

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THEOSOPHY AND CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

Students of Theosophical literature are familiar with the idea that this is a “transition age,” a period of transition from one age to another. The time is imminent when we shall have entered the new age. Nowadays we hear it said that humanity is at the crossroads, which means that it is time we made a definite choice as to the way we shall go. Therefore the transition from one state or age to another marks a decisive point for humanity. As George Delf, Organizing Secretary of the United World Trust and National Peace Council, writing in *Views* (London) for Summer 1963 stated:

This is probably the most important 100 years in four billion, and an extraordinarily dangerous one — if we get over it we'll get into a new stage of evolution.

In the letter known as “The Great Master's Letter” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 33*), written in the latter part of the last century, it is said that

the intellectual portion of mankind seems to be fast dividing into two classes: the one unconsciously preparing for itself long periods of temporary annihilation or states of non-consciousness, owing to the deliberate surrender of intellect and its imprisonment in the narrow grooves of bigotry and superstition — a process which cannot fail to lead to the utter deformation of the intellectual principle; the other unrestrainedly indulging its animal propensities with the deliberate intention of submitting to annihilation pure and simple, in case of failure, and to millenniums of degradation after physical dissolution.

And the Master adds: “It is time that Theosophy should enter the arena.”

What is the “new stage of evolution” spoken of by George Delf to be like? How does humanity envisage it today? Is it the “Golden Age” mentioned in H. P. Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*, an age when the “earth will be a heaven” in comparison with what it is now? To bring it about humanity as a whole must feel the need of it. Is such a need felt today?

At one time, it was the individual attainment of Liberation, which is after all only an exalted and glorious selfishness, that was considered to be the aim of life. When materialism took the place of religion it taught that all roads lead to extinction at death, that nothing survives the death of the body. "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die" was accepted by many as their philosophy of life. Today, though the majority still hold to this view, there is much searching after knowledge and values other than the material on the part of many thinkers. Consequently, there is evident today a growth of knowledge in many spheres, both good and bad.

In the sphere of science we find that extension of knowledge is bringing men to the realization that there can be no end to study and search. The mystery of the universe is constantly deepening for scientists, and the further they probe, the more they realize how much there still remains to be known. They are searching for the laws that must govern the whole universe as they have been found to govern that aspect of Nature which they have so far been able to probe; and soon, if they have not already done so, they must be able to say with the great Adepts of the past: "There is in our system no such thing as God, either personal or impersonal . . . but absolute, immutable law."

But if this denial of the God of the theologians is not to lead to rank materialism, science must widen its purview, revise its idea of matter — something which has already been done to a great extent since the beginning of this century, but which has not gone far enough. It is time that physicists and other scientists trying to investigate gross matter joined forces with those scientists who are experimenting with subtler matter, with mental forces, with extra-sensory perception and so on, for the latter continue the study of the universe and of man where the former leave off.

To turn to religion, which should have been an ally of science rather than at the opposite pole to it, it is today at the crossroads. Even the supposed infallibility of the Pope, the so-called representative on earth of Jesus Christ, is in doubt, for if after so many years he changes his mind regarding artificial methods of birth control, how can he be considered "infallible"? In every aspect of the church's life, the winds of renewal and reform blow strong. Religious superstitions and taboos no longer have the same hold on the people that they once had, and many thinkers, among them some of the clergy themselves, are speaking out and challenging accepted theological beliefs. All this augurs well for the future of true religion.

Count Michael de la Bedoyère, editor of the Christian magazine *Search* and author of several books, writing in *Views* for Summer 1963 said: "For centuries the concept of religion has been petrified, institutionalized, juridicized in a way that seems to separate it from the prophetic sources which revealed it." Even these "prophetic sources" are undergoing change and the so-called "revealed" word of God, the Bible,

has of late been subjected to much revision.

The reason for the failure of religion is that it has never really been practised in daily life save by a few. The New Testament ethics taught by Jesus are said to be impractical for most people. The same is true of Buddhistic ethics, for it is now believed that the *Panchasila* is only for those who take up the monastic life. And the same could be said of other religions; everywhere we see a gap between profession and practice. Thus, for instance, though all the prophets have enjoined love and mercy and forgiveness, retaliatory punishment is still practised in most countries, though there is today much agitation against the old methods of punishment of the criminal, especially against capital punishment. H. P. Blavatsky has given us a clue as to what should be done with the criminal. She has said in *The Key to Theosophy* that "human law may use restrictive, not punitive, measures." Inhumanity to the prisoner is now considered mediæval in conception, and this is a welcome trend.

It is a misconception that the ethical precepts of any religion are merely the teachings of the founder of that religion; it is equally wrong to consider them God-ordained. They should be looked upon as statements of universal Law working on a subtler plane, the moral plane. If a *scientific* approach were made to religious teachings, the truth of this could be ascertained. Science can and should come to the aid of religion and of philosophy, and a synthetic view of life should be evolved. A new approach should be made to many a religious teaching, and to begin with, God has to be understood not as a person but as a symbol. Science can find no room for God, but people need some such symbol. Science sees law working everywhere; religions see miracles; philosophies see or seek the meaning behind the symbols. By the understanding of symbology the riddle of life can be solved. Therefore do we find Theosophy pointing to the value of the interpretation of religious symbols. Plato showed the Deity geometrizing, and Pythagoras taught that the entire universe is one vast system of mathematically correct combinations. Are we getting any nearer to these ideas? That is to say, are we getting nearer to the idea that from the abstract comes the concrete, with all that that means? Is the universe concretized thought? We make ourselves by thought; we think of an atom bomb and we make it; we think of a heaven on earth and we make it! Sir James Jeans, in *The Mysterious Universe*, refers to the universe as "more like a great thought than a great machine," which reminds us of H. P. Blavatsky's statement in her first book, *Isis Unveiled* (1877), that God is "the universal mind diffused through all things" — which concept, she says, underlies all ancient philosophies.

Dr. Julian Huxley, writing many years ago in *The Uniqueness of Man*, noted that

the concept of God has reached the limits of its usefulness. . . . The disappearance of God means a fundamental recasting of religion . . . the shouldering by man of ultimate responsibility which he had previously pushed off on to God.

This "recasting of religion" would be futile unless it were based on the concept of universal Law. Physical science has widened our vision of the universe and shown us unexpected depths; and the mere fact that we can make bombs which can destroy the earth and its inhabitants has dealt a blow at the belief in the littleness of man and the greatness of God. If man's material weapons and his invisible gases can destroy, then where is God? Man prays and is not heard! He is acquiring new powers today, but is he learning how great is his responsibility?

Madame Blavatsky wrote in *The Key to Theosophy* that "Theosophy considers humanity as an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto." We can perhaps see why she said that knowledge of Reincarnation and Karma was essential if humanity was to be saved from degradation.

We can also see why she gave in her first book, *Isis Unveiled*, the necessary basis for this new understanding of life. Unless the idea of miracles, or chance, is ruled out, the unification of the different advances in knowledge cannot take place, and without this unification there must remain a "thus far and no farther" to the progress we can make. "All is law" is the scientific approach. "As a man sows so shall he reap" is the ethical approach. But we need something else; we need to understand *why* this is so, and for that we must turn to *true* philosophy or *true* religion.

Madame Blavatsky also gave out in *Isis Unveiled* that man and nature are threefold — body, soul and spirit. If we understand this, we can understand the fundamental basis of true religion. Man is primarily a spiritual being living in various sheaths of matter. He has, therefore, hidden powers which are already developed or will become operative in the process of evolution and by self-effort. Man is more than the outer body which we see; nature is more than the physical forms that compose it. The purpose of all life is to learn. The great universal cycles which give us day and night, the changing seasons, birth, life, death and life again, are constantly repetitive. The end is union with the Whole. Man cannot be understood if he is looked upon as a creature of but a day; he is not just a collection of physical atoms held together during life. He is a *whole*, and it is the wholeness not only of himself, his character and roots, but of the universe itself that he is seeking. This lies at the base of the now generally accepted concept of world brotherhood, first set in motion in our age by Madame Blavatsky in the last quarter of the last century, but not yet fully understood and therefore found so difficult to practise.

In *The Theosophical Glossary* Madame Blavatsky states:

Humanity is a great Brotherhood by virtue of the sameness of the material from which it is formed physically and morally. Unless, however, it becomes a Brotherhood also intellectually, it is no better than a superior genus of animals.

Today, with the colour question so much to the fore, this idea of a

common source, if applied, can bring sanity to humanity. We can no longer separate man from man if we want to maintain peace in the world. And it is heartening to note that in recent months some milestones have been passed in this connection.

In the early days of the Theosophical Movement one of the great founders of that Movement wrote that "the white race must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations, to call the poor despised 'nigger' brother." The Theosophical Movement was started in 1875 to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, colour, religion or social position. The idea was not new. In the constitutions of many nations we find a similar idea expressed. The U.S. Declaration of Independence, for instance, had proclaimed in 1776 "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Since this was written 188 years have passed by, and only this year has the Civil Rights Bill, giving all U.S. citizens (including Negroes) equal rights, become the law of the land. The signatories to the Charter of the United Nations are pledged to promote "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

Such principles and commitments are unfortunately often breached. But these ideas and ideals have filled the minds of ordinary men and women in all parts of the world, and surely there are signs that at least some among us are endeavouring to translate them into practice and are taking the right direction at this critical period when we find ourselves at the crossroads.

Years ago the building of empires was the aim of many nations, but today that is the aim of but a few, and we find a weakening of the wish to dominate others and a strengthening of the wish to render to other countries such help as is necessary. Thus we find that in place of apathy towards other nations there is a sense of awakening to one's duty and responsibility in the world. The word freedom is on everybody's lips, but it is well to realize that men are really free only when they are inwardly bound by a sense of responsibility to the whole human race.

But we have to go further. If we cannot separate man from man, neither can we separate man from the universe. The idea of "integration" is coming to the fore these days. If we can widen our view of it to take in the Whole, boundless as space, immutable as law, timeless as duration, then we shall be on the way to becoming really integrated.

The concept of "wholeness" that has arisen today symbolizes the goal towards which humanity is striving. We are learning that if we seek to destroy any part of Nature, even those creatures we call "pests," we produce adverse effects on our land, our crops, our domestic and other animals, and on human beings themselves, for all are bound together in one vast Whole. We are learning that nothing can ever be isolated; no

single thing can exist by itself. Therefore, as the Editorial Notes in the April issue of *Mother Earth*, the Journal of the Soil Association (England), stated: "To create an environment for single aims is to create one that cannot endure." The environment of every aspect of life is in its wider aspect the Universe itself.

The U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Dean Rusk, said in his Independence Day address at Philadelphia, on July 4, 1964:

Today we can be secure only to the extent that our total environment is secure — and by total environment we mean not only the land, waters, and air of the earth but space as far out as instruments can be projected capable of affecting significantly human affairs.

As Madame Blavatsky wrote in *Isis Unveiled*, we must "consider the universe as a whole balanced by the exquisite adjustment of parts." It is the gaining of a universal viewpoint in all things that is the need of the hour. If we tried to observe and to understand how the universe functions and how the universal pattern is reflected in all things, it would widen our outlook and open for us new vistas of knowledge.

The process of learning and of understanding involves the shedding of old, effete ideas and preconceptions. Nowhere do we notice this more than in the sphere of science, where old theories are constantly being discarded in favour of new ones. The recent contribution to knowledge by Professor Fred Hoyle and Dr. Jayant Narlikar shows us that nothing that has not stood the test of thousands of years of experience can be accepted as true. The new theory of gravity propounded by them will probably be superseded in time by another. The lesson to be learnt is that we should not accept the findings of ever-changing science as blindly as we sometimes do, for to do so would be to make the same mistake as our forefathers did in accepting unquestioningly religious dogmas and the word of the priests.

Scientific and religious dogmatism is not all that has to be guarded against. There is still another danger — the blind following of political "leaders" who often exhibit a narrow outlook and are largely responsible for the present political climate of mutual antagonism between nations. But there are some hopeful signs. As the Editorial in the Summer 1963 *Views* states in reference to the partial test-ban treaty:

What overpoweringly emerges from the initialled treaty — and this is its first point of historical significance — is that for the first time two major antagonistic Powers give practical recognition to the fact that the points on which they are united are of greater importance than their points of mutual division. They thereby recognize the overwhelming demand of moral sanity, and also that they have not only a national interest but also a duty to humanity.

This recognition is a great step forward, for it indicates the awakening of a feeling of moral responsibility towards humanity as a whole.

But side by side with the growth of such a feeling there are in other spheres evidences of a degradation of thought and character or morals. What was once thought immoral, beastly, is now sometimes accepted as right and proper. Lest we should despair it is good to note what Madame Blavatsky wrote:

In a world of illusion in which the law of evolution operates, nothing could be more natural than that the ideals of MAN — as a unit of the total, or mankind — should be for ever shifting. . . . At one time he is at the topmost point of the circle of development; at another, at the lowest. And, as he thus alternately rises and sinks, and his moral nature responsively expands or contracts, so will his moral code at one time embody the noblest altruistic and aspirational ideals, while at the other, the ruling conscience will be but the reflection of selfishness, brutality and faithlessness. (“The Fall of Ideals”: *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 27*, p. 1)

The Editorial in *Views* cited above also refers to man’s “attempt to narrow the gap between his ever-increasing technical skill and what, for want of a better expression, may be called his moral capacities.” The article continues:

The problem today is not whether Capitalism will triumph over Communism, or vice versa, but rather whether the de-humanization characteristic of both Capitalism and Communism will give way to a new style of living within a system suited to the measure of man. We do not underestimate the tremendous difficulties involved, but want first to be aware of the choice. The challenge of the second half of the twentieth century is whether man can rise beyond the social, economic and ideological forces restricting his growth. It will not occur unless each of us plays his part in achieving it.

To rise above the forces restricting our growth, we need the help of a scientific religion and a religious science. True philosophy can link science and religion together and make us see things in correct perspective. It can also give us the *raison d'être* of life and an understanding of the Universe. It is based on the conception of man as a living being who thinks, feels, acts and is urged on by some force within which wishes to *understand* life. To gather facts is not to understand them. Though the idea of God, the creator, has given way to the concept of Law, neither of these satisfies the human heart. The human heart *knows* that there is that background which contains all, which is the cause of all and the end of all; therefore it seeks the Philosophers who sense this ALL and make its understanding possible by thought and by that illumination which lies beyond thought. Everything gets into its right place once this vision of the Whole is glimpsed. If the mind reels at the vision, a nobler feeling takes the place of thought. As Gascoigne wrote in his “Night Thoughts”: “I raise my spellbound head and face to face with what I cannot name I worship and adore.”

It is this background and base of all that Carlyle referred to when he said that we must find God in the spider's web, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning when she spoke of "every common bush afire with God." But this God or Spirit or Reality or Wholeness must not be separated from the parts. All our life should be moulded on this conception and all our works form parts of a pattern. Shall we work to get results today or to find the answer to life in living according to the highest that is in us?

This message is given by Theosophy.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONERS

[Reprinted from THE PATH, Vol. III, pp. 124-25, for July 1888.—EDS.]

From L. C.

What are the "peace" and the "voice of the silence" spoken of in *Light on the Path*? Are they easy to attain to?

Answer.—The peace is that period succeeding a storm set up in your nature by any attempt to conquer the lower self. It follows each such conflict if the battle has been waged to victory for the higher. But few modern men can wage the battle with more than one thing at a time. Hence, we have many such storms. Each peculiarity, passion, or propensity has to be attacked singly and overcome. When that happens, a period of inner silence arrives in which the soul grows and attempts to instruct us. This is the voice. And, as *Light on the Path* says (Rule 21, Part 1), "It cannot be described by any metaphor." The silence has its counterpart in nature when, after storms or cataclysms, *silence* occurs. The silence after a storm is due to the effect of water falling through the air upon earth, vegetation, insects, and animals, and to the peculiar results of loud reverberations of thunder. All these combine to produce a silence quite appreciable by anyone accustomed to nature. And when a cataclysm takes place, such as the falling of a tremendous avalanche of snow, another sort of silence is brought about, during which many things in the astral and natural world not at other times evident can be perceived. Each of these silences comes to an end because the ordinary normal operations of nature reassert themselves. So it is with ourselves. Storms of disappointment, or terrible upheavals from tremendous sorrows, or the effect of our own intense will, bring about those silences in which the voice of the soul has perchance a better opportunity of being heard.

—MOULVIE

SHAKESPEARE

[Almost the entire world is celebrating this year the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of William Shakespeare. We are glad to reprint here from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for December 1942 an article which introduces a series on Shakespeare's plays, specially prepared for this magazine by a student of Theosophy who is also a Shakespearean scholar. The other articles in the series will be reprinted in subsequent issues.—Eds.]

“Shakespeare's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy” (Coleridge) has proved more beneficent to the true philosopher in the study of the human heart — therefore, in the promotion of truth — than the more accurate, but certainly less deep, science of any Fellow of the Royal Institution.

These words appear in the editorial entitled “What's in a Name?” which opens Volume I of *Lucifer*. In them we glimpse the Occult World's estimate of the message of Shakespeare. This remark should be placed side by side with another in *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 419) which runs:

Æschylus, like Shakespeare, was and will ever remain the intellectual “Sphinx” of the ages.

These two statements will be more fully comprehended and their implications more clearly seen by the Theosophical student aware of these words of W. Q. Judge:

The Adepts assert that Shakespeare was, unconsciously to himself, inspired by one of their own number.

The student who brings the light of his great philosophy to bear on the works of Shakespeare will not find it an easy task to unravel the mystery locked up in allegory, symbol and character portrayal of the great plays. The very medium of poetic drama used is indicative of the fact that the teachings which the Adepts planned to give were not to be imparted in a direct manner. Their intention must have been to provoke thought, to relieve heart perplexities purposefully engendered, by pointing to moral verities — all by a correct use of Suggestion; thus to clarify and to elevate human perception, and so to raise the moral sense of the masses, and prepare individuals for a more direct contact in the future with the truths of Occult psychology. Again, the very fact that Shakespeare remained unconscious of the Nirmanakayic influence which his genius attracted shows that we must not expect the unadulterated expression of Divine Wisdom in all he created.

There is no doubt that Literature has been one of the major channels used by the Great Fraternity to instruct the human race; at one time it appears to have been the most direct method used to change the Manas and Buddhi of the race. In later ages epics and dramas, ballads and

fables were used indirectly to impart knowledge of the Eternal Verities. Theosophy instructs the humanity of our cycle by direct presentation, as is clearly evident from the message recorded by H.P.B. and explained by W. Q. Judge. And today, perhaps, more use is made by the Adepts of the avenue of Science than of that of Literature. Such a passage as the following from *Light on the Path* hints at this:

I hold that scientific men are the pioneers of modern thought. The days of literature and of art, when poets and sculptors saw the divine light, and put it into their own great language — these days lie buried in the long past with the ante-Phidian sculptors and the pre-Homeric poets. The mysteries no longer rule the world of thought and beauty; human life is the governing power, not that which lies beyond it. But the scientific workers are progressing, not so much by their own will as by sheer force of circumstances, towards the far line which divides things interpretable from things uninterpretable. Every fresh discovery drives them a step onward. Therefore do I very highly esteem the knowledge obtained by work and experiment.

But intuitive knowledge is an entirely different thing. It is not acquired in any way, but is, so to speak, a faculty of the soul; not the animal soul, that which becomes a ghost after death, when lust or liking or the memory of ill-deeds holds it to the neighbourhood of human beings, but the divine soul which animates all the external forms of the individualized being.

For this reason, most likely, H.P.B. gave so much space in her great books to a consideration of the faults and the foibles of Science, at the same time pointing out the turns which the physiologist and the psychologist, the physicist and the chemist, should take on the path of research to make real progress. But, at the same time, in more than one place both H.P.B. and Mr. Judge stressed the value of literature in transforming the mind of the race and the influence of Theosophy on modern literature. And more: Mahatma K.H. in one place refers to "the Adept who writes stories with H.P.B." In the light of such a remark, *Night-mare Tales*, *The Idyll of the White Lotus*, *The Dream of Ravan*, and the stories by Bryan Kinnavan become endowed with a definite purpose. Such are more than literature which entertains.

And so, the Theosophical student of the present generation may well be advised to look at the firmament of Literature from another point of view — to imbibe the Adept influence which radiates therefrom. In that firmament are the Zodiac and also stars of various magnitudes, and among the latter is Shakespeare — a veritable Sirius.

It is with pleasure therefore that we begin to publish a series on Shakespeare prepared by a Theosophical student in the U.S.A. who is also a Shakespearean scholar. The writer has selected five great plays, *Hamlet*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* for examination with the help of Theosophical ideas. These studies are not exhaustive and

each of them deals with but some particular phases. The third and the fourth are studies in human character and psychology; they deal with problems which remain unsolved by modern psychology, and will so remain till its votaries adopt the knowledge enshrined in Asiatic psychology. The remaining three are excellent studies in abnormal psychical phenomena: insanity, soothsaying and witchery as they influence individuals and, through them, the course of public events; but the careful reader will find in each something more than that.

These five studies bring out also another fact which has its lesson for the Theosophical server. An Adept has written with approval of Shakespeare's method of handling old legends, etc. Once the Master K.H. wrote:

There is not a book but is the shadow of some other book, the concrete image, very often, of the *astral body* of it in some other work upon the same or approximate subject. I agree entirely with Dr. Cromwell when he says that "true talent will become original in the very act of engaging itself with the ideas of others"; nay, will often *convert the dross* of previous authors into the golden ore that shines forth to the world as its own peculiar creation. "From a series of extravagant and weak Italian romances, Shakespeare took the plots, the characters, and the major part of the incidents of those dramatic works which have exalted his name, as an *original* writer, above that of every other in the annals of literature."

It would be worth his while for the Theosophical student to note the nature of the sources. Dr. Cromwell's quotation names Italian *novelle*; these may look to us somewhat unimportant and as pertaining to a day of small beginnings; but let us not overlook that we have had a Shakespeare to transform them; in the fourteenth century they served their purpose, and not a negligible one. Among the writers of the *novelle* were Boccaccio, Bandello and Cinthio. While Shakespeare went to this source chiefly for creating his comedies, we must not overlook that no less a drama than *Othello* is indebted to Giraldi Cinthio, who was a Professor of Philosophy at Ferrara and whose *Hecatommithi* (Hundred Tales) contains the story of the Moor of Venice. A comparison between the story and the drama will reveal to the student of Occultism not only how great a genius was Shakespeare, but will also show part of the technique used by the Adepts in influencing Shakespeare.

But Italian *novelle* were only one of three main sources. The second was history. In our series Macbeth and Julius Cæsar are examples thereof. The second of these affords a good opportunity to the Theosophical student to learn of the power of transforming historical and biographical facts into drama, romance, epic. It is well known that Shakespeare used Plutarch's *Lives* and in creating his plays used the biographies of Cæsar, Antony and Brutus. The *Lives* themselves form an important tome of priceless value in understanding human character as well as in building one's own. To the reader of these three lives who is familiar also with

the plays of Shakespeare the question recurs: Can we do without the *Lives* even with Shakespeare's plays well preserved?

The third source to which Shakespeare went were the old legends and myths, especially the Scandinavian. In our series *Hamlet* and *King Lear* are examples. In Scandinavian literature there survives the legend of Amleth, and (this is of special interest to the Theosophical student) it had been worked up through the centuries, and Shakespeare made use not only of the original legend but also of the stories and even the plays based on it, the last of which was contemporary with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. We have good reason to deduce that this seed legend must carry truths important to humanity for it to have been worked and reworked and finally to have been used by the Adept who influenced Shakespeare. Can it be that it contains the basic truth about the conjoint action of the weak will, Spiritistic influence and insanity in human consciousness? A careful study of the evolution of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from the Scandinavian legend of Amleth might prove not only fascinating but useful to the student of the Occult, especially in learning about the ways the Adepts work. Also, it would make an instructive chapter in the history of European literature. Exactly similar is the way the legend of *Lir*, the Celtic Neptune, and his two cruel daughters, the rough Winds, and the third, the gentle Zephyr, became *King Lear* by the hand of Shakespeare; here again, between the folk-tale and the drama of Shakespeare there exist numerous versions of the story.

The magnificence of the creative genius of Shakespeare assigns to originality a new meaning. Emerson begins his essay on Shakespeare with words which relate to this subject and which need some reflection. He says—"Great men are more distinguished by range and extent, than by originality." Are we not encountering here the same idea which *The Voice of the Silence* brings out, distinguishing between "Behold, I know" and "Thus have I heard"? Notice the range and the extent of Shakespeare's knowledge. His use of legal terminology was such (e.g., *Hamlet*, V. 1) that some have conjectured that in his youth Shakespeare had been employed in an attorney's office! But his medical knowledge was great too (see *King Lear*), though no one has suggested that he had intended to practise as a physician! Again, are we to suppose that Shakespeare was a mighty hunter because he uses the correct technical terms of sport, especially of falconry, favourite among the Elizabethans, of hawking, of stag-hunting and of angling? And if we are not to assume that his knowledge of law, of medicine, of sport, was obtained by study and practice of these pastimes (!) what are we to assume about his knowledge of sorcery and ghostlore, and above all about his profound insight into human nature?

To the student of Occultism Shakespeare's knowledge of the super-physical must look amazing: think not only of the ghosts of *Hamlet*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, but also of the world of the elementals, of the fairies and elves of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and of the background of *The Tempest*. No, the "range and extent" of

Shakespeare's knowledge, to which Emerson makes pointed reference, gives us a very definite clue to Adept influence. A real genius — possessor of that type of genius which is described by H.P.B. as true and innate, in contradistinction to "an abnormal expansion of our human intellect" — cuts a deep canal and he is a specialist of his type; but when a genius comes under Nirmanakayic influence there is the phenomenon of a consciousness that becomes myriad-minded. Is it not that quality which made the giant Dr. Johnson write this of Shakespeare?—

Each change of many-coloured life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new:
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain.

We hope some at least among our readers will avail themselves of this opportunity and read or reread during each month at their leisure that play of Shakespeare on which the current article of our series is based. But let them go to the drama not only with mental enthusiasm but also with the spirit of grace about which Charles Lamb, to whom students of Shakespeare owe not a little, wrote in his essay on "Grace Before Meat":

Why have we none [no grace] for books, those spiritual repasts
— a grace before Milton — a grace before Shakespeare — a devo-
tional exercise before reading the *Faerie Queene*?

SHAKESPEARE AND THE ADEPTS

The Adepts assert that Shakespeare was, unconsciously to himself, inspired by one of their own number.

—*Echoes from the Orient*, WM. Q. JUDGE

The quoted statement may naturally raise questions of why such Aid was given to Shakespeare, and what evidences of it appear in his work. Theosophical teaching declares that every activity humanizing enough to shed a little brightness is brought by its own light under the direct observation of Higher Minds. No surprise, therefore, need be aroused by the remark that Shakespeare received help from the Adepts who were guiding the Theosophical Movement in the West. For certainly such a literary and dramatic efflorescence as that of the Elizabethan period in England would attract some special attention to the individuals creating it. Those Adepts would see in the dramatic growth of the time a means, free from sermonizing, of clarifying many men's judgment on their own life-problems, by viewing similar ones and the outcomes of them as presented in the theatres.

Shakespeare's pre-eminence was indeed not fully known by his contemporaries; but Vaster Souls would clearly perceive that though he

handled the same mixture of good and evil material as other writers, and by no means minced the evil, yet by putting less emphasis on that, he in fact sent out more of an upward call to the low, as to the high, in his theatre audiences, and in general he reached a more humane breadth in his plays than was to be found in others. Even his Sonnets, more than those of other sonneteers, showed flashes of the divine discontent that draws men to the Beyond; while here and there throughout his early works were drops "o' the milk of human kindness" which gave their own proof of the generosity of the soul that scattered them. Thus from the first Shakespeare unconsciously exhibited such largeness of mind as is necessary to receive, and to work under, Adept Influence.

Evidences of this Inspiration as found in the works are of an internal kind, since the field of higher dramatic action is fundamentally in the mind and soul. Indeed, the inwardness of Shakespeare's plays has always compelled study from this standpoint — which of itself is one of the evidences sought. *Hence a student of Theosophy does not presumptuously expect to reach conclusions greatly different from those usually held, but only occasionally to perceive for them deeper reasons and foundations.* Nor is Shakespeare to be regarded as one of the rare beings who are under special Adept observation from childhood. Like other and more ordinary men, Shakespeare had to win his help; and when it began, he did not fully know its nature or its origin, but felt it to be, as in fact it was, a broader, keener alertness of his own higher mind. The superior possibilities embedded within himself were what Adept Inspiration spurred into stronger activity.

Greater influxes of perception then came, truer visions in mind and soul revealing springs of character hitherto half-hidden from him. Remoter causes, results, and unexpected complications became clearer. Secret relationships were felt, or subtle impulsions between being and being. Ignorances or intuitions were detected that betray or deliver. These perceptions he strove intensely to embody in his personages. Hence this man's creative character-work began to be much deepened and broadened by his glimpses unawares into the Eastern Psychology — Soul-Knowledge — which must in truth have constituted the very essence of the Higher Influence sent upon him, and which led to those manifestations of the Life-Verities recognized by men as operative in that world known as Shakespeare's greater plays.

The Inculcators of the Ancient Wisdom could not in that age appear openly as Adepts. They worked as philosophers, and also through other individuals or groups whose nature or activities permitted. Their continuous purpose was precisely to spread through all possible channels Their Wisdom or Psycho-Spiritual Knowledge; which in the parts concerning men may most fittingly be called Psychology, and which was later to be known as Theosophy. Hence for Adepts to shed a particular light on drama as a presentment of human action and its Soul-source, and to give particular aid to a noble-minded dramatist who had obtained a large following, were only natural expressions of Their purpose.

A great creator of fictional characters is great because he is able to embody with truth in persons called imaginary the experience actual people have had, either in their present or in their past lives. More especially, he is great because within the soul-memory of his own egoic past are the qualities and effects of a very wide range of Life-Stuff, and because this mental wealth lies near enough to his present consciousness to permit him to draw from it in order to re-incarnate, or *in semblance* put into flesh once more, phases of his very own former lives and personalities. Moreover, that wealth of his past, like similar wealth of his present, resulted from a fusion of his actual individual experiences with keen observation and understanding of the lives of other men. Thus, knowingly or not, such a character-portrayer possesses and constantly uses a large intuitive power which he has gained through ages of varied experience and contemplation.

These statements may give a hint of why Shakespeare, Sophocles, and others of the finest portrayers of character have not used as a basis for their pictures the supposedly ideal, the notional, or the desired. They have not been satisfied to present the necessarily slighter images offered by their fancy, or the plot-structure formed by the logic of their intellect. Instead, they have chosen veritable personages and actual incidents — a cross-section of life as it has been lived. By a genuine visional apprehension they have entered into the real gist, colour and stability of Life-Fact. Of the vast Life-Record, they have literally relived that portion considered by them, have bound it into their very selves, and have thus experienced quite naturally a larger encompassing of life and a surer guidance of their artistic embodying or expressing power. For the Life-Record when thus again revived mentally into present actuality, inevitably carries into fictional portrayals an undeniable convincingness.

The reason is that the Image-making Power possessed by man — his "King-faculty," Theosophy teaches — is working with living Substance even when producing fictional portrayals. The same great Power — Imagination — is active, whether it brings forth a live human being or a vivified picture of one, though of course it operates on different planes of Nature and by different laws. At some time, Imagination co-operating with Desire and Will produced the living being. Later, Imagination, still co-operating with its two necessary aides, brings into another phase of Life a mentalized copy or version of that same being. In each case genuine Akashic substance is the basis of the Imaginative operation. Both the living being and the fictional portrayal are the offspring of a desire to create, a desire to energize life-atoms through Will and in accordance with the Image before Thought or Mind.

The Image-making Power manifests in two great degrees, ordinarily known as imagination and fancy. The discrimination between them, as commonly stated, is not so fundamental and sharp as is the distinction made by Theosophy. In the Adept Psychology the difference is deeply inherent in man's inner constitution, and corresponds to the difference between his upper principles and the lower aspects or reflections of these.

Of the two, Imagination is the Originative Power. Fancy is technically the imitative or reflected power — a smaller, weaker, or even vitiated reflection of the higher. Both make Images, both mould Life-Stuff into other forms of Life. But Fancy is less “Kingly” in its modes and results. Fancy works with grosser material, denser matter, lower in evolution, matter less plastic; and therefore its results are often more distorted into unreality. Again, Fancy works frequently with less noble purposes, and always it works with much less of the dynamic Fire of Life.

Therefore fictional art that mainly embodies Fancy (technically regarded) really does possess less of Life. It is thinner-blooded, remoter, and cannot touch so intimately the life in its observers. This is the true reason why great character-portrayers choose for their pictures actual beings and real stories. In the activity, however, and outward production of minds like Shakespeare’s, the results of the lower Imaging power are shot through like shimmering silk with the lights of the higher. For the breadth of Soul-Life in such minds causes the offspring of their Fancy to share richly in the vital Fire that burns in the higher Power.

Readers or observers of fictional art have felt, far within, this basic Theosophical distinction, and hence have praised the character-portrayals derived from Imagination as “living”; while, however pleasing or otherwise the Fancy-portraits, they have recognized these as slighter or merely temporary. For example, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *The Tempest* are both surpassing instances of charming Fancy. But *The Tempest* is something more — it is also a broader, deeper embodiment of qualities drawn from the higher planes of man’s being in which Imagination rules.

Now it must be remembered that Mahatmic Influence is directed not to the physical but to the inner and especially the upper planes of man’s nature. Thus a man “inspired by an Adept” would certainly experience added Imaging power, particularly the higher phases of it. This explains the appearance in Shakespeare’s work of the transcendent dramatic imagination critics ascribe to him by general agreement, though they have been puzzled to account for it. They have noted too, with wonder, the great expansion in creative power, in intuitive perceptivity, and in dramatic skill shown by the productions of his middle period as compared with his efforts earlier. Many critics have regarded the expansion as sudden, and as especially connected with the tragedies, declaring in explanation that Shakespeare must have been enlightened by some tragic experience of his own.

To these propositions a Theosophist may reply that the expansion was the effect — as well as the “evidence” — of the Adept Inspiration, and may suggest that it was proceeding for some years before the time of the tragedies. In most cases such inspiration does not come suddenly. It is like a dawn; and its progress or increase depends on how worthy the recipient continues to prove. These replies do not at all negative the statement that Shakespeare must have had himself some far-reaching unhappy experience. Most likely he had, and his Adept Helpers made use of it. For Adepts work by natural means and turn to a man’s advan-

tage the greater receptivity of Soul that may come with suffering.

Preceding the period of Mahatmic Influence were the early Chronicles, which included both comic and tragic material, and the early comedies. These indicated loosely and faintly the general lines of Shakespeare's interests and abilities. An early effect on him of the Inspiration may be represented by *Romeo and Juliet*, that supreme tragedy of blind, childishly wilful impulse, in both the older and the younger. The strong emphasis on the foolishness of family feuds seems to indicate such Guidance. Some of the more vitalized Chronicles and the comedies associated with them, in which vice meets its just deserts yet with true charity, may also express that Inspiration. The story-material and characters in these plays were on the level of large groups in the theatre audiences, and the results in them were so just and so free from tiresome moralizing that they must have caused many minds to see more clearly that what ye sow ye shall reap. It would seem therefore that in these plays too the higher Imagination and the higher Influence were at work. And in both comedies and tragedies dated by critics near 1600, the operation of each phase of the Imaging Power is richly unfolded. A noteworthy degree is exhibited in the finer comedies, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Twelfth Night*. These belong within that period of Influence not only for the pure clean fun they contain — and for the example given by this — but also for the gems of philosophic wisdom in them, uttered at some time by nearly every personage. These comedies are perennial delights, full of a sunshine that is contrasted only with shadows more suppositional than real. *The Merchant of Venice* is indeed nobler, the shadows deepen, the struggle and effort intensify, and the tragedy for Shylock is for one supreme moment de-personalized into the tragedy of a race. Here was surely a bit of direct transmission of the Influence. For, in spite of all the evil selfish revenge in Shylock, who that has a spark of genuine humanity can utterly fail to hear the Adept basic teaching of Brotherhood in that cry: "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, senses, affections, passions?" The immediacy of the response to this in us is truly another evidence of the Influence.

Many admirers of Shakespeare have been much puzzled to account for some of his portrayals of women. Where did he find beings like Cordelia, Imogen, Hermione? Very quintessence of loyalty they are, under conditions most difficult and tragic. How did he think of Miranda and Perdita, sweet and retiring as lilies of the valley? What of Viola, delicately self-effacing and well rewarded; and the saucy-patch young sister of all these, Rosalind, with her rival in comedy-making, Beatrice? Chief of all, perhaps, how could he create Portia! Excellent materials of study for some of these he could find in the two Roman stories he himself reworked and wherein he portrayed the noble wife of Brutus, and the equally noble mother of Coriolanus.

But if there is cause for wonder concerning the women, why not concerning the men? Does one not see, whatever their rank, as many of "nature's noblemen" among them too? There are Kent and Edgar,

Horatio and Banquo, quiet staunch upholders of the right and of their particular words, like the supporting timbers of a building. There are the heart-winning elders, Duke Senior, Polixenes and Gonzalo. The fine old student of life and of magic, Prospero, is unique. So too is Antonio, at least in his parent-like sacrifice for his young friend. Close to them are the romantic younglings, Ferdinand and Florizel, by no means weak, yet as fine as the flower-like girls they love. Brothers to these are Benedict and Orlando, older and more worldly-wise, but not beyond being teased and satirized by their mischievous mates. A trifle larger in conception is Sebastian, and superior still is Bassanio, both being chosen more than choosers in their wedlock, yet worthy of the choices. Also the philosophic Brutus and Hamlet, tragic labourers with duties they cannot make their own. And as a fine contrast to these last two, Henry the Fifth, reformed madcap Prince Hal, wholly changed by awakening to his responsibilities, and marching confidently into duties that are emphatically his own — more loved in memory than any English King.

Through the big fabric of the Shakespearean world these beings move; and not one of them “too pure and good for human nature’s daily food.” It is surely not too much to say that for three centuries these men and women have been ideals and moulds, though perhaps unrecognized, of the thought-life of many young people.

If models for them are insisted on, some may easily be found in contemporary English life. Even Italy too, in spite of all the evil existing there, produced individuals notably generous and high-minded.

Besides, it must not be forgotten that there are always such beings. They do not entirely disappear even in low periods. Spontaneously and unconsciously, they are the levers that lift mankind a little further up in its evolution, and are the carriers and users of the traditional truths of humanity and Nature. They are scattered through all ranks and conditions, and there would be small hope for the advancement of the world without them. All akin they are, too; for the greatness in each is of the kind that belongs to the higher egoic nature of man.

With one or two exceptions, these personages of Shakespeare all exhibit or struggle with the middle range of passions and conditions, are played upon constantly by good and evil forces that are in opposition but not entirely out of balance. Theatre audiences found their own likenesses in these characters. The large number of them, their convincing vitality, and their relative importance in the world of Shakespeare, may furnish another evidence of Adept assistance. The mental life — the psychology — he depicted in this middle range of humanity, is by everybody recognized as permanently true, as genuinely human under whatever conditions. Just as true, however, is the mental life exhibited by the two great extremes — the weaklings in general, such as the low women and the drivelling men, including some of the clowns; and on the other hand those characters who embodied such force of will and power of intellect that necessarily, when their strength was turned downward into selfishness and evil, they became the great tragic heroes and heroines.

Other Elizabethans made their low and vicious mostly disgusting, and their towering tragic figures are less humanized than Shakespeare's are, while the backgrounds of secondary characters are less rounded and vital. The Aid given to Shakespeare may well have resulted in this extraordinary humanization of his persons. This inference is indicated also by the wide difference in the degree of humanness between the later plays of Shakespeare himself and his earlier — those rather mechanical first comedies and histories. Yet even these are regarded as better than the corresponding early work of other writers. He who best held up the mirror to a large portion of nature, thereby giving Adepts the broadest field of operation, was for Them the best instrument.

There is, moreover, another special reason why those women and men of the middle range in character were a particularly fruitful field for Shakespeare's Helpers. For centuries the conditions of Europe, either war-filled or monastic, nearly destroyed all forms of middle-range life. The religious, political and social systems were all cut from the same cloth of personalisms and their opposites, *i.e.*, religious infallibles, religious know-nothings; political tyrants, political imbeciles; social Eminences pinnacled too high to see their own base, social slugs ever leaving behind the trail of their slime. Those conditions were the mirror of the contemporary theology, under which Mind and Soul were either manacled or swamped. Virtues of the home existed, but were shut up in fortresses. Citizen and community characteristics were deflected so as to become either duties owed by vassals or the place-proud behaviour of overlords.

In that civilization women were far too much regarded by their fathers as valuable pawns in making princely marriages for the expansion of domains; and by their husbands as social centres important to retain the homage of large followings of knights and squires. Below these of highest position were numerous attendants — imitative ladies-in-waiting; much lower still were the slavish houseworkers, unnoticed, mere ciphers, useful only to increase the number of serfs.

Say the *Laws of Manu* concerning women and married life: "Where women are honoured, there verily the Devas rejoice; where they are not honoured, there indeed all rites are fruitless." But the honour indicated by Manu was not that paid to the chatelaines; its root was not economic. It was an honour paid in spirit, an expression of true understanding of women's spiritual functions in the great whole of existence. Again in speaking of the connubial life — which is surely best exemplified by the middle range of conditions and persons, and in which men bear equal share with women — the *Laws of Manu* state clearly the foundational service rendered to humanity by family relationships: "As all creatures live supported by air, so the other Orders (of society) exist supported by the Householder." "As all streams and rivers flow to rest in the ocean, so all the Orders flow to rest in the householder."

The great Leaders sending to the West those Impartations of Eastern Wisdom that were to aid in human evolution, would encourage and strengthen in Shakespeare's mind his natural pleasure in creating those

middle-range characters — natural because he himself had sprung from that kind of family life and continued to experience it. Superlative tragic figures are extremely impressive to men's minds, and are much praised; partly because of the opportunity afforded to actors' egotistic ambition. But such displays of purely personal powers, directed to the re-creation of the evil in mankind, may well have been less interesting to Adepts, whose chief concern was for a general uplift of all humanity. They would wish to increase Shakespeare's inherent perception of the dramatic values of those middle-range characters that were his finest models of true, natural, evenly developed womanhood and manhood. The mystery of where he found such beings is solved by perceiving that wide unperverted Nature contains them in fraternal union, and he who works along with Nature learns how to see and depict them.

The power of glamour is used more often than people think... by the Adepts. They are often among us from day to day, appearing in a guise we do not recognize, and are dropping ideas into men's minds about the spiritual world and the true life of the soul, as well as inciting men and women to good acts. By this means they pass unrecognized and are able to accomplish more in this doubting and transition age than they could in any other way. Sometimes as they pass they are recognized by those who have the right faculty, but a subtle and powerful bond and agreement prevents their secret from being divulged. This is something for members of the Society to think of, for they may be entertaining now and then angels unawares. They may now and then be tried by their leaders when they least expect it, and the verdict is not given out but has its effect all the same.

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE QUEST

“What am I? What is my true destiny?” These are fundamental questions springing from the very heart of man. These questions have assailed man since the beginning of time.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* Krishna asks Arjuna to seek wisdom “by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility: and he adds, “the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee, and knowing which thou shalt never again fall into error, O son of Bharata.”

Few of us have ever seriously considered the nature of “questioning.” In the above quotation its true importance is stressed and it is in fact shown to form the basis of our spiritual progress. Why?

The human mind functions and grows when thoroughly absorbed in the great quest for truth, for then it exercises its true powers and faculties as an instrument of the soul. The path of spiritual knowledge has been known to mystics as the path of quest. Ultimate realization alone ends the search.

The death of any great spiritual movement in the world is caused by the refusal of the human mind to carry on the search; the result is crystallization of spiritual ideas into dogmas and outward rituals. To capture the real spirit of a great movement or of a religion the vehicle of a free mind and heart is needed. Just as behind a work of art we perceive the living spirit of the artist who uses this channel to express a living thought, so the living, dynamic spiritual force can only vibrate and live in the world through living, dynamic, free and self-sacrificing human hearts and minds.

Strictly speaking, the whole truth is never given to the world; what is given is only seed-ideas, which are useless unless nurtured in a prepared soil. The living of the spiritual life is primarily an individual concern. Each has to seek for himself the answers to fundamental questions. Our field of inquiry is very close to us, in fact it is within ourselves. We often speak of intellectual honesty, but beyond, there is something more rare, more difficult of achievement, and that is spiritual honesty.

We are spiritually dishonest when we harbour doubt and fear in our hearts, when we are too willing to rely on statements made by others without questioning their true inner value, when like Arjuna upon the field of battle we refuse *to act* and sit back in despair. We are untrue to ourselves when we act not as we know in our inner self we should.

It is vital to recognize that such a search is a live process, and once begun must continue till we have reached the end of that search. In the words of the Master, “Once fairly started on the way to the great Knowledge, to doubt is to risk insanity; to come to a dead stop is to fall; to recede is to tumble backward, headlong into an abyss.” Let us remind ourselves that as soon as creeds spring up and dogmas are enacted the living spirit of truth departs from the once dynamic and pulsating body.

The spirit of truth cannot be circumscribed; it is held by life itself.

Let us consider life for one moment. Can it be defined, or located? It is everywhere and is everything. It cannot be held in one spot. How can we claim that the spirit of truth is to be found only in one particular church, or in one particular teaching or scripture! Why has the human mind become so fearful and dwarfed that it cannot soar higher than the puerile conceptions of God, evolution, etc., that it has created? The penalty for refusing to search and to question is severe indeed. It has been at the root of many forms of madness indulged in by the human race. Far more crimes and sins have been committed in the name of God and of religion than most of us have any conception of.

The race as a whole does not understand the implications of living the spiritual life, of treading the path of spiritual search. Centuries, if not millennia, of dogmatism and blind acceptance have created great impediments. Yet every earnest searcher has within himself the light to enable him to perceive the next right step. If it were not so, no human being could ever have reached enlightenment and mankind would never have known great beings like the Buddhas and the Christs.

The search often begins while we are still at the egotistical stage. The questions we ask are determined by the type of person we are. One may suffer such mental anguish that the search for truth and work for its cause becomes a matter of necessity for him. The quest must also become a labour of love, of love for our brother pilgrims. Without the magic touch of love, words and deeds become lifeless. True it is that we travel alone, and yet the further we advance, the more we meet brothers bent on the same journey. These are the warrior-souls, the diamond-hearted ones who serve in silence and humility.

Life is never still. Each day is filled with challenges, with choices to be made, with deeds to be done and with actions better left undone and words left unsaid. The quest is the great epic of the soul. It calls for enthusiasm, builds fortitude and creates faith. Such is the life of the awakened, of the spiritually alive.

It was to resurrect in the hearts of men the longing for the great quest that Madame Blavatsky came and spoke to us the words of ancient wisdom. From time to time we get a glimpse of the true message, of what she tried to tell us in so many different ways. She portrayed for us in mighty words the pilgrimage of the soul, and in her writings can be found the answers to the primeval and fundamental questions which the awakened heart-mind begins to ask. A word of warning, however. Let us read between the lines and within the words, and perceive the living spirit of truth. This is our only safeguard against the *tamasic* tendency of our minds to think and progress only along certain mental grooves. Let us serve her Cause as free, undogmatic and loving human beings, remaining truly alive to the spirit of her message, which transcends even her teachings. That which is akin to the soul has no form or substance; it is of the essence of light itself.

ATTENDANCE AT THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS

If unselfishly and earnestly we think *Theosophy*, and desire that others should, like us, be benefited by it, then to the minds we meet in stray moments of the day and in many hours of the night we cry "Theosophy," and "Help and hope for thee." The result must be an awakening of interest upon the slightest provocative occasion.

—W. Q. JUDGE

Study is not a mere poring over of books. It is really an act of imbibing knowledge. The human mind and the vast sensorium of the human organism take note of the ever moving panorama of life. This act of noting is a process in study and it may be deep or superficial, depending upon the concentration and the effort at securing knowledge. The selfish man views life and evolution from an angle which the unselfish and altruistic man rejects. Yet, both are but reacting to the impact of knowledge. Both believe that they have studied life; both take their stand on "principles"; both are convinced that it is the "other fellow" who is wrong. If study can produce such divergences, the nature of study itself has first to be understood. The selection of a subject for study is important; the motive that impels that study is more so. A locksmith may study locks to equip himself professionally. The burglar may pursue the same study for his own nefarious purposes. The desire for study must therefore be subordinated always to the motive which lies behind the effort at gathering knowledge.

Study is not the mere gathering of knowledge — a purchasing and storing of commodities in cupboards. Any study implies and culminates in the planting of an idea in the complex make-up of man. That idea finds its lodgment in one or the other seats of memory spread over the entire body and constitution of man. Each man has a vast and bewildering assortment of such ideas. He may use them for adornment, fame or pleasure. He may on the other hand use them for incalculable harm. The waves of genocide, intolerance and bigotry which sweep the world are but fruits of wrong ideas implanted by pernicious studies. At the opposite pole, movements that promote brotherhood and help in the elevation of the human race are but the legitimate fruits of studies in Truth.

The average man of the 20th century gets his ideas from newspapers and novels, the cinemas and the radio, the cabarets and dens of dubious virtue. He gets them also from the expressions of the arts, letters and sciences as also from the philosophy of his age. All these pour incessantly into his subconscious and remain there with their potentialities for good or evil. To this vast inflow of ideas, the student now adds the Theosophical ones of Causation, Brotherhood, Karma and Reincarnation. These naturally give him new seeds for contemplation and new dimensions of thought. But the very fact of these ideas being placed in juxtaposition with mundane considerations is reason enough to engender heat

which stirs up the whole nature of the student. Therefore, unless the student has taken the trouble to acclimatize himself to the new atmosphere, there is always the danger of his retreating to his accustomed though lowly planes of existence. It is therefore imperative that the new student of Theosophy be sheltered during his initial years by surroundings which are congenial to his new orientation. Lodges and Study Groups of the United Lodge of Theosophists have been established as havens of refuge where students can acquire a readier grasp of the hitherto unfamiliar modes of thought and behaviour.

Yet, there is hardly a student who in his formative years understands or appreciates the unique service and sacrifice which gave birth to the Lodge. This is so because for long years the real reason for attending Lodge meetings is not even glimpsed by the student. Each one can, with some measure of self-introspection, ask: "Do I attend Lodge meetings because I want to please another? Is my attendance inspired by the desire to show that I keep highbrow company? Do I want people to appreciate that I must be well advanced because I nod my head — of course at appropriate times — at the mention of such subjects as Ainsoph, the Logos, or Parabrahm? Or, do I attend because I want to get something for my own sweet self? Maybe I get a kick out of hearing my voice from the platform. Maybe I think that my regular attendance will entitle me to a merit-rating (open or otherwise) among my fellow students." Many have come with such or similar motives. They never understood the sacrifice and the charity that brought a Lodge into existence and have maintained it through the years. Such have departed after a longer or a shorter stay. The Lodge was never meant for the purposes they had in view and Karma adjusted their exit as it did their entrance.

To the humble whose intellect will remain limited during this incarnation, as to the student of knowledge and power, the Lodge provides the field for doing service, for strong search, for questions and for humility. It is only in the Lodge and in the midst of pupil-teachers that the art of exposition and promulgation can be studied. It is in such congenial company that sympathy and co-operation can find avenues of ready expression and can be so controlled as to flow without any forcible effort at the behest of the student's will. It is a law of spiritual dynamics that weak forces accumulate tremendous power through unity. The power of a student's thoughts for achieving Brotherhood may be weak and vacillating. Yet, when this same negligible force is joined to similar forces generated by other students, it creates ample reservoirs of spiritual energy that can permeate platform and audience and make propagation effective.

But more important than this, each Lodge offers yet another avenue for the performance of an important function. It brings the student near and ever nearer to the Masters who stood and still stand behind H.P.B. and her great work. "Where thought can pass They can come" is a truism for all times and can be realized by the creation of an effective

channel along which exchange of ideation can take place. Therefore the students, and through them the Lodge, have to strive to create that channel — a cable of communication as it were — which can receive and transmit thought to and from the plane on which the Masters exist. Aspirations to do impersonal deeds of nobility and altruism can provide the earthly focus for the divine radiation to work through. Each sincere student so aspiring brings his own little focus as a contribution to Lodge meetings. That focus may be nebulous and weak; mental clouds may hide it for days and years; non-brotherliness may render it ineffective for periods of time; but through it all, it has to be striven after even when the storm rages and the battles last.

The aspiration to create such a channel of communication gathers strength in a brotherhood of students who are engaged in the selfsame task. Where else can the student achieve this unity of purpose and this aspiration towards something which large masses of the so-called cultured and educated would call superstition? Where else would the student find shelter against the railleries and mockeries of those who only a few years previously were friends and companions? U.L.T. centres exist so that the selfless, the altruistic and the divine within the student can have a chance to grow. It is in such Lodges that the effort goes on in silence and secrecy which would in future years turn the student into a disciple.

From this it follows that attendance at Lodge meetings becomes for the true student an act of offering and an intake of spirituality. Sitting for an hour on a chair is no longer irksome; listening to a mediocre exposition no longer a chore; for, at those very moments the dynamo of his Higher Mind is generating currents of spiritual energy. Sitting mute, the student feels exalted and the exaltation spreads around him. To him, the very mediocre exposition reveals new angles of insight which may be lost even on the expounding student. When such devoted students forgather at Lodge meetings, their joint efforts (we can call these "study") carried on in an unselfish endeavour bear fruit, and the whole assemblage, including the chance outsider, feels the benign influence. The area of influence of such a soul-stirring Lodge widens. It touches more souls to flame.

To bring one's offering to the Lodge, whole days and weeks of silent preparation have to be dedicated. For, after all, the summation of a student's corporate existence is the offering that he brings to the joint effort. When he takes his seat at Lodge meetings, does he consciously feel grateful to those whose sacrifices founded and maintain the Lodge? Has he studied and practised the technique of silent, impersonal service such as is rendered by the silent and co-operative listener? Has he practised the art of expanding his brotherly love so that he can lay aside and banish his personal sympathies and antipathies at least at Lodge meetings? Has he woven the clothing of his mind with such material as would make it porous to spiritual influences? Before attending any meeting, has he deliberately sat down and planned his thoughts, actions and behaviour which for that meeting at least would help the cause of Masters? These

are but a few of the many considerations which must weigh with the student of knowledge. The very effort at achieving all this may bring about the transition from studentship to discipleship.

The Lodge, whenever it is energized by such study diligently pursued, burgeons into a living organism with a *Prana-Jiva* of its own. Its sacrificial fires, lit at the flame of *Dharma* — Duty — and *Shraddha* — Faith — must now be kept alive by the offerings which the students bring to their meetings. Each is expected to bring that which he is capable of and no more. If no offering is brought, the student is welcome still. The burden of his deficit must be shared by the more fortunate brothers. The departure from duty by any student is a matter between himself and his Higher Self. His return back to the paths of duty may be expedited or retarded by the thoughts, feelings and attitudes of his brothers in knowledge. What offerings can the humble student prepare in the intervals between meetings? A healthy body and a clean mind; hands, eyes and mouth that run not into mischief; a resilient mind that can be brought to attention in an instant of time; the power to thin out, if not to scatter, mental fogs; the understanding of the sacredness of duty, especially at the moment of performance — these are some of the soul-exercises which, if performed in ordinary life, can contribute to the spiritual effectiveness of any Lodge.

Viewed in such light, attendance at Lodge meetings becomes holy. It is invested by a sanctity which it derives from the great divine life which pulsates in space. It becomes the congregating place of holy and sacrificing disciples. When properly tended and looked after, it becomes the playground of the Gods.

Do not indulge personally in unbrotherly comparison between the task accomplished by yourself and the work left undone by your neighbours or brothers. In the fields of Theosophy *none is held to weed out a larger plot of ground than his strength and capacity will permit him*. Do not be too severe on the merits or demerits of one who seeks admission among your ranks, as the truth about the actual state of the inner man can only be known to Karma, and can be dealt with justly by that all-seeing LAW alone. Even the simple presence amidst you of a well-intentioned and sympathizing individual may help you magnetically. . . . You are the free volunteer workers on the field of Truth, and as such must leave no obstruction on the paths leading to that field.

—A MASTER OF WISDOM

THE BANYAN TREE—A GRAPHIC SYMBOL

There are no ancient symbols, without a deep and philosophical meaning attached to them; their importance and significance increasing with their antiquity. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 379)

The Ancients, Madame Blavatsky wrote, knew "that nothing could be preserved in human memory without some outward symbol."

The subjective can hardly be expressed by the objective. Therefore, since the symbolic formula attempts to characterise that which is above scientific reasoning, and as often far beyond our intellects, it must needs go beyond that intellect in some shape or other, or else it will fade out from human remembrance. (*S.D.*, I. 473)

Such a symbolic formula as she refers to seems to be the designation given to the "Root-Base" from which the Hierarchy of "the *Arhats* of the 'fire-mist' of the 7th rung" — the highest on earth — is "but one remove." That designation — in English translation "the ever-living-human-Banyan" — we may perhaps profitably consider.

This "Root-Base" is also described as a "Wondrous Being" that, before the separation of the sexes in the Third Race, is said to have descended from a "high region." This Wondrous Being, called the "Initiator," is described as "the *Tree* from which, in subsequent ages, all the great *historically* known Sages and Hierophants, such as the Rishi Kapila, Hermes, Enoch, Orpheus, etc., etc., have branched off." A passage of great beauty and appeal thus describes this Being:

As objective *man*, he is the mysterious (to the profane — the ever invisible) yet ever present Personage about whom legends are rife in the East, especially among the Occultists and the students of the Sacred Science. It is he who changes form, yet remains ever the same. And it is he again who holds spiritual sway over the *initiated* Adepts throughout the whole world. . . . He is *the* "Initiator," called the "GREAT SACRIFICE."

The name is most appropriate, for,

sitting at the threshold of LIGHT, he looks into it from within the circle of Darkness, which he will not cross; nor will he quit his post till the last day of this life-cycle. Why does the solitary Watcher remain at his self-chosen post? Why does he sit by the fountain of primeval Wisdom, of which he drinks no longer, as he has naught to learn which he does not know — aye, neither on this Earth, nor in its heaven? Because the lonely, sore-footed pilgrims on their way back to their *home* are never sure to the last moment of not losing their way in this limitless desert of illusion and matter called Earth-Life. Because he would fain show the way to that region of freedom and light, from which he is a

voluntary exile himself, to every prisoner who has succeeded in liberating himself from the bonds of flesh and illusion. (*S.D.*, I. 207-8)

He sets what may be called the archetypal pattern followed by all who at the journey's end forgo Nirvana, electing to remain with suffering mankind until the "endless end."

It is said that "it is under the direct, silent guidance of this MAHA — (great) — GURU that all the other less divine Teachers and instructors of mankind became, from the first awakening of human consciousness, the guides of early Humanity."

The Secret Doctrine also tells us that

there never yet was a great World-reformer, whose name has passed into our generation, who (a) was not a direct emanation of the Logos (under whatever name known to us), *i.e.*, an *essential* incarnation of one of "the seven," of the "divine Spirit who is sevenfold"; and (b) who had not appeared before, during the past Cycles. (II. 358-59)

When men have become sufficiently spiritualized, Madame Blavatsky writes, they will *know* this, and also recognize why "Krishna and Buddha speak of themselves as *re-incarnations*."

The esoteric doctrine explains . . . that each of these (as many others) had first appeared on earth as one of the seven powers of the Logos, individualized as a God or "Angel" (messenger); then, mixed with matter, they had re-appeared in turn as great sages and instructors who "taught the Fifth Race," after having instructed the two preceding races, had ruled during the Divine Dynasties, and had finally sacrificed themselves, to be reborn under various circumstances for the good of mankind, and for its salvation at certain critical periods; until in their last incarnations they had become truly only "the parts of a part" on earth, though *de facto* the One Supreme in Nature. (*S.D.*, II. 359)

Consider also, in the light of the teaching about "the ever-living-human-Banyan," the following prophecy from the *Vishnu Purana*, quoted by H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 378):

When the close of the Kali age shall be nigh, a portion of that divine being which exists, of its own spiritual nature . . . shall descend on Earth . . . (*Kalki Avatar*) . . . He will re-establish righteousness on earth. . . .

In the light of these quotations, does not the significance of the banyan tree symbol appear almost self-evident? Without attempting to develop here the symbolism underlying the reference to the banyan tree as "the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life," let us turn our attention to the tree itself, under the mighty shade of which Vishnu, in one

of his incarnations, is said to have reposed and there taught to men philosophy and sciences. It seems appropriate that, as Madame Blavatsky tells us,

under the protecting foliage of this king of the forests, the Gurus teach their pupils their first lessons on immortality and initiate them into the mysteries of life and death. (*S.D.*, II. 215)

A mighty shade indeed an ancient banyan spreads, though yielding here and there a glimpse of sky. Its leafy vault sometimes extends over a very large area, sometimes more than a leaf-carpeted, sun-flecked acre. One can pass unhindered through the tree from side to side in any of several directions. Many small rooms, however, are outlined by the numerous aerial roots, stretching downward from nearly horizontal branches high above the ground. These roots have sometimes 20 feet or more to go before they reach and penetrate the soil. That once achieved, they thicken and form supporting pillars, indistinguishable in appearance from trunks. And ever from these, as well as from the upper branches, there spring fresh roots, sometimes in a cluster, sometimes intertwined, expressions of the exuberant vitality of the tree.

How easily can one imagine such a grove sheltering ancient teachers who, retiring to the forest, yet attracted pupils from near and far! And who knows whether the noble vault of such a giant tree might not from time to time have been the meeting place of Adepts from different quarters?

Apparently, even for the root that has reached and penetrated the soil, its contact with the branch or bole from which it sprang is vital, for here and there under the great tree's vault one sees a slender stump or huddled group of stumps standing erect, all bare and gaunt in contrast to the leafy verdure of the living tree.

A reflection of Marcus Aurelius seems sadly apposite in this connection. He wrote:

A branch lopped from its adjacent branch must of necessity be severed from the whole tree at the same time. And in exactly the same way, the man who sunders himself from any single one of his fellow-creatures drops out of the community.

Fortunately, though the root's severance is final and almost irrevocable, there is still hope for man. Marcus Aurelius recognizes a difference between "the branch that has from the first grown with the parent tree and continued to share one common life with it" and the branch once lopped off and then regrafted. But "it is in our power to grow once more to the branch we quitted, and resume our place as active members of the Whole."

THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

A striking letter on this subject from Dr. D. F. Lawden of the University of Canterbury in New Zealand is published in the scientific journal *Nature* for April 25, 1964.

Dr. Lawden argues chiefly from the basis of the principle of continuity, *i.e.*, however marked any change which occurs in Nature, however different the end from the beginning, there is always a smooth gradation. Nature is a unity and wherever we may choose to draw a dividing line, there is only a difference in degree but not in kind on either side of the line.

As a simple illustration of this principle let us consider the difference between an incline and a flight of steps. The ascent or descent from one step to another marks what is called a discontinuity. *Immediately* on one side there is one level and *immediately* on the other there is another level. There are no such discontinuities in an incline. The latter might rise more steeply and to a greater height, but it does so by a smooth gradation.

In accordance with this principle of continuity, any dividing lines that we may draw on the fabric of Nature, as Dr. Lawden puts it, while they may make certain features of the pattern stand out in relief, have no counterparts in reality. In particular, he points out, it was to be expected that the division of matter into living and dead forms would ultimately be revealed as an artificial one; *i.e.*, nowhere can we draw a dividing line on one side of which is living matter and on the other dead matter.

As Dr. Lawden points out, the principle of continuity is exemplified by the smooth gradation of forms from the fundamental particles of matter to the human body, and by the operation of the same laws of physics in human behaviour as in so-called inanimate matter. So far most scientists would agree. They would, however, begin to part company with Dr. Lawden when he applies the principle in the reverse direction and suggests that if consciousness is a characteristic of man, it must also be a feature of subatomic particles. Another scientific journal, *Discovery* (June 1964), states that the prize for the tallest story of the month must go to Dr. Lawden for making such a suggestion.

The most certain feature of the matter aggregate which is the human brain, Dr. Lawden asserts, is that it is conscious. "Even the spatial structure of that brain as revealed by surgery is only inferred." Therefore consciousness, in however primitive a form, must by the principle of continuity be a feature of every aggregate and ultimately of the fundamental particles of matter. If somewhere along the slow path of evolution consciousness arose discontinuously, we would have to draw a dividing line separating conscious from non-conscious matter forms. He goes even further in suggesting that

the electric and gravitational characteristics of a fundamental

particle are simply those aspects of its mental qualities which it presents to an external observer and that the particle, in its real essence, is a continuing mental experience of an extremely primitive nature.

It appears that much of what Dr. Lawden has to say has been elaborated by Madame Blavatsky in her article "Psychic and Noetic Action" (reprinted in *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*). Broadly speaking, Part I of this article corresponds to Dr. Lawden's application of the principle of continuity in one direction, *i.e.*, in tracing a smooth gradation of forms up to man and the operation of the same physical laws in his constitution as in so-called inanimate nature, while, of course, introducing the importance of the psychic mind or "unit-being" which has free will and can exert a guiding influence on the play of forces and laws in its physical constitution. Part II corresponds to the application of the principle in the reverse direction, as it shows man's personal consciousness dependent in part on the consciousness, memory and limited free will possessed by each matter aggregate (*i.e.*, cells and organs) in his physical constitution. However, unless we go further and understand the distinction which she draws between psychic and noetic action in Part II, we miss the vital point of the whole article.

An atom is defined as an independent entity (p. 58) a psycho-spiritual and not a physical unit and hence not subject to physical laws. As soon as atoms group to form cells, the latter become conscious units with free will to act within the limits of law. (The atoms of science were called such because they were thought to be the ultimate indivisible units of matter. Now they are known to be matter aggregates, *i.e.*, they have a spatial structure. Hence their subservience to physical laws. Presumably Madame Blavatsky would define them as conscious units although of a more primitive nature corresponding to their more primitive structure compared with that of human cells. Madame Blavatsky also makes use of the term molecule. Scientifically, a molecule is a special kind of aggregation of atoms, but strictly speaking the latter should also be called molecules since the word atom comes from a Greek word meaning indivisible.) This means that there is a correspondence between the nature and behaviour of the molecule or cell and that of man. The human body is the outer covering of the inner principles, of soul, mind, life, etc. In man there is a psychic action, a following of impulses from without, of desires which interact with the senses and organs; and a noetic action, an energization from within, from the higher mind-soul. So the physical molecule or cell is the body in which dwell its inner principles, the (to our senses and comprehension) immaterial atoms which compose that cell. How does the psychic and noetic activity of the cell manifest itself? Here we see the participation of the cell in the larger life of man and his influence upon it. We see, also, his dependence upon the cell, as one vital factor, for the establishment and maintenance of his personal consciousness.

The cell is an integral part of its parent organ, through which it receives and records impressions, the nature of which depends upon the organ. Thus the liver and spleen are correlated with the personal mind, the heart with the higher Ego. It is thus that all purely terrestrial events, such as the partaking of a banquet, leave a record of a kind in the cells, in this instance the stomach cells. On the part that this plays in the personal consciousness we quote Madame Blavatsky herself:

A hungry stomach evokes the vision of a past banquet, because its action is reflected and repeated in the *personal* mind. But even before the memory of the personal Self radiates the vision from the tablets wherein are stored the experiences of one's daily life — even to the minutest details — the memory of the stomach has already evoked the same. And so with all the organs of the body. It is they which originate according to their animal needs and desires the electro-vital sparks that illuminate the field of consciousness in the Lower Ego; and it is these sparks which in their turn awaken to function the reminiscences in it.

Finally, we extract one more short passage from Madame Blavatsky's article to give some insight into noetic action in the cell and its relation to noetic action in man.

It is the function of the physical, lower mind to act upon the physical organs and their cells; but, it is the higher mind *alone* which can influence the atoms interacting in those cells, which interaction is alone capable of exciting the brain, *via the spinal "centre" cord*, to a mental representation of spiritual ideas far beyond any objects on this material plane.

Truth is brighter than the sun; truth is the sunny day of Reason, and falsehood the mind's dark night.

All has an end, and will pass away; Truth alone is immortal, and lives for ever.

The light of all flesh is the sun; the light of the soul — truth everlasting.

—EASTERN PROVERBS

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

It is, in this curve of the Great Cycle of Necessity, necessary to understand that we as souls learn through bodies of both types — male and female. Sex does not inhere in spirit but its roots are in the psychic nature. Judge's *Letters* and if I am not mistaken *Gita Notes* contain several points. Before man rebecomes a one-sexed being he will progress through what is called the hermaphrodite stage; not homosexuality but a proper and proportionate development of the Buddhi (Hermes) and Manas (Aphrodite). In the fifth sub-race of the Third Root Race separation of the sexes took place and what begins must end; *S.D.*, Vol. II especially, explains when and how. In every incarnation sex of the body is determined by certain psychic tendencies inhering in us and our personal development demands and Nature responds by building a male or a female form for us.

The problem of the origin and development of the two sexes is connected with the sin of the mindless. It is an obscured study inasmuch as only hints are given, and these few in number. Dignity and purity of sex life will take us, one by one, to the plane where reverence for the opposite sex (and not only attraction) will be born. One hint — between the prevailing and growing homosexuality and the development of the hermaphrodite the difference is as between black and white magic.

Please remember that there are affinities and affinities. For one like you there cannot be an ordinary kind of marriage without spiritual affinity, for otherwise you will find your inner life made a hundredfold more difficult. Love also is of two kinds, represented by the blind Cupid and the all-seeing Eros. So my advice to you would be: Hold on to Theosophy; live the life as best you see it at the moment, and let Karma decide. Do not force the issue, and please remember that there is always time for consideration and reflection before any decision is taken.

It is perfectly proper that when a *suitable* mate is found a man should marry and settle down as a householder, bringing up a family with right views and high purposes. But decide nothing hastily. *Brahmacharya*, the way of true celibacy, is not for all. It is in some ways and at a certain stage superior to, but much much more difficult than, the *Grihastha* way, or the householder's life described by Mr. Judge in his article "Living the Higher Life" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 34*). But remember also this: there are marriages and marriages. The ideal of the householder is high and sacred, and some of its esoteric aspects are brought out in this pamphlet, which you will do well to read carefully. You speak of killing out the desire for sexual gratification. It is possible to do this, not by a single effort which tries to kill and to uproot in a moment, but by gradual training in self-control, making the lower nature yield to the higher and training it day by day until it is absolutely subject to

the will. When the animal instincts are simply suppressed or crushed out, man is in a very different condition from that in which these same gross elements are refined, elevated, purified and preserved. Of course you can develop before marriage that right attitude to sex by dwelling on the idea that the creative power in man is a divine gift and we abuse that power and desecrate that gift when we use it merely for animal gratification. That selfishness is the real root of unhappy marriages or marriages which are failures, and that the association of man and woman when really inspired by altruism is a very different thing indeed, lying as it does at the very foundation of every happy home, is not generally admitted because such relations are seldom seen.

Brahmacharya is truly service of Brahma. Conservation of energy, of time, of speech, of thought, feeling, etc., is related to it. This is a most difficult topic. Conservation of *Prana*, rooted in and emanating from *Jiva* on different planes of being, is involved in the process of *Brahmacharya*. Not only the body but our other constituents also have their own *seminal principle*. That *creative* power has to be conserved and then concentrated, only after which true creative acts by body, mind or heart should take place.

We cannot let this confusion in the mind of the questioner pass about marriage in the East and marriage in the West. Marriage in the East is no more predestined than marriage in the West. And marriage in the West is not all free choice and free will without the basis of Karma. Go away for the moment from the question of marriage and please note that a man cannot exert his free will save and except by the recognition of his weakness as well as his merit. It is custom and not nature's law which functions both in the East and in the West. Marriage in the East is not regarded in the real sense as predestined. We have our affinities and there are affinities now in existence with those we contact. These affinities may work out as in the Western world through what is called free will, but there are other circumstances which surround that free will. Here in India also though horoscopes are consulted there are innumerable factors which go into the determination of the marriage question. The whole problem needs to be looked at Theosophically, for in both ways that are called Eastern and Western there are grave defects which make marriage a lottery, as H.P.B. puts it. It is well to draw the questioner's attention to what is said by her in the *Key*, as also to the pamphlet "Living the Higher Life."

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Of interest to students of Theosophy is the current research in the field of sleep and dreams, which is said to be yielding "new insights." According to the latest theories on the subject, outlined by Flora Rheta Schreiber and Melvin Herman in *Science Digest* for July, everyone not only dreams every night but dreams all the time that he is asleep, for mental activity occurs all through sleep. Dreams are viewed as so fundamental that it is considered that we must dream to live.

New research in the nature of dreams challenges and overturns the time-honoured, traditional theories based on the findings of Sigmund Freud. The discovery by Drs. Nathaniel Kleitman and Eugene Aserinsky that rapid eye movements, corresponding to the activity in the dream, appear at certain times during sleep and that these can be recorded electrically in the sleeping person, has led to important dream studies. Eye movements, brain wave patterns, breathing and galvanic skin responses of sleeping persons were charted, and when they were awakened at appropriate times they could recall their dreams, whose substance was then recorded.

Researchers have established two separate states of sleep—light and deep sleep—yielding two different types of dreams. Sleep, it is believed, "instead of being a state in which there is no stimulation to the brain, is in fact a time of very considerable mental activity." In deep sleep, brain activity is often greater than that which takes place during the waking state. Dream visions cause the same responses that are induced when we see something while we are awake.

The new theory is that the events of the preceding day determine our dreams. What is more, dreams, as also dream deprivation, have been found to affect our daytime personalities. Sleeping persons who were awakened, for experiment's sake, each time they started dreaming, showed next day the signs of irritability and lack of concentration. Persons deprived of dreams for 15 days showed personality changes.

The *Science Digest* article suggests that

the practical implications of these new theories promises to be very great. Take just the altered concept concerning the mental activity that takes place during sleep. . . . Since the mind is working even though we may be unaware of it, the problem unsolved during the day's conscious plugging may well resolve itself during the more relaxed mental activity of sleep. . . .

Perhaps, as we learn to accept our dreams, we shall be able to use them as an aid to our daily activities. Creative persons in particular can look to dreams as a spur to ideas if only they will train themselves to remember. But even if they don't remember, the thought that seemed muddy when they went to bed has a new illumination in the morning because of the night's dreaming. . . .

New investigations will also probe the important connection, newly glimpsed, between the biological and the psychological aspects of dreams. . . . What is the value of a dream, we may ask? It doesn't tell your future, give you a chance to even up your score with the world, or even gratify your repressed desires. But it is a source of energy, of mental power, a part of your very existence, an ally of your waking life.

Students of Theosophy will notice that some of the "latest findings" of modern investigators are what H. P. Blavatsky pointed to in the last quarter of the last century. Psychiatrists admit that there remains much more to be learned about sleep and dreams, but complete knowledge of what they mean will have to wait till researchers gain a fuller understanding of the nature of man.

Researchers today seem to be too much occupied with how people can cut down on their sleep. It is believed that an individual who normally sleeps eight hours may be able to get along on much less. In another article in the same issue of *Science Digest*, that for July 1964, Andrew Hamilton writes of the experiments that are being made to determine how much sleep a person really needs. These experiments include the breaking of sleep into two cycles a day — for example, from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. and then for a brief hour or two in the afternoon. Some subjects feel that this regimen suits them as much as sleep for eight hours at a stretch.

The article quotes Dr. Joe Kamiya of the University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco:

We still are lacking many answers to basic questions about sleep. . . . Maybe what we need is to find ways to cut down the need for wakefulness. In our culture it's the desirable thing to be as active as possible. But we don't really know whether this is intrinsically good or healthy. More research will tell us whether to choose between more sleep or more wakefulness.

As against this view, the August *Psychology* (England) reports the experiments made by an American psychiatrist, Dr. Nathan S. Kline with a pill composed of a drug called Iproniazid. Dr. Kline, who has tried the pill on himself, claims that he gets along "quite comfortably" on a mere three hours sleep in 24 hours. Exactly how Iproniazid works in reducing human sleep requirements is not known yet, but Dr. Kline thinks that it may retard the breaking down of adrenalin which the body manufactures to deal with stress; the longer-lasting adrenalin may account for the lesser need for sleep. He believes that sleep is not really necessary and that there will come a time when science will completely abolish the need for sleep in humans.

It is true that what counts is the *quality* of sleep and not the mere quantity, but anybody who calls sleep useless evidently does not know

what its real function is. It needs to be understood, first, that it is caused, not by loss of vitality, as ordinarily understood, but because at the end of the day a person is surcharged with the life-waves that are rushing into the body all through the waking hours, and is unable to resist them any longer. Not only do the nervous centres, and especially the sensory ganglia of the brain, recuperate their strength by the change of the state of consciousness that we call sleep, but the soul is able to live a higher life of its own during the hours of sleep. "In sleep," says H.P.B., "there is a connection, weak though it may be, between the lower and higher mind of man, and the latter is more or less reflected into the former, however much its rays may be distorted" (*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, p. 75). Thus sleep has more than a physiological function; it has also the function of spiritual revivification. What we call sleep is *life* for the "Seer within the physical dreamer" (*ibid.*, p. 73). Have the psychiatrists experimenting with dangerous drugs that cause sleeplessness calculated the harm that sleep-deprivation would cause to the inner man?

In the *Deccan Herald* (Bangalore) of September 6, "C.A.F." recalls the "fully-authenticated stories of psychic incidents in which the assassination of President Kennedy was foreseen. All these incidents, it is said, were recorded and attested to by "unimpeachable witnesses" much before the assassination actually occurred.

Now, the story of a dream by an English lady, in which Mr. Nehru's death was foreseen in minute detail a few days before the event occurred, is told in *Psychic News* (London) by the well-known psychic researcher, Brigadier Brownlow. The Brigadier, who evidently knows the lady well, vouches for the fact that "she was too intelligent and truthful to concoct rubbish and bruit it abroad." Her name has not been revealed, so that she cannot be accused of indulging in a publicity stunt. In her own words:

I dreamt with extraordinary vividness of the death and funeral of the Indian Prime Minister. It does not sound much until I tell you he was laid out in public, his body exposed. There was no coffin. I thought there should have been one, knowing nothing of the customs of Hindu rites and ceremonies at death. And I also saw two white flowers laid beside his head motionless in death.

Days later, when his death did occur, and news and pictures came through the Press, I was amazed. There was recorded what I had dreamed in every detail — the processions, the funeral pyre and the body exposed to public view.

She had never been in India and knew nothing whatever about Hindu religious customs and obsequies, yet in her dream she was able to see every detail of the last rites as also of the lying in state and the tremendous crowds.

After analysing the facts of the case, the Brigadier suggests that in some inexplicable manner the lady had been able to see ahead in time; in other words, she had been given an awareness of a future event. According to him, we on earth can only speculate how these things are brought about.

Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge contains quite a long and valuable section on the subject of dreams, which those interested should certainly study. The London woman is only one of a countless number of people who have had interesting dream experiences. All such people would gain much enlightenment if they studied what Theosophy has to teach on the subject. Madame Blavatsky wrote in *Isis Unveiled*:

Dreams, forebodings, prescience, prognostications and presentiments are impressions left by our astral spirit on our brain, which receives them more or less distinctly, according to the proportion of blood with which it is supplied during the hours of sleep.

And, again, she tells us of that "tablet of the unseen universe," the astral light, on which all things past, present and future are recorded. It is possible for certain individuals and under certain circumstances to see future events pictured in the astral light.

Until recently, light and its effects on living things were studied by many scientists in different disciplines without much communication. Now, the relatively new science of photobiology is bringing scientists together to exchange ideas on how plants, insects, birds, fish, animals and man himself obey the signals of the sun's light. Last year, a congress on photobiology was held in Canada; this year, a similar congress is to take place in Britain (*Think*, May-June 1964).

One of the most important fields of study is photosynthesis, the process by which plants use chlorophyll to trap the energy of light and make carbohydrates and other products. It is an extremely complicated and vitally significant process in the maintenance of life; with its help, those "primary nutritional substances" are created which, directly or indirectly, sustain all other living organisms. Professor Otto Heinrich Warburg of Berlin, who is playing a leading role in this field of investigation, presented a report on the latest results of his research work at the meeting of the Nobel-Prize-winners in Lindau (*Universitas*, Vol 6, No. 4). Though science has come considerably closer to understanding the way in which plants manage to synthesize organic matter from carbon dioxide and water with the aid of light, there are many questions which still need clarification. But experiments have established that it is only due to the absorption of the energy set free by green plants during their exposure to light that the complex interplay of so many chemical processes acquires real purposefulness.

Scientists also know today that plants have a sensitive device that enables them to measure the length of the nights, and this controls flowering in many species. There are other ways in which light affects plants. It has been found that blue light, even in minute quantities, greatly stimulates protein production in plants. This may mean that plants harvested during or just after a full moon have more protein than those harvested at other times.

The migration of birds and beasts, their shedding of their coats in spring and growing of them in winter, their sex cycles and similar phenomena are frequently related to length of days and nights. Many years ago, Sir Edward Sharpey-Schafer suggested that "the regularity with which migration occurs indicates that the exciting cause must be regular. There is no yearly change, outside the equatorial zone, that occurs so regularly in point of time as the change of the duration of daylight... [which] may be considered a determining factor in migration."

That light influences the physical aspect of human behaviour is also obvious. Our temperature and metabolism, for example, reach lowest ebbs during the depths of night. It is believed that light probably affects us by the influence of colour, shape and texture, and that there may be annual cycles which have a connection with the length of days.

The exact nature of light is not known to science, nor is the nature of the consciousness pertaining to the lower forms of life understood by our scientists. How living things respond to light affords an example of one aspect of consciousness of which H.P.B. says:

Nature taken in its abstract sense, *cannot* be "unconscious," as it is the emanation from, and thus an aspect (on the manifested plane) of the ABSOLUTE consciousness. Where is that daring man who would presume to deny to vegetation and even to minerals a *consciousness of their own*? All he can say is, that this consciousness is beyond his comprehension. (*S.D.*, I. 277 fn.)

Periodically, items are published which call attention to the apparent influence of the moon on affairs on earth. Everyone is familiar with the moon's influence on the tides and on plant life. Now, the United States Air Force scientists claim that there is "a definite relationship" between phases of the moon and the amount of cloudiness on earth (*The Japan Times*, August 18). So far they are not clear as to why this is so or what its significance may be. Further research, it is hoped, may disclose an explanation of the moon-cloud relationship.

Iver Lund, an aerospace research scientist who spotted the relationship, studied the record of 21,184 days of weather observation made between 1905 and 1962 at each of 10 places in the United States. He found that between the new moon and the first quarter, and between the full moon and the last quarter, there is less sunshine than the seasonal average. On the other hand, between the first quarter and the full moon

and between the last quarter and the new moon the amount of sunshine is above the average.

It is not enough to know that we are under the influence of the moon or any other planet. To know *why* is the important point. Theosophical tenets provide an opportunity for us to study and reflect upon this matter in a philosophic manner.

The greatest barrier to progress in criminal law, according to David Bazelon, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, is the theory that punishment deters crime. Judge Bazelon was recently a Regents' Lecturer in Law at the University of California, where he proposed that a rehabilitative technique would probably be far more effective than the punishment method.

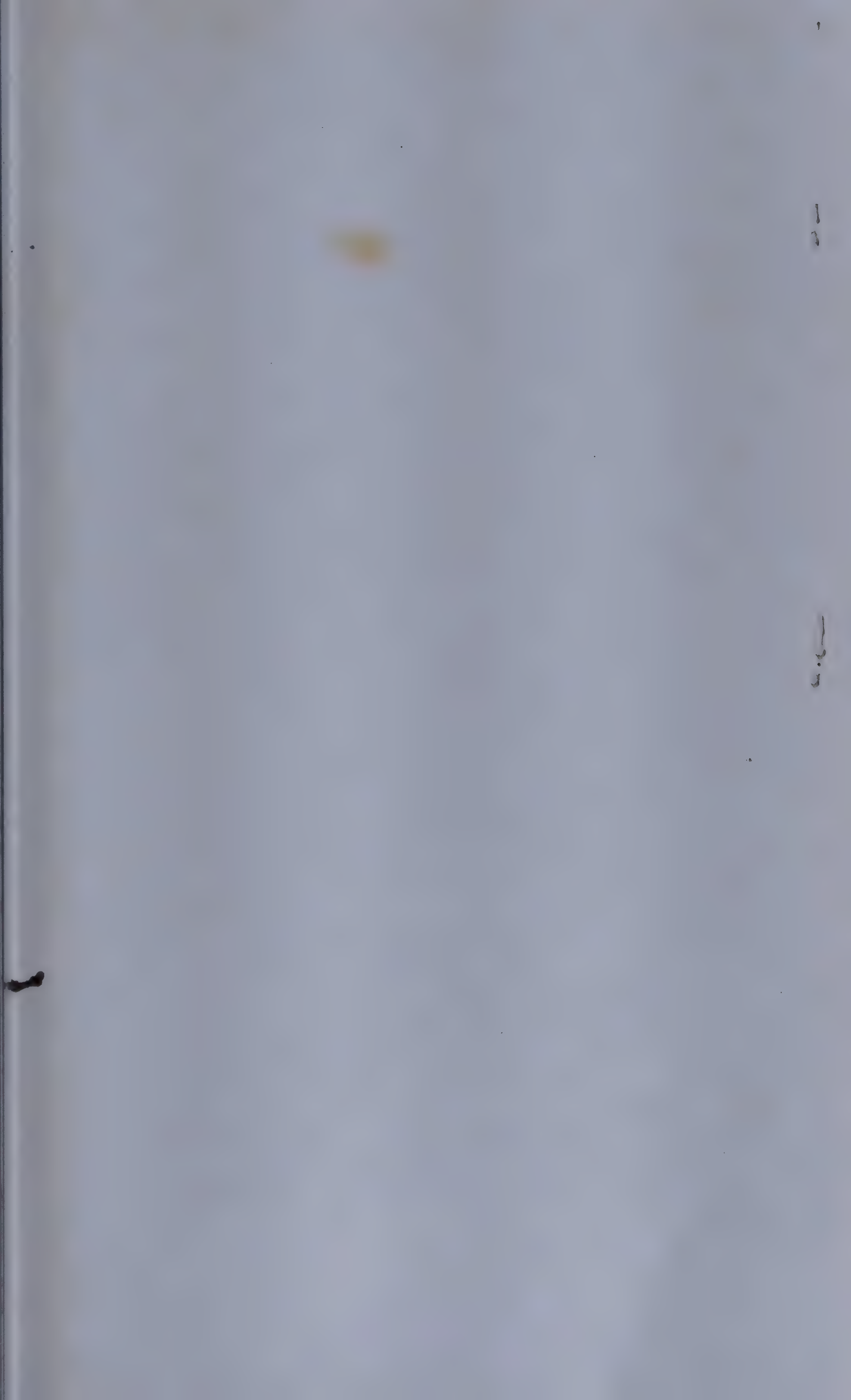
Some people feel [Judge Bazelon says] that whenever trained workers, including psychiatric therapists, supplement the work of police and prison guards, the offender will be mollycoddled and consequently society's bulwark against crime will crumble. This is nonsense, but the attitude persists. Why is it sensible to deny early treatment to first offenders? Why send them to a penitentiary where their dangerous tendencies will be dangerously augmented...?

Judge Bazelon admits that "the threat of some form of deprivation is essential in the functioning of any moral or legal system, and the threat must have substance." But it is his view that we are too set on punishing the offender for the sake of punishment and that this method of crime deterrence is ineffective. For example, approximately two-thirds of the prison inmates are second offenders.

Would it not be a fruitful approach, Judge Bazelon asks, to turn jails into hospitals or rehabilitation centres?

The offender would then be deprived of his dearest possession, his personal liberty. This would be punishment enough to satisfy man's punitive urge to act as a deterrent. During rehabilitation the offender would have the chance to change his personality and his style of responding to life... Perhaps this revolutionary century will also effect a little revolution on behalf of the fallible humans who cannot live up to even the more obvious rules of social order.

Violence is no answer to violence. When men become convinced that Divine Law cannot be mocked and that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," all crime will enormously decrease — including the supreme, hypocritical crime of men presuming to punish others, instead of the wiser trying to help and teach, while restraining, the less wise.



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