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

—W. Q. JUDGE

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- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study ; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।



There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth

BOMBAY, 17th October, 1953.

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AUM

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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BECOME DEVOTED

Without devotion a vast confusion arises within us that has been likened by some to a whirling motion, by others to the intrushing overpowering flow of turbid waters. (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 76)

Devotion must be obtained, sought after, desired, cultivated. The disciple must learn to do every act with the Divine in view, and the Divine in everything. (*Ibid.*, p. 100)

The term devotion is variously used. In common parlance a man is devoted to his vocation and even to his recreation; a woman is devoted to her husband or children; a patriot is devoted to his country.

But the term has a more definite connotation in the sphere of religion: a devout man is faithful to his church and creed; thus a church-going Christian, or an orthodox Muslim, with the observance of his five-times-a-day prayer and of his *jumma* days, and his Hindu, Zoroastrian or Judaic counterparts, are all said to be men and women of devotion; all such observe the formulary of their respective creeds. Then there are those, cleaving to worldly existence but watchful of the temptations of the flesh and the devil, endeavouring to live their religion, not only in a formal, outer way by the letter of the law, but also inwardly by the spirit thereof, who are respected as truly devout. There is also the other type of sectarians who "give up the world" and pursue a discipline with its ascetic practices and sometimes even with a programme of service and altruism. All such belong to some "holy order," to some organization with its *yogi* cult or *fakir* tradition, etc. These also are called men of devotion and the term is used with a special significance and implication. A sectarian who practises set mystical exercises of meditation, prayer and worship, under the ægis of some organized religion, is spoken of as a devotee. The objective of such "devotional" living is the finding of Christ, or union with the Beloved, or the realizing of God—always with the desire of feeling

the joy of the Spirit. Such a devotee is the Hindu *yogi* or the Muslim *fakir* or the Christian monk and, however holy and harmless they may be, they are sectarians still.

These sectarian devotees, rising to pure heights, experience what a Thomas à Kempis or a Kabir has recorded. Such men and women of devotion, or *bhakti*, are not always possessors of knowledge about Deity—they gain in and by feeling and are often satisfied, but their realization is lacunous.

Theosophy is the Science of Devotion. W. Q. Judge in his priceless instructions has emphasized the value of devotion. He reiterates the warning to the aspirant not to be exclusive, but to attempt an all-round development, to acquire knowledge and to do good works, both on the plane of duty and on that of sacrifice; but he constantly emphasizes the importance and value of devotion.

To comprehend adequately his teachings it is necessary to note that he endows the term devotion with a special significance.

In living the higher life the objective should be, if the practitioner is to succeed, the recognition of humanity as a hierarchy of souls, divine and immortal, rooted in and related to sub- and super-mundane hosts of intelligences. To acquire knowledge of why and how this is so, to render help and service to humanity along correct lines, to be devoted to it with Compassion and Sacrifice and to attain Union with it—all these are aspects of the life of true devotion or *bhakti*.

Mr. Judge renders the term *yoga* as devotion; thus in giving names to almost all the chapters of the *Gita* he uses the word "devotion" for the original "*yoga*"—e.g., "Devotion Through Application to the Sankhya Doctrine" or "Devotion Through the Right Performance of Action" for *Karma-Yoga*, and so on. If we turn to the title of the twelfth chapter, which Mr. Judge renders as "Devotion by Means of Faith," literally it ought to be "Devotion by Means of Devotion" (*Bhakti*). This indicates that a life of devotion is a life which aims at Union with the Supreme Spirit, is a life in which *yoga*—the yoke of the lower animal nature—is recognized, its purpose perceived, and union with the Supreme, transcendent and immanent, is achieved. Thus Mr. Judge's exposition of "Devotion" shows a lofty and sublime way of attainment for the human soul, who raises the animal in him, elevates the human in him and knows the Divine Eternal.

Next, Mr. Judge, being a true Theosophist, has naturally no use for sectarianism in ordinary life, still less in the exercises of the higher life. The object of the true devotee is the One Deity, the Sublime Spirit, the Supreme Self—above the God of any and every sectarian religion—the universal and impersonal Deity. It is necessary for us to distinguish between a Hindu or a Christian devotee, a *bhakta* or a *yogi* and a Theosophical devotee. But unless the Theosophical student rises above the dogmas of his creed, the sectarianism of his caste or class, the fetters forged by his nation and race, he cannot become a true devotee in the Theosophical sense. The early steps in unfolding true devotion consist in rising above such divisive forces, in feeling the Divine Presence, knowing the forces which operate in living nature, and realizing the Powers of the Spirit.

Mr. Judge values the *Bhagavad-Gita* as a book of this lofty Devotion—Union—and he instructs the student-aspirant to facilitate his attempt at living the higher life by becoming devoted.

We have culled from the *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* by W. Q. Judge and Robert Crosbie some significant passages on this important subject. To begin with, the book lays down this fundamental:—

The Western mind may find a difficulty in grasping the idea of devotion to that which is everywhere, for the common acceptance of the term implies an object to which one may devote himself; here, however, devotion is shown to be a quality inherent in the one who perceives and not in any object seen and is therefore applicable universally as well as in particular. (P. 145)

We would say, nowadays, that there is little difference between the so-called educated mind of an Oriental and that of an Occidental; and for the "practical man of affairs" in India, China or Japan there now exists the same difficulty as for the Westerner, to which Mr. Judge refers above.

Next, the book explains the leading thesis on the subject of devotion:—

Throughout the dialogue Krishna speaks of the various paths of devotion taken by men. Most of these paths are taken in order to obtain some coveted reward, such as freedom from rebirth, enjoyment of the individual's ideal of happiness after release from the body; individual salvation. He shows that all these rewards may be obtained by constant effort, but that all are temporary in duration, necessitating a return to earthly existence at some later period, however remote. "The Brahmacharya labouring for salvation," labours for himself alone; he "goeth to the supreme goal," but in that state is beyond the power of helping his fellow men. Although he may remain in that blissful state for an immense period of time, the duties to his fellow men which he set aside in order to obtain salvation for himself, will inevitably place him where those duties have to be faced and fulfilled. The case of such an one is quite different from "those great-souled ones who have attained to supreme perfection" in knowledge and universal duty. (P. 149)

Then the practitioner of devotion should clear his consciousness and impress it with the right doctrine regarding living in the world and fulfilling his Dharma and Karma. Mr. Judge asserts the value of the Religion of Works, or the treading of the Path of Action, *Karma-Marga*, in living the life of devotion. In one place he goes so far as to say that action and devotion can achieve what the learned man does not achieve by his knowledge. The following extract gives a good basis for a quiet reflection:—

In history and in our own experience there is abundant evidence that the *Bhagavad-Gita* is right in saying "spiritual knowledge includes every action without exception," and that it is to be attained by means of devotion. Ignorant men who had no access

to books have by their inward sense perceived the real truth of things, not only those round about them, but relating to the larger concerns of nature.... The reason is that these men have attained to devotion, and thereby cleared away from before the eye of the soul the clouds of sense whose shadows obscure our view of truth. I do not decry or despise learning; it is a great possession; but if the learned man were also a devoted one in the sense of the Bhagavad-Gita, how much wider would be the sweep of his intellection no one could calculate. (Pp. 75-76)

But how should a lay student, aspiring to become a devotee, begin? Our text-book advises the development of that attitude of mind which values inner faith and the first step is overcoming the tendency to doubt.

The perfection of this spiritual knowledge is reached by strengthening faith and expelling doubt through devotion and restraint. Then occurs a verse, almost the same as one in the New Testament, "the man of doubtful mind enjoys neither this world nor the other, nor final beatitude." (P. 110)

Knowledge can be obtained by study; often doubt is the companion of mental laziness. Assimilated knowledge dispels doubt and brings faith to birth. One sure result of a growing understanding of our Theosophical teachings is the ardent wish to act rightly. Between inner motivation and outer behaviour some conflict arises and the practising devotee is given the principle of conduct in the performance of deeds. Commenting on the fifth chapter of the *Gita* Mr. Judge writes:—

In the twelfth verse we find the remedy for the difficulty, as well as the difficulty itself, clearly stated thus: "The right performer of action, abandoning fruit of action, attains to rest through devotion; the wrong performer of action, attached to fruit thereof on account of desire, remains bound." (P. 123)

Here we find the relation between devotion and action. There cannot come to birth the right kind of devotion in the lay student who has to live in the world yet be not of it, unless doubt is dispelled by growing faith, and unless in the performance of duties and sacrifices mental abnegation of the desire for fruits and mental devotion to doing right with detachment is undertaken.

When this is persisted in for a period the student-aspirant is leaving behind the plane of personality and approaching the plane of the Soul, the Watcher, who is called the Victim of our lower

self. Unless a proper balance between faith-motivation and detachment in action is established the student meets an important difficulty.

Mr. Judge, commenting on the second chapter in which *Buddhi-Yoga* is explained, says:—

Many would-be occultists, as well as some theosophists, leave out of sight this chapter's teaching. Devotion has no charms for them; they leave it to those who would be good men, no matter what their creed or philosophy, and attention is paid to reading books, either new or old, upon magic, upon ceremonial, or any other of the manifold delusions. Nor is this erroneous practice newly risen. (P. 71)

Unless the "charm" of devotion is felt intelligently the student is bound to encounter the important difficulty thus explained in our text-book. If the weakness of doubt is not eliminated it arises within the consciousness with great force. The pride and egotism of the personality strengthen that doubt and the student is sent staggering to his fall.

To be a true renouncer of action and a devotee one must put the problem on another plane. On the physical brain plane there is no way of reconciling a contradiction such as appears to exist in the direction to perform actions and yet renounce their performance. It is exactly here that many readers of the *Bhagavad-Gita* stop and are confused. They have for so long been accustomed to thinking of the physical and living in it, the terms used for their thought are so material in their application, that, seeing this contradiction, they say that the book will not benefit them. But considering the difficulty from the view that the real actor is the mind, that acts are not the dead outward expressions of them, but are the thoughts themselves, we can see how one can be both a renouncer and a devotee. (P. 127)

In this dual practice of developing faith and doing deeds with detachment the student learns, if he is assiduous, that "the real actor is the mind." In learning this lesson he distinguishes between the influences generated by his sensorium and the function of the mind gaining more and more of detachment. If he is successful in taking this step and in maintaining the ground gained he finds himself more an intelligence in the world of mind and soul and the unfoldment of his devotion makes him a potent altruist who has calmness of heart and tranquillity of senses. Of this Mr. Judge writes:—

Let this right attitude be taken, and what follows is described in this chapter [Chapter IV]:

"A man who perfects himself in devotion finds springing up in himself in the progress of time this spiritual knowledge, which is superior to and comprehends every action without exception." (P. 115)

Instruction received from books and meetings, from assimilation and application, from reflection and meditation, from companions or in dreams points to the goal or the object of devotion—it "has Me alone as the object." This simple idea is the soul of practice on the path of devotion.

Mr. Judge has thrown light on this stage of the would-be chela's effort to develop devotion. He writes:—

This devotion is what is inculcated by the Adepts to their Chelas. It involves a mental abnegation not agreeable to our modern mind, but that must be acquired or real progress is impossible. We must by means of this mental devotion to the Divine, which means abnegation of all the rest, dismiss all results of our actions. It is not ours to say what shall be the result of an action; the Law will bring about a result much better, perhaps, than we had imagined. If the results, if the passing daily circumstances, are not those we expected, then by means of Devotion we accept them as just what the Law intended. But if we fix our desire on accomplishing even a seeming good result, we are bound by that desire, no matter whether our wish is accomplished or not.

This exhortation to devotion is at once the most simple and the most difficult. Some deride it because they want powers and "development"; others because they think it is too simple; but the wise student, even

when he cannot at first grasp its meaning, will revolve it in his mind, strive after it, and make it a thing to be attained by him. (Pp. 68-69)

Robert Crosbie throws further light on the obstacles of this stage:—

The real "worship," is devotion to an ideal. Here "the Self of All" is the ideal, and the action indicated is to think and act for, and as, the One Self in all things, without self-interest in the results. We are not attached to results by our acts, but by our thoughts; freedom comes from a renunciation of self-interest in the fruit of actions. (P. 162)

With the "discerning power" there must also be the "power of steadfastness," for unless we are constant in devotion to the higher life, and the ideal of a conscious life in spirit, not matter, we will be recreant to the best we know. (P. 230)

Discernment and steadfastness not only sustain our devotion but strengthen it. The devotee's aim in becoming a pure and blessed channel is the summation. And so it is written:—

Krishna puts it clearly enough in the twenty-fifth verse [Chapter V]:

"Effacement in the Supreme Spirit is gained by the right-seeing sage whose sins are exhausted, who hath cut asunder all doubts, whose senses and organs are under control, and *who is devoted to the well-being of all creatures.*"

If the last qualification is absent, then he is not a "right-seeing sage" and cannot reach union with the Supreme. It must follow that the humblest imitator, every one who desires to come to that condition, must try to the best of his ability to imitate the sage who has succeeded. (Pp. 124-25)

"FROM MYSELF TO MYSELF"

Memoirs of a Vagrant Soul, or The Pitted Face by the Lebanese mystic writer Mikhail Naïmy (Philosophical Library, New York. 1952. \$2.75) is a work of even deeper interest from a Theosophical point of view than its predecessor, *The Book of Mirdad: A Lighthouse and a Haven*. An article on the latter appeared in our January 1953 issue under its subtitle.

The dramatic fictional framework of this book, even if its apparently allegorical implications were easier to interpret, would scarcely be of as great interest as the reflections set down in these *Mémoires*. They are supposed to have been penned between 1913 and 1916 by a habitually silent but

highly educated man with an enigmatic background. His mind a blank as to his past, he had sought employment in the small coffee-house in the Syrian quarter of New York where they were written during his three years of humble service. He did not remember his name and, because his face was pockmarked, they called him "Pitted Face." These *Memoirs*, bearing the title beautifully written in Arabic, "From Myself To Myself," are supposed to have been found after he had disappeared, to meet, it is implied, with tragic vengeance for a long-forgotten deed of seeming madness.

Pitted Face marvels at the garrulity of men

whom "nothing oppresses...so much as to be silent and to meditate." "How, then," he asks, "do they hope to find God in themselves?" He has no shadow of a doubt that God is there to be found. God is, for him, the undefinable and the illimitable, the "Light whence issues every light." "Within me, O Light inextinguishable," he exclaims, "is a spark from your holy forge."

He recognizes man as the microcosm of the universe. "...all the far-flung worlds throb, and live and move within the small world which is you."

Pitted Face...owns all things: the heavens and all that is in them, and the earth and all on it. For out of everything above and below has he been fashioned, and by everything above and below does he live....

We are two seas, O Sea. But Pitted Face is the broader, the deeper, and the more lasting sea. For a day shall come when you shall contract and finally dry up. Whereas Pitted Face shall not contract except to spread out; and shall not be emptied save to be filled unto eternity.

"The stars and I," he remarks, "are two infinite worlds that merge in one vast, boundless world called Pitted Face." How significant, in the light of Madame H. P. Blavatsky's statement: "The silent worship of abstract or *noumenal* Nature, the only divine manifestation, is the one ennobling religion of Humanity" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 381 fn.) is the following reflection of Pitted Face:—

Men look at stars with their eyes, and therefore see them not. Stars must be looked at with pious hearts, and in reverential silence.

He writes of the folly of believing it to be possible, through the outer senses alone, to penetrate beyond the outer shell of things. Men, he says, "set to all things boundaries and limits; whereas the slightest thing is limitless and boundless." But

the senses that rely neither on eye nor ear; neither on nose, nor tongue, nor hand,—such senses are nonsense in the code of men. Should you say to them that... in silent contemplation they could see what the outer eye is incapable of seeing, and hear what the outer ear is powerless to hear,—should you say that to them, they would dub you on the instant a fool, or a lunatic.

Theosophy speaks of the inner senses, which it teaches were innate in the first human races but atrophied with the material development of the

outer senses, though there are individuals today who have acquired "the *Inner* sight" by training and initiation, or who possess it—in the case of mediums, to their sorrow—by reason of passivity or practices pursued in earlier lives.

Of man's relation to the visible world Pitted Face writes:—

The key to nature is not in nature itself, but in the tiny pupil of each man's eye. If the soul looking out of that pupil be an enlightened soul, then all it sees is light. The key is in the inner light.

Whoever would know nature must first know himself.

Pitted Face considers ignorance to be the only calamity. The Buddha said that "from ignorance spring all the evils." "Without knowledge," writes Pitted Face, "all is slavery." And again, "Where there is ignorance, Pitted Face, there is pain," and he adds: "A sweet and sustaining food is knowledge extracted from pain."

Life has always been a school and a forge, and never a battlefield. What appears to the ignorant as a battlefield is but the forge through which Life makes all her children pass in order to purge them from the dross of Time and Space and to make them realize what divine metal they are created from.

Pitted Face writes:—

To absorb one lesson well is worth a whole lifetime. To learn, say,...that the deed ever rebounds on the doer, is to reap a good harvest, and to pave the way for learning other lessons.

The following sentence of his is particularly interesting in connection with the saying, common among Theosophical students, that "when the lesson is learned the necessity ceases":—

A lesson well understood is never repeated; while one misunderstood is repeated again and again in diverse forms and manners until its meaning sinks in the mind and the heart.

The Law of Karma is elsewhere repeatedly referred to by Pitted Face. Death says to him, in an imaginary dialogue, that men "invite on themselves the inevitable results of all their former cravings and actions, whether they know them or not." And Pitted Face on another occasion reflects:—

What a clear-eyed and even-handed judge is Fate! All things and beings in the universe, from the greatest to the least, are weighed every instant in its scales and

apportioned their due,—no more, no less. How infinite and accurate is its memory!

What people record of themselves Pitted Face regards as of small moment:—

...it is what Life records of them that counts, for that is preserved unto the end of Time...Nothing is lost; nothing is overlooked in Life's archives.

And those archives Theosophy explains as being the Astral Light, the "tablet of the unseen universe" which holds the pictures of all our thoughts and deeds.

Pitted Face clearly recognizes also the necessity of reincarnation. Death asks him:—

Do you suppose that each time a child is born a new soul is ushered into the world?...Even a babe has accounts to settle with Life.

And he tells Pitted Face: "To reach your completion without passing and re-passing through the gates of Death is quite impossible."

Pitted Face assures himself:—

The sleep of death shall whet your appetite for fuller enjoyment of life, and you shall wake from it with keener hunger for more life.

The solidarity of mankind, the fact of Universal Brotherhood, which is a basic tenet of Theosophy, is well brought out by Pitted Face, who sings the praises of Creative Labour as "the link connecting man with man, and connecting all men with the rest of creation." He writes:—

Wherewith shall I reward those who have sown and harvested that I might be fed; and those who have spun and woven that I might be clothed; and have rolled back the darkness that I might have light.... Creative Labour has mixed in one crucible your flesh and blood with all men's flesh and blood, and your thoughts and emotions with their thoughts and emotions.

And Pitted Face demands: "...what man's life is not a pillar in the lives of all men? You live by each other; why do you not live for each other?"

In line with this concept of brotherhood is his declaration that all other languages are but stepping-stones and ladders to the language of telepathy, for, as is explained in the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge* (p. 138):—

...if there were a real and complete separation between any two human beings, they could not communicate with, or understand each other in any way.

The Voice of the Silence refers to the two warring selves in every man:—

The Self of Matter and the SELF of Spirit can never meet. One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for both.

This is recalled by Death's injunction:—

Give up your transient self for your abiding self.... Efface that Pitted Face who is still exposed to growth and decay.

The perfectibility of man is part of the creed of Pitted Face:—

A divine school is Life whose business is to turn out divinities. To be graduated from it is to become a god.

The Voice of the Silence says:—

Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost.

Pitted Face, rudely shaken at last out of his oblivion of his past, laments:—

How strong were my wings when no past pulled me to the ground, and no memories tied my mind and my heart to the earth!

How spacious was my world bounded on all sides by eternity, with me a roving spirit infatuated with the All-Spirit!

The high-light of the book, however, is the description of Pitted Face's experience of ecstasy, which seems to bear the marks of a genuine mystical experience and which he suggests may have been a prelude to "deeper and longer spells terminating in that eternal ecstasy of selflessness" which he has been longing for with all his heart and soul.

Everything in the universe, the visible and the invisible, seemed to have melted in me, and I in it....

All seemed to be a tremendous outpouring of love too glorious for any pen or brush to depict. It swept me off my feet, as it were, and carried me into regions far beyond the reach of reason and fancy....

Bliss of in-breathing and out-breathing life freely, unhurriedly, unconsciously.... Bliss of gathering the worlds into one's heart as gathers the hen her brood under her wings! Bliss of undivided self! Bliss of rapturous existence: Ah, bliss of sheer being, I have tasted you tonight!

This beautiful book, in many ways so Theosophical in its message, may be warmly recommended to earnest students for thoughtful reading.

THE PATH OF ACTION

In the Fourth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita* Krishna instructs Arjuna upon the nature of action, saying:—

Even sages have been deluded as to what is action and what inaction; therefore I shall explain to thee what is action by a knowledge of which thou shalt be liberated from evil. One must learn well what is action to be performed, what is not to be, and what is inaction. The path of action is obscure. That man who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is wise among men; he is a true devotee and a perfect performer of all action. (IV. 16-18)

Karma, or action, is a very much misunderstood term, in spite of the fact that the *Gita* throws on it a light which is veritably dazzling. The exposition of *Karma-Marga*, the path of action, as given therein embraces the philosophy of what not to do as well as of what to do; yet the path of action must ever remain obscure to those who have not the proper key for understanding the *Gita*, and to those who fail to see that for actions to be truly righteous and beneficent they cannot be divorced from *Jnana*—Knowledge—and *Bhakti* Devotion.

In examining *Karma-Marga*, the Religion of Works, as it affects the individual in his own life and in his relationship to his fellow men, a few "do's" and "don'ts" have to be considered. Not to be inactive is the first of the rules on the negative side. Bodily laziness, moral lethargy, mental indolence, are grave dangers to the body, to the character and to the mind of the Immortal Soul. But so strong is the cosmic principle of the perpetual motion or action of Life that no one can be truly inactive. Laziness itself is one kind of motion or activity. From the lowest to the highest, all must act. Krishna says in the *Gita* that though he is the Lord of the Universe and need not act, yet He is constantly in action, for otherwise all creatures would perish. (III. 22-24)

So act we must. But what actions shall we perform? Krishna says: Perform your own congenital duties, those duties which Karma has brought to you. Each one has to fight on *Dharmakshetra*, the field of duty, as a valiant *Kshatriya*. But duty is another very much misunderstood word. Often mere inclinations rooted

in desires are mistaken for duties. Then there are those who believe that duty is what others think we should do. And how many there are who consider duty to be irksome, to be performed under duress and to be avoided whenever possible! Mr. Judge, who has in numerous places emphasized the importance of the performance of the routine, small duties of life, defines *Dharma* or duty as

"the sacred Law," the fulfillment of our karmic destiny through many incarnations, the working out and elimination of defects which have brought us into earth life under the conditions in which we find ourselves, which conditions we should feel and know to be the very opportunities needed for our further progress. (Notes on the *Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 235)

"If you can do no more than duty it will bring you to the goal," says Mr. Judge in another place, and he echoes the words of a great Master in naming duty "the royal talisman."

It may well be asked: "How shall we determine what are our congenital duties?" We have but to look at our own mental and moral capacity, our own environment, and get busy and energetic in the performance of our own proper duties. And that brings us to the second of the "don'ts" as pointed out in the *Gita*—"Don't attempt the duties of another." If only we followed this injunction we would avoid much suffering and waste of time. Those acts which it is not necessary for us to perform cannot be our obligatory duties.

There is still a third "don't" as to acts and duties which the *Gita* points out. In a strikingly memorable verse Krishna says that all duties, all actions, are surrounded by desire. Our desires are many and varied. Our whole life is one huge bundle of desires—fulfilled or unfulfilled. It is the power of desire or *Kama* which tempts man to run away from the path of duty, from the Religion of Works, for how many times have we not seen that trying to fulfil some particular desire, chasing some particular like or love or passion we fail in our duty?

As against these "don'ts" the *Gita* puts forward certain positive rules of action. The first of these is: Renounce the fruits of action—very different from the renouncing of action or duty.

Our business is with our duty, which has to be performed without calculating what good or harm will accrue to us from it. People say: "I will do this, for I want such and such a result"; or, "I will do this because I like it, it gives me pleasure; I will not do that, for it is painful." If we are trying to free ourselves from the temptation and the enslavement of *Kama* we must do everything that has to be done without the desire to obtain or to avoid this or that result. A very difficult task indeed! At first our whole life loses its motor-force. All along we had been guided entirely by likes and dislikes; now we cannot consider our own wish; we seem lost.

For those who find it impossible to act thus, Krishna gives a more positive and concrete goal when he says: "In acting, in performing your own duties, commit all unto Me, the Supreme Self." Everything that we do, whether personal or impersonal duties, has to be offered as a sacrifice, *yagna*, to the Highest we can conceive of. It naturally follows that that which is not pleasing to Krishna, that which we know we cannot offer unto Him, must not be done by us. Freedom from the fetters of desire, ignorance, illusion and delusion immediately results if we ask before acting: "Is this action of mine going to please Krishna, the Supreme Self of the Universe, who is also the Highest Self in me?" In other words, "Is this action true, good and beautiful?"

MANY LIVES ON EARTH

The man or woman who is normally and healthily interested in life regrets its shortness, and particularly so if he or she belongs to the growing number of people who feel that the world can only be "saved" by the personal efforts of individuals. What can be accomplished in the few decades allotted us on earth? they ask.

Fortunately we are not really so hampered in this respect as most—especially Westerners—suppose. Man proceeds on his evolutionary pilgrimage by means of a long, long series of incarnations. In other words, each of us has lived

Even this dedication of everything to Krishna, the Supreme Spirit, may seem difficult to many, because for most people Krishna seems to be far, far away; His Divine Power is not perceived by them. Therefore we are asked to see in each act and in every duty a deep significance, an occult meaning. This looking into the spiritual side of things would make our acts sacraments.

Further the *Gita* states that for the aspirant the discharge of duties is not the only factor. Deeds of duty are obligatory, to which must be added deeds of sacrifice—*Yagna*—of mortification—*Tapas*—and of charity—*Dana*—as self-chosen obligations. These acts, says Krishna, "are not to be abandoned, for they are proper to be performed, and are the purifiers of the wise." (XVIII. 5) Such special actions assist the Inner Ego in its efforts to express itself through the personality. Also through such actions we enhance our own sense of brotherhood and assist others to do likewise.

"Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child," those deeds which are pleasing to the *Ishwara* within us. He who is engaged in sacrificial labours—labours which are our duties, revealed to us by our own soul, by our own mind, by our own righteous effort—will in due course find that Krishna is very near, nearer to him than anything else. He is a right performer of actions; he is a true *Karma-Yogi*.

on earth before many times and will live, in a body similar to the one we use now, over and over again in the future. Obviously we need time to accumulate all the kinds of experience life has to offer; time to assimilate the meaning thereof; time to develop capacities for the application of our growing knowledge; time to put our impress on the world in company with those of our fellows who are like-minded with ourselves. And Nature supplies our need by the process of reincarnation.

Not many people care much about the authority of religion nowadays, but it may interest some

to know that this teaching, which involves the pre-existence of the soul before birth as well as its survival after the death of the body, is one that all the great religions of the world have either taught or taken for granted.

Nay, but as when one layeth
His worn-out robes away,
And, taking new ones, sayeth,
"These will I wear to-day!"
So putteth by the spirit
Lightly its garb of flesh,
And passeth to inherit
A residence afresh.

These words from Sir Edwin Arnold's *Song Celestial* set forth an idea which has found expression all down the ages. Even in Christianity the notion that God creates a new soul for every child born into the world was generally taught to the people only after the truth of the pre-existence of the soul had been eliminated from the accepted doctrines of the Church at a Council of Church Fathers held about 500 A.D.

This lost teaching was not restored to the West until the 19th century, when Madame Blavatsky introduced Theosophy to the public. As Theosophy is a restatement of the age-old fundamental principles of world and human evolution, it naturally includes the teaching of reincarnation. It was reintroduced about 75 years ago and the idea of rebirth is now not so strange in the West as it was in the days when it was first propounded under the banner of the new Movement. The number of professed Theosophists is small when compared with the population of the world, or even with the reading public, but it is well known to those who are more or less conversant with what is being said and written, that Theosophical teachings have penetrated modern thought to a very remarkable extent—notably this idea of many lives on earth. Even in the last decades of the last century this was true: Madame Blavatsky, who died in 1891, is reported to have said in answer to a question:—

When you consider and remember those days in 1875 and after, in which you could not find any people interested in your thoughts, and now look at the widespread influence of theosophical ideas—however labelled—it is not so bad. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 6)

This process of penetration, which then was

already noticeable, has been going on ever since.

To confine ourselves to the teaching of reincarnation. In the course of these seven decades and more, it has been derided, condemned, parodied by many; but it has also found many who accepted it eagerly. Unfortunately some of the latter, though friends in intention, have done harm to the cause of truth by the wrong notions and mistaken interpretations they have propounded in its name. For us hasty moderns, whether of the East or of the West, it is hard to stop to think. We grasp at ideas quickly and are all too often satisfied with a superficial understanding of them. This leads to misstatements and misinterpretations, for the teaching involves more than we realize in the first flush of enthusiasm consequent upon our intuitive acceptance of the doctrine that fills us with new hope and gives us the conviction that life is very much worth while, despite its many difficulties and disappointments.

It does bring relief to feel that we have another chance in spite of death long before we have gathered the whole harvest of living—but, what reincarnates? What do we mean when we say "I" shall live on earth again? Surely not that conglomeration of personal aims and desires which we think of as ourselves! That changes from year to year, actually from minute to minute, though we may not notice the transformation. Surely not the "character" which becomes modified in a rather haphazard way as we grow in years and experience—not always for the better, or from strength to strength. Theosophy explains that all these are indeed but the temporary clothing of the actor, who is the Self, the reincarnating Ego, the real, inner man or soul, who gathers knowledge and experience of various kinds as he appears on the stage of life: as a man or as a woman, in a brown body or in a black one, or in one of the indefinite colours termed "white." What this inner Self that leaves the outworn body and in time takes a new one *really* is, can only be realized by each one for himself as he thinks the question through quietly, eliminating from himself in thought all that is changing and evanescent, and then trying to define what is left.

Do we go on reincarnating for ever? Theosophy says: No. Earth is like a school and each

incarnation represents a day. We, the pupils, have to go on attending our Earth-school until we have learned all that it has to teach us. We have to make up our minds, however, that the task before us is a stupendous one—much more difficult, much more comprehensive than we, at our present stage of development, can fathom—and that patience and persistence are needed—and time.

We are taught that the human race to which we belong has been incarnating on earth for 18 million years and to judge by the slow pace at which we are going and the ignorance, confusion, disharmony and lack of mutual consideration we meet on every hand, we shall not need to be warned that we are far from the end of the journey even now. But there is an end, finally, and there is no reason why we should not reach it, if, like the children at school, we attend to our duty and do not waste too much time.

Why don't we remember our past lives? This question generally refers to memory in the sense of recalling details: where we lived, what our parents looked like, what profession we followed, and so forth. Things like these we do not remember, to be sure. But then they are matters which do not affect the real, reincarnating man—the Ego. They are of interest only to the personal man* and the recollection of them depends, for the vast majority of us, on the brain. Now as the taking of a new body means also a new brain, it is evident that these details are not available, for the organ on which they were recorded has disintegrated and only their essence, their significance, has been impressed on our real Self. So the new brain does not remember in detail the events that took place in a former earth life.

But, in another sense, we do remember; the fruit of our experience is not lost. The meaning of what we enjoyed or suffered, all that we learned from that past, constitutes an eternal posses-

*See *The Key to Theosophy*, by H. P. Blavatsky, Section VIII, Sub-section: "On Individuality and Personality."

sion. It is stored, not in the physical brain but in the immortal part of us; and this is at our disposal in each new incarnation. We know it as character, as the dictates of conscience, as talent in some direction, in short, as knowledge and capacity which belong to an inner store and cannot be accounted for by the accumulated experiences of this one life.

One of the treasures that some people obtain from that inner store is the conviction that we have lived before; that our real friends—and our real enemies, if any—have not become such by contact with us in this life only and will not be lost to us when we "die." Not every one is sufficiently open to the inner influence to feel that certainty, but many are, especially children, who, more commonly than grown-ups think, "remember" having had another mother and another father once and would talk about it all if adults did not so often discourage such confidences by calling the children silly or fanciful, or accusing them of telling fibs.

We should do well to lend an attentive ear to these "intimations of immortality" in ourselves and in others. The time has come for reorientation, and we shall never, so the great Occultists tell us, get a soul-satisfying view of life and be able to find lasting happiness until we stop interpreting ourselves and our surroundings from *without* and from *below* instead of from *within* and from *above*.

In other words, we must give up evaluating things from the point of view merely of our physical selves and try instead to look at them with the eyes of the Immortal that we really are. As that practical man of action, General Eisenhower, said on his installation as President of Columbia University in 1948: "What the world needs, to solve its pressing difficulties, is 'education in the apparently obvious.'" Theosophy would add: "from the standpoint not of the body and its limitations, but from that of the inner man and his possibilities." How different life looks to one who judges it on the basis of reincarnation!

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

AT AN INFORMAL "OCEAN" CLASS

CHAPTER XIII

II.—ASSIMILATION IN DEVACHAN AND CONTINUING CONSCIOUSNESS

Q.—If an ordinary human being, having advanced to Devachan, can in fact affect for good those whom he loves while they are still on earth, what could be done by a Being who had knowledge?

Ans.—There is no limit to what could be done, save and except that imposed by the Karma of the being whom he would like to help. If we had perfect knowledge of the nature of the other, we might be able to conceive of a thousand ways in which we could help, and still be debarred from helping him because of something in his nature.

Q.—Does not the *Ocean* seem to imply that there is a freedom of the soul in Devachan that is not possible to the ordinary soul here on earth?

Ans.—We should be able to see that from the key statement of the whole chapter, near the top of p. 118 (2nd Indian ed.): "It simply now has gotten the opportunity to make its own world for itself unhampered by the clogs of physical life." The Ego here does not have the opportunity to make its own world for itself unhampered by the clogs of physical life. Here, whatever it is that we aspire to do, whether good or evil, we are constantly subject to the interruption and interference of our fellow beings.

Earth life is an objective state, one of the two fields for the manifestation of Soul. What does "objective" mean? It means a state in which we, in relation with others, can act out what we think. But Devachan is a *subjective* state; that is, the being is in no conscious contact with any other being. The truth is that after death two things happen: First, in Kama Loka we relive life at its worst, as we thought of living it or as we wanted to live it when on earth, or in the way we were prevented from or afraid of living it. Secondly, in Devachan we relive our life at its best as we thought that life should be lived. How

are we able to do that after death? Because there is no interference from other beings. Why can't we do that here? Because of interference from other beings.

Q.—Does the Ego gain anything from his stay in Devachan? 122

Ans.—It is the one place where he does gain something. Do we gain anything by eating our dinner? Not a thing; we only gain from what we assimilate. So Devachan is that stage of assimilation where the Ego absorbs into his own permanent being whatever was assimilable of the life last lived. Spiritually, it is a state of progress. Intellectually, there is no progress; physically, there is no progress—it is neither a physical state nor an intellectual state, but a spiritual and psychic one.

Our analogy is simple: Does the food we eat add anything to the health and strength and energization of the body? Surely it does. So with Devachan. The good experiences of the earth life are assimilated into the very fabric of that portion of our being which we call Buddhi-Manas, and the man comes back better by just that much.

Q.—Can there be such a great Karmic influence as to keep a person out of either Kama Loka or Devachan and bring him back immediately into a body?

Ans.—There could be if he were an Adept; and he wouldn't have to wait for the body to die to do that, either.

Q.—Don't we assimilate while we are in the physical body?

Ans.—We all know that we do, but it is not a state of uninterrupted assimilation. While we

are living in the body we are consciously acting, unconsciously assimilating. So, waking human consciousness differs enormously from the spiritual condition. We have a threefold basis of action in the body, while our basis of action in Devachan is internal and unitary.

Q.—Since we pass through dreams into deep sleep, is there no higher resting-place for the soul than Devachan after death?

Ans.—Devachan is a personal Nirvana, and it may last to the end of the Manvantara—it does, for some beings. If you will watch carefully the almost numberless statements about the after-death states, you can not only see that fact recited, but also see the reasonableness of it. Devachan is a state of repose. Now, if there be a state of repose for an almost infinite series of years, it might last to the end of this Manvantara; it would be comparable to a Devachan, but it would be given another name—Nirvana. Any state of repose this side of Nirvana is a Devachan.

There will be no higher state of repose until the whole of humanity goes into repose and our period of evolution for man as a whole is over. There is no higher state than Devachan for the human being, but there is a higher state for those who follow the path of knowledge and of compassion. Just as they become free from the illusions of earth life without leaving the earth, so they become free from the illusions of Devachan without forfeiting their right to repose. Such would be the Adepts.

Q.—It is said that the high leanings and aspirations of the soul cannot be worked out on this plane. Why do we have to go to Devachan to work out the noblest aspirations of the Soul?

Ans.—It is because we haven't got what it takes to work them out here! All of us have lots of good intentions, and you know what the road to a certain place is paved with! We haven't the courage, we haven't the will, to carry our good intentions into practice here, because there are too many oppositions, too many frictions—it costs too much. But after we die there is no opposition; we work them out to our own satisfaction,

because we are not interfered with. The very reason that there is no Devachan for an adept is that his will is the supreme power in him, whether he is asleep or awake, alive or dead, in this body or in any other. He lives in what we might call a will body. There is no Devachan for him; there is repose, but no illusion.

Q.—Does not Mr. Judge say that as this state is often entered into and passed through here, it should be a help and not a hindrance?

Ans.—Why, yes. Devachan as a state of bliss is not absent from earth life. When any one is so happy that he isn't thinking of anything—so happy that his happiness fills him—he is in Devachan; and, *per contra*, when any one is so miserable that his will is in abeyance, he is in Kama Loka. Devachan and Kama Loka apply to the soul; they are not geographical locations.

While we are in earth life, then, we experience all the states of consciousness, or their subdivisions, over and over again; but after death we do not. That is the great value of earth life. In it, we do not notice when we pass from a state of bliss—call it Devachan—to a state of mental anxiety and suffering—call it Kama Loka. Afterwards, we look back and say, "It's strange—when I woke up this morning, I was as happy and as cheerful as could be, and at 10 o'clock everything went dead wrong!" But we did not notice when we made that shift. Our attention is on objects, sensations, feelings and not on states of consciousness.

Q.—The question I had in mind referred to Kama Loka, not Devachan. Wouldn't you say it is possible to assimilate the joys of Devachan and the woes of Kama Loka while here in earth life?

Ans.—Well, if we don't, we shall always fall victim to them. If I can't tell a state of consciousness before I am in it, after I am in it and while I am in it, then I shall inevitably fall victim to it. If I can't see the contrast while the contrast is there, I certainly can't see it when it is not there.

We have to learn to understand Devachan, and recognize it when we come into that state. When we get "the blues," when we become full of anxiety and woe and terror and despair and despondency, we are *overwhelmed* by them—just as Arjuna was in the Second Chapter of the *Gita*. Arjuna didn't even suspect that he was in Kama Loka or Avitchi, but that's where he was. Krishna knew it. Arjuna wasn't wise enough to say, "Why, I know what is the matter with me—I have just tumbled over into another state without noticing it."

Unless we understand Kama Loka or Devachan *while we have the opportunity to compare it and contrast it with other states*, we shall fall victim to it after death. As a matter of fact, our very thought and study on this subject—granting that we try to get clear perceptions and conceptions—will inevitably shorten our stay in Kama Loka and Devachan; they will bring us out of both states more quickly than would be possible for the ordinary human being.

Q.—What becomes of that ethereal Devachanic vesture—Mr. Judge calls it a "vesture" rather than a form?

Ans.—It is a vesture of thought. In Devachan the Ego is going over and experiencing, working out in his mind and thought, the best of the life last lived, the ideals that he had and was unable to work out in actual, physical, waking life but on which his mind dwelt much. He realizes those ideals in Devachan; he has them in his thoughts in that state. So it would seem as if he made that vesture of thought, and it can be assimilated as a part of his own permanent nature. When he has worked it out, there is no longer any vesture. He, as the immortal triad, sees and knows himself, and sees the nature of the incarnation to come; then he is drawn back into incarnation. At least, we can look at it this way; work it out; this is by no means a final answer.

Q.—Can a being, born into this world as an idiot, enjoy the Devachanic state after death?

Ans.—Well, from a certain point of view, it is a form of "idiocy" that makes a man go to Kama Loka and Devachan! But consider: even

though the congenital idiot might have a death vision, how could such a being possibly have a Devachan, since it could scarcely have generated any noble aspirations or psychic impulses?

Q.—We find this statement on p. 124:—

The whole period allotted by the soul's forces being ended in *devachan*, the magnetic threads which bind it to earth begin to assert their power. The Self wakes from the dream, it is borne swiftly off to a new body, and then, just before birth, it sees for a moment all the causes that led it to *devachan* and back to the life it is about to begin, and knowing it to be all just, to be the result of its own past life, it repines not but takes up the cross again—and another soul has come back to earth.

The puzzling part of this passage is the phrase, "...it sees for a moment all the causes that led it to Devachan." Is there not a moment of clear seeing between Kama Loka and Devachan? What takes place during the passage of the Ego from Kama Loka to Devachan?

Ans.—Those are two cognate and extremely searching questions, and upon them, as upon many other things, the written statements of the philosophy are, first, exceedingly reticent and, secondly, such statements as are made are scattered far and wide. One has to find them for himself. We can get, however, following H.P.B.'s advice, a very clear analogy. During the day we have our waking activities. Then, when we go to bed at night, we have a vision—everyone does—a backward vision over the day. We think over, we look back over, what we have done, what we thought, what we have said during the day. Some do it carelessly; some do not notice that they do it; some do it thoughtfully, because they realize that it is the analogy in physical life of what takes place at death—the backward vision over things done, things undone and so on.

All of us are aware, or could be aware, that after these few quiet moments something happens to us—a moment of complete unconsciousness. For the time being, the waking life, whatever it was, of today and of every other day, has ceased and been blotted out just as absolutely as if it never existed. This is the barrier between states. Then only do we begin to dream on the outward tide of dreaming, which corresponds to waking up in

Kama Loka. We die, we have the backward vision, then comes complete unconsciousness and then comes our experience in Kama Loka.

If we follow the analogy, we know that after our dreaming there comes a prolonged period to which we give the name of sleep, but which, seen from this side, represents total unconsciousness. We all know that in returning from that unknown world that we call deep sleep, there is suddenly a re-entrance on the incoming tide of the dream world. Then, just as we awake, a moment's obliteration, so that very, very few people bring through anything, you might say, from dreams. We have been in bed for 7, 8 or 9 hours, and in one second we can recall all that we did; that is, one second is time enough to recall what we brought through.

Going on with this analogy, there is death; there is the retrospective vision of the life lived; then there is the passage of the barrier that separates the world of the living from the world of the dead, a line of unconsciousness; and, finally, "waking," to use the best term possible, in Kama Loka. But it must follow that the Kama Loka life comes to an end. As it does so, there must be a retrospective glance in Kama Loka, then unconsciousness, then the waking into the Devachanic existence. Again, after the period of Devachanic activity, there must come at its close a retrospective glance over the Devachanic life, then a moment's unconsciousness, and then waking as Atma-Buddhi-Manas on this plane—in which case we see both forwards and backwards; we see what led up to this birth, and what is involved in it. That is, we see the unlearned lessons and the undone things which we are once more to struggle with.

Those who are really interested in this question will find in *The Key to Theosophy*, on p. 160 (2nd Indian ed.), two profound statements—the first relating to the retrospective vision and the second, to the prospective vision.

Q.—Where does the Ego function during this "unconscious" moment?

Ans.—We ourselves can see what that means—a change of orientation, a change of direction. No matter what it is that we may be giving our

attention to, when the time comes either that we have to cease giving our attention to that thing, or we ourselves choose to give our attention to a new thing, there is a moment's hiatus when we are looking at nothing. We have ceased to look at A and, before we can look at B, we have to reverse our attention. That's given in the Third Aphorism of Patanjali, and the line of "unconsciousness," the barrier line, is the fundamental meaning of the word "concentration." The Third Aphorism in the First Book of Patanjali says, "At the time of concentration the soul [ourselves] abides in the state of a spectator without a spectacle." Where there is nothing to be perceived, there is no consciousness of perception. The thing is self-evident, when we come to think about it.

Q.—Is it just that we should be punished for what we did in a former life, when we do not remember it?

Ans.—According to the teachings, every night while we are asleep, at the moment just before birth, and in the after-death moment of concentration, we have a perfect consciousness of the past, and of the future, as well as of the present—we see their unbroken continuity. Human waking consciousness is discontinuity. Our consciousness during this life is discrete, not continuous. That makes earth life what it is.

But the idea that we are punished for our sins of omission and commission carries with it the idea that somebody or something outside of us is doing the punishing; in other words, the idea that we are punished in the evils that befall us is a relic of the Personal-God idea. We may not be aware of the fact, but it colours our thinking a great deal. Why did this befall me? That's a good question to ask. If we understand that, whatever befalls us, we who are the reaper were also the sower, we see that we reward ourselves, we punish ourselves. But in truth, there is neither reward nor punishment. That question applies to the religious doctrine of salvation and damnation. Whether good or evil happens to us, we have a chance to do something besides enjoy, something besides suffer—we have a chance to learn, to realize our own

judgment, our own wisdom in action, our own moral stamina, our own power of cohesion, that is, our power to stand fast in the midst of no matter what circumstances. So if we get rid of the idea that we are punished or rewarded we have a chance to consider the real nature of Karma and to get some better perception of the possible implications of the Third Fundamental Proposition.

Q.—How is it possible not to have continuity?

Even though we are not aware of it, it must be present.

Ans.—We may have continuity or discontinuity of states, continuity or discontinuity of mind, continuity or discontinuity of will or judgment, but we ourselves are continuous. The desirable thing is to have the unbroken continuity of the will, of the moral nature, of the discriminating faculty—and that, we know, is not the case with us.

Yet the very study of Theosophy, the very attempt to understand and apply it, restores to us the command of our own faculties, and then these things which now are mysteries will cease to be so to us.

ARE WE IN EARNEST? ARE WE GRATEFUL?

What the broom is to the house, self-searching is to the heart. Sweep well your hearts.

Make no demands upon the world which you make not upon yourselves. Nor make demands on any man which you allow him not to make on you.

All things must have a centre from which to radiate and round which to revolve.

—THE BOOK OF MIRDAD

Theosophy has been characterized as the most serious movement of the age. Most students, despite the repetition of this tenet—a warning for personality, individuality and race—take it as only a vague generalization. Are we serious? Do we know what is the *soul* which is energizing the words and mental images which we evolve and use? We are apt to get a spasmodic feeling of seriousness when crises arise, *e.g.*, a sudden illness, a rumour of retrenchment in our office, a cyclonic storm, the outbreak of an epidemic, diminishing bank balances and rising living costs. These and countless other apparently unrelated factors induce seriousness. But, once the crisis has passed, we sigh with relief and, unless we are by nature unusually introspective and reflective, very little shall we have learned therefrom.

Are we in earnest? Are we serious? A little thought on these questions will indicate that to be earnest and serious means having developed to some extent a sense of responsibility. We may be in earnest or serious about our passing or our children's passing examinations, or about our making good at sports or in business, political or social activities. We may feel that we shall achieve something by a certain course of diet or of

mental hygiene. All these moods and attitudes are indicative that there is something which is to be attained, whether it be health, wealth or happiness.

Few, however, among the earnest and serious as above described aim at goals which possess permanent values. Once our objective is attained, new allurements in other fields of activity attract us. We do not stop to question, in the modern rush to *do*, what is permanently valuable and what is only the bewitchment of a transitory phase. Our ideation, whether we possess bodies of Eastern or Western heritage, is in these days limited to the achievements and periphery of a single lifetime. How often do we hear it said, "He died in harness," as if that meant something important! Yet how soon is the person so spoken of forgotten and his achievement lost!

Contact with Theosophy, for short or longer periods, opens up the great vistas of the beginningless past and the endless future which flash upon the student's consciousness. The experience closes the door forever on his former unthinking irresponsibility. It makes him feel a responsible being. The Vision Splendid has reanimated to a greater or lesser extent his storehouse of inherent

Ideas because he is potentially a MAN, a Thinker. The fructification of a tiny acorn in due course produces a mighty oak. At the same time it is true that, through lack of foresight, we do not always envisage the effects of the seeds we sow, and this is never more evident than in a Theosophical awakening.

Our earnestness and sincerity take on a new colouring. We realize that there is a Goal to be achieved and that life has a Purpose. We see the magnificence of this Goal and this Purpose and they absorb us to such an extent that our friends and acquaintances see or sense the change which is taking place within our consciousness. Some are attracted and ask questions, while others are repelled and resentful. Thus the first test arises from those who surround us and our enthusiasm and earnestness and sincerity become tempered in the fire of criticism, unjust and just. This allows us to evaluate and to keep our balance. If sufficiently strong, the student brushes off diverting tactics and pushes on.

For whom is the Goal sought?—is one of the next points that should engage our attention. Are we trying to further our individual progress, or are we at work for the elevation of the family, the community or the human race? Reflection on our progress tends to deepen our earnestness. We may have planted the great weed of selfishness, or we may have cast all considerations of personal achievement into the fire of endeavour to alleviate the world's suffering, having recognized that we are an integral part of the Whole. We begin to see that our achievements, great as they may seem to us, have not been accomplished by our own unaided efforts. We sense and come to know that we have had assistance, that others must have stood where we now stand. They must have faced the same sort of problems, had to answer the same inner questions, braved the same enemies of doubt and temptation. Progress, then, for whom? Wealth for whom? And happiness for whom?

There are those who, seeking ardently the goal of personal attainment, push on, the emphasis in their endeavours being on the "great (really the little) I." Others see that to achieve anything

of worth they must tread the Path of Altruism, the ancient Path trodden by all who are truly in earnest, truly serious.

Then comes gratitude for the labours of those who have preceded us and who have erected signposts that man may advance in the right direction—gratitude to Those who have attained to the journey's end and yet, foregoing rest, have had the heart compassion to extend helping hands and to proffer advice to their toiling brothers on the ancient Path. Therefore there are gradations of gratitude and these, plus reverence when it arises, aid and sustain the pilgrims bogged in dark valleys or walking on treacherous cliffs.

True earnestness requires a Goal of permanent value—not one to be reached only by ourselves, but a Goal the reaching of which will involve the successful progress of the whole of humanity, which we shall come to regard as our family. We shall sense and come to realize the Presence and Prescience of those Elder Brothers who have not forgotten us, although a major portion of humanity nowadays seems to have forgotten Their very existence, though organized religions take the name of one or another of Them in vain.

This is the task of the earnest Theosophical student. The fact that he is in earnest does not mean that he will not fall and often fail to live up to his highest possibilities. But just as a child can learn to walk only by falling and picking himself up, so can we. And is not the Goal—emancipation of the Race from the entanglements of the round of births and deaths, and the restoring of the Law of Order in act, speech and thought—worth every effort?

So think as if your every thought were to be etched in fire upon the sky for all and everything to see. For so, in truth, it is.

So speak as if the world entire were but a single ear intent on hearing what you say. And so, in truth, it is.

So do as if your every deed were to recoil upon your heads. And so, in truth, it does.

So wish as if you were the wish. And so, in truth, you are.

So live as if your God Himself had need of you His life to live. And so, in truth, He does.

—THE BOOK OF MIRDAD

STRAY NOTES ON THE GITA

There are as many avenues of approach to the *Gita* as there are "children of men," and at different times and under different circumstances that avenue is the best which meets the present need of the student.

One such avenue is that which leads to a greater understanding of *Antaskarana*, the bridge between the Higher Self and the lower self.

We know from the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna recorded in the *Mahabharata*, that before the *Gita* begins, before even the preparations for war commence, Arjuna and Duryodhana had approached Krishna, the Higher Self, and asked for his aid. Duryodhana, the lower self, naturally chose the aid of Krishna's armies, the wholly material part of the Universe, while Arjuna, already standing on *Antaskarana*, saw the greater need of the Higher Self's aid, in preference to the armies which were legion. It must be noted that Krishna did not offer his armies *and* himself, but his armies *or* himself. It is, after all, more important to have a good leader than many men without a good leader! As the *Gita* is a book of guidance for spiritual living it does not deal with Duryodhana any more but tells us about Arjuna.

Standing on the bridge between the lower and the higher nature of man, firmly established in his faith, Arjuna prepared for battle in full confidence, with Krishna by his side. But, when the flurry of preparation is over, when the moment comes for him actually to engage in the battle, the upliftment due to conviction of the righteousness of his cause begins to diminish and his consciousness changes. He has moved to a new environment and begins to look about him. He begins to face the issue for which he has been preparing, and he asks for a nearer view of what is to be. He asks that his chariot be placed in the middle of the battlefield so that he can appraise the enemy. And he gets a big shock. He sees that the goal is to be reached by killing all those who are dear to him, and he is engulfed in despondency. He cries out that if he reaches the goal, what of it? He will be bereft of happiness and his conscience will be full of misery.

All students, throughout the ages, past and future, have gone and will go through this stage. All at one stage or another glimpse the goal to be reached and ask for the help of the Higher Self, and then, faced with the actual carrying out of the behests of that Higher Self, on the physical plane, in their own psychological and physical nature, sink down in despair, full of misgivings, doubts and despondency.

Arjuna differs from most of us, however, for he has no doubt of his success in the battle. It is in the later Discourses that we see him beginning to doubt whether he can succeed, as when he says that he does not see how he can gain control of his mind—an essential to success. His present concern is with the feeling that he will be doing wrong in fighting against ancient tradition and faith, personified by Drona and Bhishma, and that he will not be happy when his friends, those so familiar and dear to him, are no more.

Despondency and fear, even of doing what seems to the limited personal consciousness wrong, drag the mind down towards *Kama*, and the vision is lost. Even though standing on *Antaskarana*, if the mind loses itself in the lower nature it fails to see the vision given by the Higher—and that is our stage. But with Arjuna, his stand on *Antaskarana* is more firm, and though for a moment he is lost in the lower he is still able to contact the Higher, and is, in fact, talking to the Higher all the time. Though he wants a definite plan given him by the Higher he has to learn that no such thing is possible. After 18 Discourses he is asked "to ponder fully" what he has heard and then to "act as seemeth best" to him, for the free mind, liberated from the dictates of the lower, and not yet able to absorb fully the light of the Higher, has to make its own decisions. It cannot be told directly what to do, for it is confused—it would, therefore, even misunderstand what it was told it had to do; it cannot be said "with certainty" which course is the better, for it must reason things out for itself *on the basis of* the knowledge gained. Right from the beginning of the attempt to lead a spiritual life the student must accept responsibility, and this can only be

truly done when he pays attention to what he is taught in terms of principles and, in applying them, learns for himself what is the best course of action. There is no need to fear doing wrong unless it is deliberately done and unless no attempt has been made to put knowledge into practice. Though each will have to bear the result of his action if it is wrong, the wrong done in ignorance can be turned to his advantage if he learns from its reaction. Cannot one see here how it is that the Guru suffers at the hands of the pupil? For how often does the pupil upset the plans of the Guru by precipitate action!

Courage is necessary to take knowledge on to the plane of action for "the flame is surrounded by smoke," but to learn the difference between action, renunciation of action, and renunciation of the effects of action will take away fear of action. It is, of course, literally impossible to renounce the fruits of action, *i.e.*, the effects of action, unless the actor acts as part of the impersonal law and becomes the agent only. And this he can do only when he is firmly established in *Antaskarana*, with the full light of the Higher shining through him, purging the action of every taint of personal wish or desire or thought.

We find, therefore, that in the very beginning the Higher points to the difference between forms and consciousness; forms perish, tradition perishes, blind faith must give way to enlightened faith. The "tenderly smiling" Compassionate One talks to the sufferer from fear and sentiment in just those terms that throw a ray of light into the darkness of his despondency. The putting on of new garments and the throwing away of old ones is such a familiar idea that it makes of death and rebirth simple, easy-to-understand processes. Death should have no sadness associated with it, for who minds throwing away worn-out clothing? And who does not feel joy when obtaining new ones? We learn that it is the Sovereign Lord who throws away the old garments and picks up new ones, for He is immortal.

There is no such thing as the annihilation of a friend, for both he and we ourselves will last for ever. And should we still feel sad, affected by grief at the seeming annihilation, knowledge comes to our aid: all these forms have *already*

been slain by the Spirit, by the Law, in the sense that their time of usefulness has ended and they are due for destruction to make way for new ones. It is only the physical carrying out of the process that is now necessary.

Under Law Arjuna has been placed in the position where he must carry out this last stage, for, born a prince, his duty is to defend his people against adversity. Psychologically, having sensed the Real and seen the unreal in tradition, faith, friends and foes, he has already killed the unreal, for action begins in the mind. He, and we, must not grieve over the inevitable, that is to say, we must train ourselves to realize that there is no relationship between grief and the inevitable—a truly wonderful idea to dwell upon.

But if friends and possessions, whether material objects or ideas, prejudices or preconceptions, have to be destroyed, what will take their place? If the Wise Man is not attached to his friends and possessions, to what is he attached? If Arjuna follows the advice coming from the Higher in him, will he be lost? Breaking the "hundred cords of desire," will he stand deserted and alone on the Bridge? He is not yet "at home" there, and so he asks Krishna to give him the description of a wise and devoted man. What can he say? Will he act and move like other men? Where will be his dwelling place?

His eyes, still dark with despondency, fail to realize that he is looking at and talking with a Wise Man, and so he has to be told in detail what the possessions of the Wise Man are—and all will admit that they far surpass the ordinary possessions of mankind. He has also to be shown how to achieve them. He must forsake all desires, and he must be content and then the mind, ordinarily torn by desire and discontent, will be quiet. This can be achieved if he will only *depend* on the Supreme Spirit. Dependence, trust, confidence in the Higher, these can be attained through devotion; these are the safeguards and the vital forces necessary for success. It is a question of all or nothing. The heart must be placed on the Higher, the mind must work and work until it has *penetrated* the very depth and height of the Higher.

It is a difficult task. In these early stages it

is interesting to note how doubt and confusion rage in Arjuna's mind. He is not yet certain that it is the Higher in him who is teaching him, and that he is being given knowledge of things as they truly are, for he asks that Higher why, "if according to thy opinion" knowledge is superior to action, he is being asked to act! He still doubts his Teacher, for he has failed to grasp the implications of immortality and of the casting off of old garments, and, therefore, he does not see how the Teacher could have lived before so many ancient Sages mentioned at the beginning of the Fourth Discourse. Such doubts rise in our minds over and over again at different levels and "How can these things be?" is a cry of all when the "thinking" mind has not yet been illuminated.

Nothing can clear away doubts but knowledge and therefore the spiritual knowledge or illumination that comes to us in the middle stance on the Bridge must be directed downwards into the lower mind already limited by former insufficient knowledge, hemmed in by time and space, coloured by tradition and by possessions.

What is it that prevents the lower from easily absorbing spiritual truths?—the restlessness of the mind, "full of agitation." And Arjuna, like ourselves, faced again with the actual battlefield of the everyday life of action rather than of thinking, again becomes despondent. "I do not perceive any possibility of steady continuance" in this practice of control of the agitated, restless mind, and if I cannot do this then what will happen to me? And the old answer comes, continued practice, or patience and absence of desire—these are the keys to success in the control of the mind.

We learn about Krishna or the Higher Self, and even when granted a glimpse of the wonders of the Spirit we want to know how It acts. But if It acts, then It must have a form, and though the delusion that has affected Arjuna so far is now gone, he still wants to go a stage further and see with the Divine Eye what the Universe is like. Standing on the Bridge, with his consciousness now focused in the Higher, he sees the Vision of the Cosmic Form and is overwhelmed. He learns that this is not a vision of something apart from the world, apart from the lower, but is bound up

with the lower, is the *real* within the lower, and fear strikes him. The littleness of himself is so apparent, the vastness of the ALL so magnificent, the Light illuminating all is so dazzling, that he cannot bear it and seeks refuge in the more familiar, begging to see the ordinary well-loved form of his Teacher again.

He now realizes how mistaken he has been in his attitude to that Teacher whom, in his pride, he has thought of merely as a friend, and he begs for forgiveness. Who among us are free from this attitude towards our teachers, living or dead, or towards our own higher nature that illuminates our hearts while we treat it as on a level with our own experience!

Arjuna's mind is still puzzled, for he asks: Which is it best to do, to worship the unmanifested or the manifested, the glorious greatness of the Higher or the Higher as it expresses itself in and through the lower? The answer shows the dual aspect of *Antaskarana*—both are good, for are not the two aspects ONE?

The lesson is learnt: in the world of forms, action must be performed, for past actions bind us to the path of duty, but if we would not be caught up in the now-to-be-performed actions, then the results which come from them must not be thought of; no gain must be connected with them in our minds, no feelings of like or dislike of them, or of self-gratification must arise. We must realize, as Krishna does, that actions are inevitable, actors are inevitable, pain and pleasure are inevitable; definite, direct, responsible action is to be done in the name of the Higher.

Why must we so realize? Because if our pride says, "I will not do so," if any part of our nature says that, even then there is no escape, for we are bound by the past. Therefore we are given the knowledge of how to act in any and all circumstances. We have to ponder fully in our heart all the knowledge we can possibly get from penetrating the Higher with our mind, desiring nothing but to become the Higher, and then we must act the best we can.

Finally, established firmly in *Antaskarana*, we must remember again and again the Vision which we have been granted. As *The Voice of the Silence* says, the mind "gathers dust while it reflects,"

and a cleaner is required to make it clean. The cleaner is "remembering." To remember is a positive action; loss of memory due to not remembering over and over again, is the loss of all.

One who is seated in meditation, with heart fixed with love upon the Higher—in any well-loved form—such an one is the "most beloved" of Krishna.

THE IMPRISONED SPLENDOUR

Robert Browning in his *Paracelsus* has brought out the great truth that man is his own divinity, his own inspirer, and that "to know"

Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.

But will our imprisoned genie come forth merely because we have heard of its existence and sensed the truth of the concept? Mr. Judge in his *Letters That Have Helped Me* (Indian ed., p. 45) says, "You have the key to self and that is all; take it and drag out the lurker inside." The kingdom of heaven evidently has still to be taken by violence and a simple rub of our Aladdin's Lamp will not suffice. This *djinn* of Allah will not be summoned forth at the first call. We have to call often, for our mind is now so coated with layers of misconceptions and desire-propelled fancies that our first call may only disturb the bats and other creatures of the night that have settled in our mental sphere and in our ignorance we might mistake their fluttering for angels' wings and accept what then arises in our minds as a new revelation from on high.

But we have to do something or else we shall find ourselves among those whom Ibsen condemns for never giving an opportunity to their latent potentialities to express themselves. Here is what he makes Peer Gynt say:—

"We are songs;
You should have sung us!"
"We are thoughts;
You should have thought us."
"We are a watchword;
You should have used us!"

but instead

"A thousand times over
Hast thou cowed us and smothered us.
Down in thy heart's pit
We have lain and waited
We were never called forth."

"We were never called forth"—here lies the tragedy of human life, that the God within should have so little opportunity to make its voice heard but should forever be crucified on the cross of the lower passions and desires and ignoble thoughts. These other voices drown the voice that would fain speak would we but be quiet and listen. The din and clatter of the material world assail our senses and absorb our attention, the songs of the sirens of desire, the visions of the airy castle-builder of our egotism and ambition and our intellectual pride arise and intoxicate the mind that would aspire upward towards its parent and it becomes once more the slave of these enchantments.

H.P.B. says of the mind, the lower reflection of *Manas* (*Raja-Yoga*, p. 59), that if it can be freed from *Kama* it becomes the guide of the highest mental faculties. It is thus not some new consciousness that we have to acquire; we have only to learn to make the correct use of this mind that we are already using, and unfortunately also misusing a good deal of the time. We can start, therefore, just where we are.

The right use of the mind depends largely on the relinquishment of wrong mental habits. Hence the great Teachers, e.g., Patanjali, begin their teaching on *Yoga* with Mind-Control. They exhort us to stop the mental modifications of the wrong sort, as already described, and to begin practices of mental discipline that will bring the mind constantly back to a central point or position. Even if we feel that little success will crown any efforts which we may make in this life, yet this work should not be neglected, for we can at least prepare our mental luggage for our next life and thus get rid of some of the mental trappings which are hindering our progress. Attention should be given to what is said in *Letters That Have Helped Me* (pp. 29-30) about the ferment which we permit to arise in our own nature and which "impedes the entrance of the clear rays of

Truth." This ferment is not the result only of wrong or immoral actions but may arise from many others which the world does not consider harmful but the cumulative effect of which is to keep us enslaved to the personal consciousness and the purely material concerns of life.

People say that they want to do something for Theosophy but they generally think in terms of physical work. This, of course, has to be done, but those who think of such service only fail to see that before them lies a sphere of creative thought-effort which would give occupation for all free moments. It is said that the Adept peoples his current in space with thoughts powerful for good. We also have our currents in space and we should ask ourselves what we are doing with them.

Suppose we were to feel that we were like a great telephone exchange with calls coming in and that we were continually responding to these and sending out return messages. For is not each of us a portion of that *Akasa* which is the sounding board of the universe, storing up all impressions, good and bad, and giving forth at every instant responses in terms of what we have accumulated and deserved? Cannot we so charge our instrument with spiritual ideation that from us can stream forth elevating thoughts and aspirations towards a higher life?

In other words, in this vast repository there lie the unsung songs, the unthought thoughts and the unproclaimed watchwords but unless we do something to call these forth they will remain dormant. This requires the making of the mind porous, that is, we have to dwell upon thoughts of a spiritual nature until their vibrations have made channels through which the responses from *Buddhi*, the storehouse of the spiritual experiences of the past, may stream forth. Until that is done, *Buddhi* remains inactive here and the true purpose of incarnated life is in so far thwarted.

We have thus to begin with charging our currents in space with thoughts which will be of use to others, thus giving of our strength to their own higher resolves, awakening in them a dormant idea, or inspiring thoughts of mutual help and co-operation and thus diminishing the power of those feelings of fear and hostility now thickly spread abroad. Our thoughts will energize the elemental forces of our currents in space and, entering into the minds of others from within, will be of timely assistance to many who otherwise might never have a chance to get at these truths. Such thoughts arising within their own consciousness in an impersonal way will be the more readily accepted.

We should aspire to be Theosophically active all the time. In these days, when so many voices claim our attention, we have to balance receptivity with greater self-engendered mental activity. More selective reading is a good point to begin with if followed by ideation on what is read. Actively critical, as distinguished from carping, thought will also be very useful for the charging of our currents. But each can work out for himself the ways in which he could make his life more purposeful and more fully charged with the spiritual energies which alone can regenerate mankind.

Mr. Judge says that a man can be shut up in a prison and yet be a worker for the Cause. "What is wanted is true knowledge of the spiritual condition of man, his aim and destiny." It is such thoughts as these which will enable us to draw out the lurker from within ourselves and to help others to come to the same realization. The vast majority of mankind are enclosed within the cavern of the five senses, seeing but the fleeting shadows of personal existence which they take for the only realities. It is our duty to make every effort that could incite them to turn round and look within themselves, so that they might perceive the light of true knowledge.

SCIENTIFIC GROOVES OF THOUGHT

William Q. Judge in his *Letters That Have Helped Me* has written of the grooves of thought in which the minds of students run. He likens general human nature to an engine which is flanged and run for a certain size of track, and adds that the would-be occultist must remove the flange "and have a broad-faced wheel that will accommodate itself to the other mind and nature." (Indian ed., p. 75)

It is a common view, particularly among scientific workers, that the scientist, through the discipline to which he subjects himself, has found the way to accommodate his mind to nature; or, in other words, the scientist is a student of nature, free from prejudices and assumptions which so hamper the searcher for truth who is devoid of scientific training. The falsity of this view is shown in a recent article by Dr. John Owen, lately Visiting Professor of Sociology in the University of Helsinki, entitled "Philosophical Analysis and Scientific Progress" and published in *Science News* No. 26. Dr. Owen writes:—

...scientists make assumptions at all stages of their research, albeit often unconsciously. These assumptions may arise from personal bias, from past training, or more significantly, from the scientific and philosophical temper of the age....

It is in the light of prior assumptions that scientific facts are selected and their meaning interpreted. Philosophical assumptions and postulates are literally basic to science in that its validity is inseparably related to their validity. But although this is apparent to any scientist who is more than a technician, axioms and presuppositions are seldom held up to criticism in the same way in which the scientist demands that other theories be examined and analyzed.... The growth of science consists not merely in extending its range of valid data, but in the revision and reconstruction of its theoretical foundations. If these are false or inadequate they can deprive an experiment of meaning. More important, they can hinder the entire development of science until revised and corrected.

Dr. Owen distinguishes between the technicians of science who plan and carry out their experiments and calculations within the framework of the dominant assumptions and presuppositions of scientific orthodoxy, and the few great scientists who can adopt a position of philosophical detach-

ment from science in an attempt to relate it to the wider issues of contemporary thought and to subject these assumptions and presuppositions to a critical analysis.

In the opinion of Dr. Owen, science has advanced as much through such critical analysis as through the discovery of new facts and the invention of new instruments and methods of measurement and calculation. He instances the achievements of Einstein, who had the audacity to question the first principles of Newtonian physics, held sacrosanct until his day.

A comparison might be drawn at this point between science and religion. The life-giving message of a great spiritual Teacher is crystallized by his followers into an orthodoxy. This orthodoxy must be destroyed by the next Teacher before he can begin his constructive work. The work of a Newton at first enlarges the frontiers of science and then is converted into an orthodoxy which hinders progress until the inadequacies of the system are revealed by an Einstein.

Dr. Owen gives an important example of scientific orthodoxy:—

...there is no warrant for the view that the purpose of science is to reduce everything to matter, and the scientist, regardless of his field, has no valid justification for assuming the metaphysical theory of materialism at the start of his research. Science simply seeks to penetrate the mysteries of the universe, yet many scientists entertain the erroneous view that science naturally presupposes materialism. This leads to a dogmatism which is as unscientific as it is unphilosophical. In the social science it has led to the mechanistic standpoint that the world of mind and thought, being unreal, is powerless to affect the course of historical and sociological events, and to the naïve but fashionable methodological principle that the range of the measurable is identical with the range of the knowable.

Dr. Owen's main thesis has a more general application. Wherever and however truth is sought, the mind is constrained to run in grooves. Unconsciously, whether one is studying nature, listening to a lecture or studying *The Secret Doctrine*, there is a tendency to select material in conformity with preconceived ideas and to interpret that in the light of those preconceptions.

The first step in the gaining of true knowledge is to detach the mind from the influence of all those ideas which have been derived from personal bias, past training and the general climate of thought of our age.

Nevertheless, the philosophical analysis of the main principles, the dominating concepts and the working rules of science, which is the unique contribution of the few great scientists, however necessary it may be, is essentially destructive. Truth was never discovered by analysis or by reason or by any brain process, for it is realized with the awakening to consciousness of the Divine nature of man. The second unique contribution of the few great scientists is a constructive one—the new light which they shed upon a familiar field, so that known facts are seen in a new relationship. Their cogitations so energize their nature that the problems pondered are raised to a higher level of consciousness, there solved and the solution reflected down into the brain consciousness again. This reflection is possible only because of their detachment from the scientific grooves of thought, but it is but a faint and distorted reflection because their detachment from these grooves and from all the other outside influences on the brain-mind is only partial.

The Egos of a Newton, an Æschylus, or a Shakespeare, are of the same essence and substance as the Egos of a yokel, an ignoramus, a fool, or even an idiot; and the self-assertion of their informing *genii* depends on the physiological and material construction of the physical man. No Ego differs from another Ego, in its primordial or original essence and nature. That which makes one mortal a great man and of another a vulgar, silly person is, as said, the quality and make-up of the physical shell or casing, and the adequacy or inadequacy of brain and body to transmit and give expression to the light of the real, *Inner man*; and this aptness or inaptness is, in its turn, the result of Karma. (H.P.B. on "Genius," *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13*, p. 3)

It is the scientist's lack of comprehension of the nature and powers of the Inner Man and their relation to the physiological mind that marks the essential difference between science and Occultism. Both are based upon observed facts but the facts of science are restricted to those which pass through the mesh of the preconceptions of science, while the mind of the Occultist is attuned to nature, visible and invisible. H.P.B. writes:—

The physicist devotes all his efforts to the careful elimination from the mass of materials on which he builds up his conclusions, of everything except that which he conceives to be real fact—and it is exactly that which he conceives to be real fact,—anything clearly appealing to the senses—which the profound philosophy of Eastern Occultism deliberately condemns at starting as, in its nature, illusory effects, transitory *secondary* consequences of the real underlying fact. And in acting thus, does Occult Philosophy make an arbitrary choice between rival methods, as a chemist might select one or other of two different methods of analysis? Not at all. Real philosophy cannot make any choice arbitrarily: there is but one eternal verity and, in pursuit of that, thought is forced to travel along one road....

Of course, it must be remembered that the unreal knowledge, proceeding from the observation of illusory, because transitory and secondary effects, hangs together satisfactorily as regards the short chain it is able to construct. This it is which leads so many, in many respects powerful, minds, to be blindly contented with it. Some of the laws of matter can be detected (if not understood) by mere observation of matter. But it is obvious that the something out of which matter proceeded, the something into which it will return, cannot be observed by material senses. In what other way can observation be extended beyond the range of material senses? Only if it can be so extended, is any knowledge attainable by Man which has to do with eternal verities and primal causes, which is real as distinguished from the transitory and the unreal? Promptly, in ignorance of the methods by which observation can be extended beyond the range of the senses, the physicist declares,—concerning the hypothetical eternal verities you can only dream and indulge in illusory conjecture—all mere brain-spun fancy. Thus the world at large, not content with hugging illusions and calling them realities, spurns the reality and denounces it as illusion. ("Who Possess Knowledge?" *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 32*, pp. 13-14)

Elsewhere H.P.B. gave the rationale of the extension of observation beyond the range of the material senses:—

Still each of us can relatively reach the Sun of Truth even on this earth, and assimilate its warmest and most direct rays, however differentiated they may become after their long journey through the physical particles in space. To achieve this, there are two methods. On the physical plane we may use our mental polariscope; and, analyzing the properties of each ray, choose the purest. On the plane of spirituality, to reach the Sun of Truth we must work in dead earnest for the development of our higher nature. We know that by paralyzing gradually within ourselves the appetites of the lower personality, and thereby deaden-

ing the voice of the purely physiological mind—that mind which depends upon, and is inseparable from, its medium or *vehicle*, the organic brain—the animal in us may make room for the spiritual; and once aroused from its latent state, the highest spiritual senses and perceptions grow in us in proportion, and develop *pari passu* with the “divine man,” (“Truth in Modern Life,” *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 17*, pp. 2-3)

In so far as science accommodates itself to nature, and encourages all of us to do likewise, instead of relying upon authority or copying blindly our forebears, it deserves our gratitude. But in so far as its own prejudice and preconceptions blind it to the recognition of some facts and colour its interpretation of others, it is a mirror of erring human nature. There are obvious examples of this. The contemporaries of the great scientist Crookes refused to give serious consideration to his investigations into the phenomena of Spiritualism; the “technicians” of today do not give serious attention to the investigations of Dr. Rhine and others into extra-sensory perception.

There are, moreover, countless unrecorded facts in the humdrum affairs of any human life which to the uncoloured spiritual perception are conclusive evidence of the real world of primal causes.

REVIEW *

This book contains a wealth of interesting and suggestive ideas. The student well grounded in Theosophy will find many of its teachings here, unacknowledged, as is comprehensible in a phantasy of this type. He will find God depicted as the All, the statement too that “there are as many Gods as there are earthlings.” Here are

* *The Kingdom Beyond the Eyes: Fragments of a Dream.* By MARK EVERLEY. (The C. W. Daniel Co., Ltd., Ashington, Rochford, Essex, England. 172 pp. 1953. 10s. 6d.)

presented also the essential unity of Spirit and Matter, the omnipresence of Life, the drama of guided evolution and of human unfoldment, the unity and interdependence of mankind, reincarnation and Karma, Compassion and the remaining behind of those who knew the way, till all had passed.

The book condemns most vehemently blood sports and meat eating, vivisection, capital punishment, abortion and war. It exposes also the fear-strengthened priestly dominance over the minds of men. Best of all, perhaps, is its heart-stirring and head-lifting presentation of Man, his sufferings, his courage and the grandeur of the stature towards which he is rising, undaunted by difficulties, learning by errors, contemptuous at last of punishment and reward. There is guidance from spiritual teachers, quickening from great art and music, but in the last analysis it is by his own efforts that man must win his way to wisdom and the power greatly to serve.

The book's most serious drawback is the injunction, more than once given, to be tolerant for the present of evil perceived within. This surely contradicts the repeated plea to “deliver Him not unto foulness.” Also the implied uniqueness of the “green star” (our Earth) as the field of development for self-conscious “sparklings” is not in line with Theosophy. Perhaps the story form demanded the personalizing of Good and Evil as Christ and Lucifer, who are here shown as the two sides of the same medal, but need the personal pronoun have been used even for the All?

Despite these points, however, and also the author's leaning towards the Christian idiom, the jumbled sequence in the historical retrospect, and a style which can be very irritating, *The Kingdom Beyond the Eyes* should repay thoughtful reading.

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Information as to the meeting place and times of meetings may be had from the United Lodge of Theosophists, Bombay.

The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge as set forth in its "Declaration"

I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate; it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the Form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished to Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

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