. What matters if out of the furnace of effort, all societies are melted and dissolved and a new central unified organization emerges? What is important is that each one who calls himself an adherent to Theosophy energize himself and others in their determination to search, serve and sacrifice.

For those who kept the torch alive after the passing of H.P.B., there must be an inner satisfaction that they remained true to themselves and to Masters' programme. They tended the fire during the long, long night; they gave a meaning to Brotherhood; they propagated the philosophy so that it percolated through into the art and literature of the times. Through them interest was revived in karma and reincarnation the while the world went through decimation and wars, to come out sobered by the thought that brotherhood cannot be violated with impunity. Such students need no plaudits, expect no rewards. Their morrow is not built on wishful thinking but is left to karma to mould and frame. If it is their destiny to meet the Agent, it is good. But if it is their destiny to take birth again and again during those intervening years when the Agent withdraws, that is good also.

The stand taken by a few is best summarized by the following story which highlights a particular line of thought.

In far-off times, there lived upon a mountain top an Initiate of the ancient Brotherhood. Those who went to have his *darshan* (sight) returned transformed, so great his presence was. The news of his wisdom spread far and wide and many desired to see him. However, several abstained because of the dangers of the path.

One soul more daring than the others braved the perils of the way and, reaching the foot-hills, took his rest in the hut of a hermit. After sharing his frugal repast, he asked of the hermit news of the Wise One, and whether many had seen him. The hermit said that but very few ventured to the top. The hazards of the journey were such as imperilled life and many doubted whether the risk was worth the taking. The few who did reach the top and returned, came back enthralled, exalted. They all had the desire to serve the Master and to spread broadcast his teachings.

“But,” asked the Pilgrim, “have you not seen him, touched his feet, asked for his blessing?”

“No,” the hermit said, and continued, “I came here young and in health. I found the path blocked by boulders, strewn with thorns. It took months of effort to clear it and then the rains came and washed away my efforts. Again there were boulders and thorns; but they were now behind me. I could have resumed my pilgrimage.”

He paused as though he were re-living the moment, and then proceeded, “I went on, glad in the knowledge that I had surmounted the danger and the difficulty. Tired and taking my rest, I fell to musing of the long and arduous months when I did nothing but clear the way. As I sat there, I heard a whisper in the still and starry night to go back and station myself here in the midst of the dangerous way to keep it smooth for other pilgrims who, weary and tempest-tost, might turn away at the sight of the obstacles. I knew then what I was expected to do. Not for me to reach the top. Not for me to gaze on the divine face and fall at the lotus feet of the great Initiate. Without regret, I turned back. This hut has given shelter to many an aspiring heart, kept his resolve alive, fed his flickering flame. These hands have cleared the way for many a footsore aspirant.”

Before such sacrifice I was muted.

After some time, the hermit resumed,

“I am nearing the end of my life, I must pass on. Someone must fill my place. Years back, a youth returned from the mountain top. He was fired by faith and I basked for a moment in the warmth that an awakening soul spreads. He said he wanted an avenue of service. He asked my help.” A look of pity flitted across the face of the hermit. “I offered him the work that I had been doing. The youth could not understand the offer. He wanted to SERVE; to go out among the multitudes and carry to them the message of hope. He left, and here I sit and sleep and work till my day will close and the gleaming turns to night.”

Both then retired for rest. Early next morning, the pilgrim was ready to resume his journey. He searched for the hermit but he had left. As he plodded on, a voice from far away seemed to float out to the pilgrim in the still morning air wishing him godspeed.

THE DILEMMA of modern man is that though he despairs of life, he does not wish to die. The instinct for survival gives us hope. The enemy we have to fight is not capitalism or communism. It is our folly, our spiritual blindness, our love of power, our lust for domination. A gloomy anthropologist said in 1945 that putting a weapon like the atom bomb into the hand of an ape is guaranteeing the destruction of civilization. If we do not adjust ourselves to the incredible reality of the nuclear age, if we do not revise our old habits, if we do not recast our institutions, we will pass out. There is a conflict between ancient traditions and the emerging new ethos. All life is a perpetual conflict between the old and the new. The hero is the champion not of things become, but of things becoming. The dragon to be slain is the monster of the *status quo*. The enemy is in the seat of power; he is the tyrant who uses to his own advantage his power and authority.

—S. RADHAKRISHNAN

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Writing on "Our Fantastic Early Warning System" (*Fate*, June-July 1973), Sam Napier avers that most people have the experience of glimpsing the future at least once in a lifetime. It may be a dream that comes true or some other phenomenon. But some people make a habit of it. Fed into a computer, we are told, all these strange occurrences may one day provide a unique early warning system against disaster. The article goes on:

Each year New York airport alone receives around 1000 calls from people who claim to have foreseen air tragedies that are about to happen. Today nobody treats the callers as cranks and dismisses their messages with polite acknowledgement. It's the frightening accuracy of these predictions that sent the world's airports into full-scale alerts.

Not all the phone calls foretelling future events which pour into newspapers, radio stations and even government departments are about warnings from dreamland. The strange glimpses into the future can happen anytime, anywhere.

A psychiatrist, who investigated the premonitions surrounding the Aberfan disaster when the mountain slid into the Welsh village, found 72 people who claimed to have foreseen it. President Kennedy's death was predicted before it happened. . . .

Today we know that these strange, unexplained glimpses into the future go unheeded at somebody's peril. And the warnings and risk aren't given only to the great and well-known. . . .

Some people dream about the future — and their dreams come true. Others have visions in daytime in ordinary places. But we can't just call them cranks and dismiss what they see about to happen.

In *The Ocean of Theosophy* Mr. Judge explains:

In the Astral Light are pictures of all things whatsoever that happened to any person, and as well also pictures of those events to come, the causes for which are sufficiently well marked and made. If the causes are yet indefinite, so will be the images of the future. But for the mass of events for several years to come all the producing and efficient causes are always laid down with enough definiteness to permit the seer to see them in advance as if present. By means of these pictures, seen with the inner senses, all clairvoyants exercise their strange faculty. Yet it is a faculty

common to all men, though in the majority but slightly developed; but occultism asserts that were it not for the germ of this power slightly active in everyone, no man could convey to another any idea whatsoever.

Michael Phillips' article, "Memory Wizards Baffle Scientists" (*The Sunday Standard*, September 2), gives several instances of super-intelligent children, and considers how genius may be recognized in a child and what forms it takes.

A report in a recent issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* is quoted as saying that some children, called "hyperlexics," teach themselves how to read at a remarkably early age, become compulsive readers of any available material and quickly amass an encyclopaedic knowledge of data. A six-year-old London girl, Stephanie Dale, for instance, already has the knowledge of a university student. A special study of some of these superkids, carried out over the past four years by doctors at the Virginia University Medical School in the U.S.A., has so far failed to discover the reason for this amazing talent.

The life of such unusual children can have problems that are unknown to an ordinary child. One of the snags is that it is difficult to find other youngsters with the same interests and mental level. Education of necessity is geared to cope with the average child. Not only teachers but parents, too, have their share of problems in coping with exceptionally bright children.

Very often in the past superkids have failed to live up to their early promise simply because they have not been given the facilities they need and deserve. Educationists throughout the world are watching with interest the U.S. experiments in admitting a select band of near-genius children into colleges and universities, waiving the normal educational requirements. These super-bright youngsters have already startled both teachers and fellow students with their grasp of complex branches of learning, particularly science and mathematics.

Edith Stern, for instance, could read at the age of two; at four she could solve complex mathematical problems; by the time her friends were learning to read, Edith was immersed in the theories of Darwin and the philosophy of Kant. At 12 she entered Michigan State University, and at 15 she could explain problems in advanced calculus to university students much older than herself.

The article continues:

Bright and worldly though they are, superkids must be treated with care. Only selected children will benefit from an advanced education at such an early age and others run the risk of being driven into a neurotic shell or even into delinquency. Today, cramming the bright child's head full of facts regardless of their relevance is happily becoming a thing of the past. . . .

How can you identify a superkid? According to Professor N. R. Tempest of Liverpool University, he invariably has these qualities:

Perseverance and confidence.

High reading ability.

Precocious behaviour.

A wish for early acceptance in the adult world.

If he possesses all these by the age of six, your child could be one of the juvenile élite. Or, like John Pevensy who as a seven-year-old London child in 1945 possessed the brain of a classics professor, he could decide to become a beach deckchair attendant. . . .

Studies over the past two years at Yale University's Child Study Centre, and by child psychologists at London University, have so far failed to solve the mystery of the mathematical superkids. So did the only serious surgical investigation — carried out in 1967 — on the brain of a six-year-old Mexican child killed in a road accident in Tampico. The youngster could work out square roots in seconds and instantly calculate on what day any particular date fell for any year of the century. With the parents' permission, the brain was dissected and examined for abnormalities, but none was found. The surgeon who conducted the investigation said later: "It was an average brain of an average six-year-old. There was absolutely nothing to suggest that it was capable of abnormal activity."

In many cases the children who possess this uncanny calculating ability are strangely lacking in other skills. . . .

Psychologists at Stanford University in California have found that 20 years ago only 18 per cent of children had "superior" intelligence. Now the figure is around 25 per cent and still rising.

An article on "Premature and Phenomenal Growths" reprinted from *The Theosophist* in the THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, September 1936, offers the following explanation:

What the Occultists say, is this: humanity is on the descend-

ing pathway of its cycle. The rear-guard of the fifth race is crossing slowly the apex of its evolution and will soon find itself having passed the turning-point. And, as the descent is always more rapid than the ascent, men of the new coming (the 6th) race are beginning to drop in occasionally. Such children regarded in our days by official science as exceptional... are simply the pioneers of that race... The characteristics of the race that will follow ours are... a growth and development that in the present age (to the profane) appear quite miraculous... To us, occultists, believers in the knowledge of old, such isolated instances of premature development, are but so many more proofs of the end of one cycle and — the beginning of another.

The following is extracted from *Scientific Nutrition Book* by Dr. Dona Grey Kelly, nutritionist and biochemist:

In the beginning every one of you were created whole, but as the mind of man took control over spirit... so mind and body degenerated until the mind became more and more confused and the physical body became diseased and a channel through which to satisfy the lusts and passions of men.

Never can the three parts of man be separated. Mind, Body, and Spirit must work as a balanced whole, in order to gain his creative birthright. First, Spirit must control mind. Secondly, Mind must control the body. Then you are capable of living to the fullest, overcoming the physical body, making it a fit habitation for the Spirit.

This is by no means easy, but it is the purpose of LIFE to force us to find our way back to this perfect Trinity of Life. By regarding your bodies as a channel for the Living God or Spirit you make the first step toward fulfilling that purpose. When you sincerely believe this you will not want to pollute your bodies with unclean foods that putrefy and poison the body, filling it with desires of passion and greed.

You will learn to exercise control of your desires and to feed your bodies with live vital foods which nourish, cleanse and purify, not only making you clean in body but clean in mind and thought.

If you have never thought of it before it will be good for you to know that the grosser the foods, the more dead the foods, together with the poisons disguised under the labels of food that

you put into your bodies, the more vicious, more animal-like becomes the nature of man.

Also, when you live and feed your bodies from Nature's vital storehouse of clean, living, growing fruits, vegetables and nuts, your nature becomes refined, kindlier and simple; you begin to reach out for a greater knowledge of life and its wonders. Then and then only, you will begin to learn control of the mind... through which Spirit penetrates and awakens all forces of the Living God in all its beauty, power and wonder....

There is one point which must be stressed here: even in the vegetarian way of life, YOU MUST LEARN TO MAINTAIN BALANCE. ALL OF NATURE IS BALANCE. A MAN'S WHOLE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS TO LEARN AND MAINTAIN BALANCE. Mind, body and spirit must maintain BALANCE, in order to function well and develop. Man must learn to balance his foods properly, in order to supply the various organs and functions of the body with the right kind of fuel.

When you absorb this one fact and awaken your consciousness to the full significance of nature, which is BALANCE, then you are ready to seek and learn the ways of maintaining and working with this great law. You will see the wisdom of applying that great principle in all its ways. Commence, first, by learning to balance foods. Then as you refine, cleanse, and build up vital bodies, your minds will learn control and you will reach out to seek the purpose of life, thereby beginning to learn the balance of creation and to understand more and more the complexities of Life.

Under the title "Unsolved Riddle of a Dying Race," S. P. Singh writes in *The Sunday Standard* (August 26) of the Todas, the tribals inhabiting the Nilgiri Hills of South India. It is believed that their numbers are decreasing progressively, and the Government of India is now making all efforts to preserve this mysterious race with its quaint manners and customs. Despite intensive research in India and abroad, no more has been known of the Todas or of their origin than at first. Known as the "inscrutable mystery of the mountains," they have aroused various speculations and books have been written on them since they were first discovered in 1819 and their world, which had for ages remained screened from the unkindly stare of the inquisitive, was laid bare. Mr. Singh writes in his article:

Their stature, the erect carriage, luxuriant hair and the clear light skin, the Semitic facial cast, the easy grace that comes through generations of walking on springy grass — all combine to make one doubt if the Todas ever had been part of the Indian mainstream.

The history of the Todas is lost in the mist of ignorance. They hardly have a legend throwing light on their past. A school of thought holds, however, that they migrated to these hills about 800 years ago from across the Kanarese country-side. . . .

Some adduce their Jewish cast of countenance as a proof that they are the descendants of the now forgotten Hebrews who were driven out of their homes during the times when the tramp of Roman legions was heard across the world.

Captain H. Congreve of the Madras Artillery set himself to demonstrate that the Todas are the relics of the ancient Scythian invaders who, driven from place to place, sought refuge in the plateau which has always been inhospitable to the invader. . . .

Looking at the Todas today, memory goes back to the dark period of history when man was more naive and his ways were not so complex. . . . They have survived the ravages of time, staying pure and uncontaminated. There is no hospital, no school or any such appurtenances which crowd the civilized world. Free from all inhibitions, they live quite at peace with nature, fully unaware of how the world outside it spins.

There are those who hold that the *real* Todas, when first discovered, moved away to habitats which still remain untouched by civilization, and that those who pass under that name today are but their degenerate remnants. In *Isis Unveiled* (II. 613–15), H. P. Blavatsky refutes the many surmises, more or less absurd, that have been made about these people. She characterizes as “perfectly erroneous” the hypothesis that their fair complexion and peculiar features bear a likeness to the Jewish type, and adds:

Among the foolish rumours current about this people, the most erroneous are those in relation to their numbers and to their practising polyandry. The general opinion about them is that on account of the latter custom their number has dwindled to a few hundred families, and the race is fast dying out. We had the best means of learning much about them, and therefore state most positively that the Todas neither practise polyandry nor are they as few in number as supposed. . . .

We will try to correct a few of these opinions, as far as we have learned from a very holy personage, a Brahmanam-guru, who has our great respect.

Nobody has ever seen more than five or six of them at one time; they will not talk with foreigners, nor was any traveller ever inside their peculiar long and flat huts, which apparently are without either windows or chimney and have but one door; nobody ever saw the funeral of a Toda, nor very old men among them; nor are they taken sick with cholera, while thousands die around them during such periodical epidemics; finally, though the country all around swarms with tigers and other wild beasts, neither tiger, serpent, nor any other animal so ferocious in those parts, was ever known to touch either a Toda or one of their cattle, though, as said above, they never use even a stick.

Furthermore the Todas do not marry at all. They seem few in number, for no one has or ever will have a chance of numbering them; as soon as their solitude was profaned by the avalanche of civilization — which was, perchance, due to their own carelessness — the Todas began moving away to other parts as unknown and more inaccessible than the Neilgherry hills had formerly been; they are not born of Toda mothers, nor of Toda parentage; they are the children of a certain very select sect, and are set apart from their infancy for special religious purposes. Recognized by a peculiarity of complexion, and certain other signs, such a child is known as what is vulgarly termed a Toda, from birth. Every third year, each of them must repair to a certain place for a certain period of time, where each of them must meet; their “dirt” is but a mask, such as a sannyasi puts on in public in obedience to his vow; their cattle are, for the most part, devoted to sacred uses; and, though their places of worship have never been trodden by a profane foot, they nevertheless exist, and perhaps rival the most splendid pagodas — *gopurams* — known to Europeans. The Badagas are their special vassals, and — as has been truly remarked — worship them as half-deities; for their birth and mysterious powers entitle them to such a distinction.

The reader may rest assured that any statements concerning them, that clash with the little that is above given, are false. No missionary will ever catch one with his bait, nor any Badaga betray them, though he were cut to pieces. They are a people who fulfil a certain high purpose, and whose secrets are inviolable.
