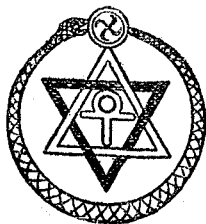


सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।



There is no Religion Higher than Truth

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE LABYRINTH OF SCIENCE AND OF PHILOSOPHY THEOSOPHY POINTS THE WAY OUT

An experienced man of science has contributed an article to the September *Aryan Path* which students of Theosophy should read with care. "Curator" is a recognized authority and is well known both in Europe and America. He points out that modern science has reached a stage when the work of the specialist ought to receive a check. He sees a pressing need for synthesisers who would co-ordinate the different branches of knowledge. He speaks also of the jealousy and show of many "up-to-date" science-researchers. Their main desire says "Curator" is to gain position and fame, for which they compete and intrigue, and to achieve their purpose try hard to prove their "originality." He says that "original" research is highly prized and each clever young man moves heaven and earth to prove himself "original." The result is a stack of learned papers on unimportant side issues. If this state of affairs goes on unchecked presently some "rising" physicist will write a fat volume on the medieval problem of how many angels can dance on the point of a pin! "Curator" deplors the waste of time and energy as well as the injury done to the cause of scientific knowledge.

This competition for original research is rooted in a false conception of the birth and growth of knowledge. It is an epistemological problem. Modern science fanatically holds to the wrong idea

that human civilization began in savagery, and that unaided man rose from height to height till to-day he shows himself the proud possessor of wisdom never known before. This theory is assumed to be true and the Theosophical view that civilizations grander and wiser than this of the twentieth century have flourished, and that man did not evolve from a stage of savagery, is disregarded without even being examined.

As long as men of science dogmatically hold to their theory of the genesis of civilization they will not profit by Theosophy, a body of knowledge which is really exact, unlike their theories which change with every season. Further, that knowledge has its own methods of investigation and research. It teaches that man carries within himself his own instruments more accurate and more powerful than any microscope, telescope or spectroscope.

Two main ideas if studied and accepted would revolutionize modern science. They are intimately related, and they touch upon the subject of human evolution. We will give them in the words of H. P. B.'s *Secret Doctrine* :—

Strictly speaking, esoteric philosophy teaches a modified polygenesis. For, while it assigns to humanity a oneness of origin, in so far that its forefathers or "Creators" were

all divine beings—though of different classes or degrees of perfection in their hierarchy—men were nevertheless born on seven different centres of the continent of that period. Though all of one common origin, yet for reasons given their potentialities and mental capabilities, outward or physical forms, and future characteristics, were very different. . . . Some superior, others inferior, *to suit the Karma* of the various reincarnating Monads which could not be all of the same degree of purity in their last births in other worlds. This accounts for the difference of races, the inferiority of the savage, and other human varieties. (II. 249)

The whole issue of the quarrel between the profane and the esoteric sciences depends upon the belief in, and demonstration of, the existence of an astral body within the physical, the former independent of the latter. (II. 149)

Not only is science caught in a labyrinth ; but modern philosophy which has been speculating for long years has ceased to guide the man in the street. On this topic also there is an article in the September *Aryan Path* by Dr. Michael Kaye followed by "The Faculty of Reason" from the pen of our friend J. D. Beresford to which the attention of Theosophical students is drawn.

Philosophy too has specialized departments, and is hampered by the sin of "originality." Indian philosophy has suffered at the hands of her occidental sister, younger in age and immature in experience, and who, furthermore, has allowed both theology and science to flirt with her. The result is somewhat pitiful : western philosophy has remained a spinster, set and sedate. Instead of guiding her, numerous Indian scholars and philosophers have been influenced by her. The vigour and depth of views of the six schools of Indian philosophy when properly synthesized by the seventh, Gupta Vidya—have a very practical message but they are little known to modern civilization. Indian view-points *darshanas*, have solved the intricate problems of space and time and motion, of spirit and matter and intelligence, of instinct and reason and intuition. But instead of garnering in humbleness the old teachings and repeating them in modern form—"Thus have I heard," many Indian scholars falling prey to the craze for becoming original go round and about, and exclaim in pride "Behold I know." Western philosophical speculations contain more than one lesson for Indian scholars and more than one occidental philosopher has a message for them. We are not averse to Hindu scholars learning from their western confrères, but we do think

that the old Indian schools have important guidance to offer the modern world. The old teachings need to be presented in suitable modern garb but it must be a *faithful* garb. Philologists and orientalist have made that work more difficult. On this also H.P.B. has something to say. Under the caption, "A Sincere Confession," the following appears in *Lucifer* Vol. VIII p. 150 :—

"The following quotation taken from the Introduction to the Vedānta-Sūtras, translated by Thibaut and edited by Max Müller, is significant of the spirit which animates our Western Sankritists.

'But on the modern investigator, who neither can consider himself bound by the authority of a name however great, *nor is likely to look to any Indian system of thought for the satisfaction of his speculative wants*, it is clearly incumbent not to acquiesce from the outset in the interpretations given of the Vedānta Sūtras—and the Upanishads—by Sankara and his school, but to submit them, as far as that can be done, to a critical investigation.'

The italics are ours, and the sentence will serve to mark the distinction between the Theosophist and the Sanskritist. The former seeks in the Vedānta and elsewhere for wisdom and for guidance ; the latter merely to satisfy his intellectual curiosity. His own Western philosophy suffices amply for him, and all the deep researches of the almost infinite past signify nothing but a curious history of philosophy to be criticised and observed from a position which he thinks has far transcended them.

We believe that actuated by such a spirit our Western scholars will *never* learn the true significance of Eastern thought. On their own statement they do not want to ; and the *true* pandit, the inheritor, not merely of the capacity to con Sanskrit manuscripts, but who also is master of the profound knowledge contained in them, will take these self-sufficient students at their word."

Alas ! The Western Sanskritists have proselytized numerous Hindu scholars to their way of interpreting the ancient texts and of manipulating the figures of yugas and manvantaras. Result ? The "*true* pandit," referred to in the above extract, has retired more and more in the background and has become more and more silent.

"There can be no possible conflict between the teachings of occult and so-called exact Science, where the conclusions of the latter are grounded on a substratum of unassailable fact."—H.P.B. (*The Secret Doctrine* I, 477.)

THEOSOPHICAL VIEW OF THE HIGHER LIFE

WHAT IT IS NOT.

HOW TO START?

(From the report of a lecture delivered at the Bombay U. L. T.)

Many are the men and women in the East as in the West who are desirous of changing and improving their own mode of living. Some may not confess that they are trying to seek some meaning of life that would endow it with greater interest and especially with greater usefulness. If we put aside prejudices and predilections and begin to examine the various ideas that ordinary people of the world have about the Higher Life of the Soul, we find that there are many misconceptions and some of them are not only erroneous but really dangerous. For many a crank tries to justify his own queer mode of living by saying he is different, he is extraordinary, he happens to be under training, trying to achieve something not within the reach of ordinary mortals. So it becomes necessary to begin by looking into some of the wide-spread misconceptions about the higher life, and then examine the true ideal in the light of this ancient and immemorial philosophy.

We find that there is a notion which regards the religious life as the higher life ; it is said that an orthodox man who observes the rites and ceremonies of his own particular religion, is a pious and devoted man ; he is sometimes even called an evolved soul. Is the orthodox religious life the same as the life of the soul ? To begin with, we find that in all religions there are good men and evil men, unselfish people and selfish people, and that sometimes the very ones who follow strictly and dogmatically their own orthodox creed, are not the most unselfish ones. Then we find another peculiar fact ; every particular orthodox indicates different ceremonies, different rituals and observances. It would therefore appear that if the higher life is one of observance of a particular religion then it is not within the reach of all men and women. We find that exactly opposite ideas are taught to the various worshippers of the many creeds throughout the world. We find, for instance, in India that the worshippers of Vishnu have their own prescribed rites and they are different from those of their brother who is worshipping Shiva. If we go to the West, we find that the Roman Catholic has rites and ceremonies that his brothers of other denominations consider wrong, furthermore, the rites of Christianity differ from those of Eastern creeds. The Christian worships the Cross, the Mahomedan worships the Crescent, while the Parsee does not worship either the Cross or the Crescent, but worships Fire. Further we find that all these worshippers of different symbols, worship without much

understanding of what the Cross or the Crescent or the Fire signifies. History shows that these various worshippers in orthodox and separative creeds have fought against one another. We know that the worshippers of the Cross pursued the worshippers of the Crescent, and that in turn the latter tried to drive at the point of the sword, the worshippers of the Fire. We are all familiar with the struggles and strifes that have separated men in the name of religion. So how could these orthodox religions that separate form the basis of the higher life of the Soul, which would bind in peace all men and women, irrespective of creed, race, nationality ? If we want to understand the meaning of higher life we have to begin by seeking its universal basis. No law of nature, no process in nature acts capriciously. Nature is uniform and takes no account of human views or human conditions. The sun shines for all ; gravitation pulls all ; water wets and fire burns all. The Soul is in all men and women and its process of growth cannot but be uniform for all. That being so, the preliminary step which precedes the beginning of the higher life is to disregard the narrow, erroneous notions of religions which divide human beings instead of uniting them. And that can be done by discarding the sectarian and orthodox interpretations of religions. Jesus did not come to establish a church nor to found an orthodox religion. If we go to the real spirit of Christianity, we find that Jesus like all other great Teachers of the world and Saviours of humanity, tried to show a way of life. That was the mission of Krishna, Buddha, Zarathustra, Pythagoras, Jesus, H. P. Blavatsky. Any and all great Teachers of the world have tried to show men and women how to get away from orthodox sectarianism, how to begin to live the higher or spiritual life. But this injunction of all great Teachers, to come out and be separate, to pursue the higher path, has been misinterpreted.

That brings us to a second erroneous conception about the higher life. People believe that the higher life means going into the jungle or onto the top of a mountain, to leave men's interests and become separated from their lives, their woes, their sufferings. This is entirely wrong. It is true, we have to be separate and isolated, but it is a very different type of isolation, for it means a separation from the lowest tendencies within our own devilish natures. People complain—how can we have simplicity in the midst of all the turmoil and struggle of

present day civilization?—we must retire, give up our worldly possessions, and enter into monasteries or nunneries, ashrams or maths. Simplicity of life is a very different thing from that which is generally understood. If it is true, as it has been again and again proven, that the nearer a man is to orthodox church, the further he is from God, it is equally and as certainly true that in monasteries and nunneries corruptions—deep spiritual corruptions—spring up. This going away, then, does not mean a change in locality, but one of inner attitude. But even then being separate from men and women does not mean that we should neglect the service of others. As the *Voice of the Silence* puts it: “The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life—has lived in vain. Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of Karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.”

Another great misconception about the higher life: People think that certain outer observances and peculiar habits of life, adopting physiological practices and so forth, imply the leading of Spiritual Life. Theosophy is known to be a great philosophy which tries to show better ways of life to its own students and devotees; therefore it is but natural that people who know nothing about the teachings of Theosophy, pass judgment on the science by observing the ways of those who call themselves Theosophists. This is logical. People cannot help judging a philosophy by the acts and practices of those who call themselves devotees of that particular system of thought. But because so many have called themselves Theosophists who have no right to the title, people believe that Theosophy is an almost immoral code of conduct, due to the practices that have been advocated in the sacred name of Wisdom Religion. It will be useful for us all to try to answer some of the objections and queries that are put by critics regarding certain practices which are identified with the teachings of Theosophy. Wherever we go, questions arise constantly as to certain practices of life. People ask, is vegetarianism necessary for living the higher life? Must all students of Theosophy become vegetarians? Why is it necessary to give up all alcoholic drinks? And what about smoking? And what does Theosophy teach in reference to marriage and marital relations? These are the most common questions asked.

Is vegetarianism essential to the living of the higher life? And the answer of Theosophy?—“Not at all.” To begin with, Theosophy as an impersonal and an universal philosophy and science, never imposes hard and fast rules in a cut and dry manner upon its students and devotees. If Soul

development were a matter of vegetarianism, if it were as simple as that, there would be many more spiritual Adepts in the world. And remember every horse and cow is a strict vegetarian!

Whatever you may read in so-called theosophical books, that is, in pseudo-theosophical literature, you will not find in truly Theosophical books the absolute injunction that you must become vegetarians. Now please do not misinterpret and suspect that the speaker is a meat-eater. The speaker happened to be a vegetarian long before she came to Theosophy, for scientific, hygienic and moral reasons. Examine the issues involved, and when you are convinced that vegetarianism is better, only then adopt the practice. Do not begin in the wrong fashion, by adopting physiological practices, and then pose that you are superior to common mortals. That is an entirely wrong conception, and as Madame Blavatsky explained in the *Key to Theosophy*, physiological practices are far less important than what a man feels. Let us take care of our thoughts and feelings first, and when a certain amount of purity has resulted within our own thinking minds and our own emotional natures, only then should we think of ascetic rules in our outside living. *Begin from within, reform the inner man, and do not believe that mere habits of physical life and outer practices can give spirituality or enlightenment. Evolution proceeds from within without, and unless we are self-energised and understand what we are trying to do, it is better to leave ALL outer practices and observances alone.* There is much misunderstanding: the living of ethical and moral life is confounded with diet and food and such outer shows. We should try to eradicate this wrong notion and liberate people from the fetters of such erroneous conceptions. One can eat meat and still be spiritual.

What about the use of alcoholic drinks or tobacco-smoking? Theosophy gives certain definite scientific reasons, as to why all alcoholic drinks are harmful. It says, first study the question, investigate the propositions presented and then you will see for yourself why the use of alcohol has to be given up if you wish to think higher thoughts, feel nobler aspirations. Alcohol is injurious for all brains, for all men and all women. How about tobacco? It may not be injurious if used moderately. Do not confuse the two; as well confuse coffee and cocaine. We have to discriminate, we have to understand these things; do not obey passively even when it is a Theosophical teaching, or because a Theosophical expounder gives certain ideas. To try and understand—that is the great quest.

How about marriage? Is it true that Theosophy discourages marriage and marital life? Entirely a wrong conception. Theosophy does advocate, most strongly, purity of sex life; but

purity of sex life does not mean no marriage, or no marital relations when you are married. Sex force is a force that should be used for its own purpose, and for nothing else; and its own purpose, we all very well know, is procreation. Theosophy does not discourage marriage; on the contrary, it encourages the building of homes; the use of home-life is an important step in living the higher life; but it does discourage all practices that tend to tamper or play with sex. Let me repeat—sex force is only for procreation, and never for anything else. Understand that proposition and you will understand why Theosophy is so strongly, definitely and deliberately against all practices and methods of birth-control and birth-prevention. Therefore does it condemn any and all abnormal sex practices; therefore does it also condemn promiscuous living. Theosophy has two ideals in reference to this particular purity: one is the ideal of Brahmacharya, or celibacy; the other is the ideal of pure married life. Celibacy is wrong if it implicates any tampering or playing with sex. We have to be very strong on this point, because, once again, under the name of Theosophy, certain wrong and dangerous practices have been advocated, things which are shameful and diabolic. Get this point very clearly and make no mistake about it. There are no exceptions to this. Any man or woman who teaches wrong practices in sex life, or who practises or advocates them is no Theosophist. Now because this life of Brahmacharya, of absolute purity and celibacy, is very very difficult for ordinary men and women, Theosophy advocates that other ideal—of a pure married life. Once again do not believe the nonsense that a Theosophist, if he wants to progress must *not* marry, or if married he must leave his wife and home! That is not Theosophical, and those who say or do so are not Theosophists. As a matter of fact, Theosophy shows that for men and women of the 20th century, the beginning of the higher life is in the home.

This may appear as a digression but it is most important and the points involved are significant. One of the very aims and purposes of the work carried on by this Lodge is to expose the corrupt ideas prevailing about spiritual principles, to show the public that dirt and mud have accumulated on the sacred name of Theosophy. It is our task to try to clean the name and restore it to its pristine purity. And so in looking at these many misconceptions, we have achieved something. It is very useful, for in understanding from the negative point of view as to what higher life according to Theosophy is not, we have clarified our minds to understand what that life is.

Theosophy is not a system of diet, or a system

of breathing, or a system of healing suffering bodies. What is Theosophy? It is a system of metaphysics and ethics which tries to bring about a change in the *minds* of men and women, thereby raising those individuals to a higher type of thought. *When high and noble thoughts have been generated from within ourselves, actions will take care of themselves. Right and pure thoughts invariably will produce right and pure actions.* We see that the higher life is not the orthodox religious life, not the life away from the world in monasteries or convents; nor is it the life of adopting physiological practices and ascetic rules. We see that the higher life is the life of the home—there is our starting point. Every one of us was born in a home, we have all been brought up in homes, most of us to-day live in homes. It is there, where we find ourselves, that we can begin living the higher life. We can begin to try to educate ourselves by discharging the duties and obligations in the home; that is the beginning of soul-life.

There are many who do not think about life and its improvement. We shall not take them into consideration to-day. But those who have come to hear a lecture on the subject, must be desirous of finding some way to change their own lives. What does Theosophy say to them?

Most people describe the higher life as a better, more useful and noble life; but unless we add something to that description, we shall fall into dangerous paths. The higher life is not only the better life—it is the *wiser* life. It is the better life founded on greater knowledge, greater wisdom, greater perception and understanding. People think that to be good is sufficient; but to be good is one thing, to be wise is another. From the spiritual point of view, understanding and knowledge must go hand in hand with goodness, unselfishness and purity. Try as you will, you will not succeed in being good, unselfish and pure, unless your *mind* has really become enlightened through true knowledge. Wisdom is necessary. What do we mean then when we say high thinking? Why are our lives not high? Why are they low, mean, petty and selfish? Because our thoughts are selfish and petty and mean. The great axiomatic truth is—As we think, so we speak, so we act, so we become. *The starting point is the change in the mental attitude. The higher life begins with thought and ideation. The starting point is within yourself.* But thoughts have subjects and objects, and as we are not to run away from the world, our mental attitude must be towards men and things. With the inner attitude as the starting point we have then to take into account the outer circumstances. The spiritual life begins with change of thought, with right ideation, naturally founded on right knowledge, and it begins in the home.

THEOSOPHICAL DON'TS

Bear always in mind that there are exceptions to every rule, and to these again and other side exceptions, and be always prepared to learn something new. . . . You have much to learn—and we have much to teach nor do we refuse to go to the very end. But we must really beg that you should not jump at hasty conclusions.—MAHATMA K. H.

Students of Theosophy are not necessarily Theosophists. Most of them are not free from set notions, beliefs, superstitions and even dogmas—however obscure or “theosophical” these may have become. In a hundred ways our religious and social upbringing, wearing a theosophic mask, fools us, and proves a hindrance in the service of the Cause. One tendency is to acquire a set way of expression which has a final air about it. Catch words and phrases uttered every now and then provide no explanation to the enquirer nor consolation to the weary and the sorrow-laden. It does not illuminate a man to be told, in answer to, “What is soul?”—“Atma-Buddhi-Manas,” or “Immortal Triad,” or “Why! the Monad.” A man who is sorrowing over the death of a friend does not gain perception or peace by being told: “Your friend is in Devachan; of course, there may be a Kama-Rupa hanging about.” What is worse, these words and phrases are often but a veil which covers from us our own ignorance. Further, a little knowledge of Theosophy, picked up from the *Key to Theosophy* or the *Ocean of Theosophy*, and which satisfies us, often takes for us a form of finality. We, unconsciously to ourselves, assume that the last word on the subject has been understood. This is fatal. No Theosophical doctrine or tenet but has a complex and profound side to it. We have not fully understood all about reincarnation even, or body, or mind, or soul, or spirit—or anything. Let the student continuously endeavour to learn more and more, and that will enable him to destroy the sin of silliness, often more dangerous than the sin of wickedness. With this in mind let our propagandists peruse the following reprint of Mr. Judge's article in *The Path*, of December, 1894, pp. 276-77; let the Eastern reader remember that what is said about Christianity applies to other religions, what is said about the West applies to the East, and so on:—

The following suggestions arise from experience and are due to facts in the Theosophical world.

Don't speak or write as if morality and ethics were unknown before H. P. B. wrote the *Voice of the Silence*. Some of our devoted band have been

heard to speak in such a way that hearers thought the speaker meant to convey the idea that only in the *Voice* or other similar books of ours could be found the high and correct ethics by which one ought to guide his life. Buddhism, Christianity, and all the other religions teach the same morals, and literature is full of it.

Don't say that all the Theosophical doctrines were first given out by the Mahatmas through their Theosophical chelas. Attributing everything solely to the Mahatmas is foolish, as it is easily controverted. And do not be forever saying, “We are taught this and are told that”. The number of doctrines found mentioned for the first time by the Mahatmas through H. P. B. are few, extraordinary in conception and scope, and easily recognized.

Don't explain everything by one theory. To wit; do not be so inadequate as to brush off the whole of Spiritualism with one word, “all spooks and shells”. You will be wrong if you do so, and the result will be antagonism.

Don't say that science is all wrong and that men of science are materialists. Huxley has done us good service; he has but lately admitted consciousness to be a third factor in the universe, not a part of force and matter; and Spencer has many a good thing in his works. Besides, if you want H. P. B. on the matter, you can read her words that the truth is to be found in a union of science with occultism.

Don't think or say that phenomena are good stepping-stones to Theosophy. They are not, for those who stand upon them will fall from them to their hurt.

Don't run down the spirit of true Christianity, nor imagine that we can get ministers and congregations *en masse* to change into Theosophists. The true spirit of Christianity, as meant to be taught in the beginning, is doubtless Theosophy, but truth is not aided by running amuck among the faith of a whole people.

Don't say that H. P. B. has been reincarnated unless you know it and are able to prove it. To say you think so is not proof. She may or may not be, and either way the work must go on.

Don't talk as if messages from the Masters are all precipitated on rice paper, the writing incorporated in the paper, and such child's talk, indulged in only by those who do not know. And forget not that precipitation proves only that something was precipitated. It can be done by mediums and by various sorts of occultists.

Don't think or say that the only true occultism is found in the East, or that we must go to the East for it, or that the West has none of it. Remember

that the greatest known Adept was a Western woman, a Russian, and that the energy of the lodge of Masters was first expended here in the West in this age. If so, is it not reasonable to suppose that the West has its occultists even though hidden? Recollect also that H. P. B. received in her house in New York before witnesses Western men of occult science who worked wonders there at times. Perhaps it is as has been hinted many a time, that the true thing is to be found in a union of the East and the West. The terms Guru and Chela have been misused so that all too many are looking to India for help, from which they will get but little until the West is itself full of wise students of occultism who know the meaning of being placed by karma in the West. The fact is, again, that in the East the men are looking to the great Russian woman for the very spiritual help that first shed its rays upon the West unmistakably. Again, there is extant a letter from the Mahatma K. H. to a Western man wherein it is said that he should work in his own land and forget not that Karma so demanded.

Don't teach that vegetarianism is the road to heaven and spiritual growth. Was not the great Nazarene right when he intimated that, the kingdom of heaven being within, it did not come from eating or drinking? And has not our old friend H. P. B. written suggestively that cows and elephants are pure vegetarians? Reflect on the fact that some of the very best people on earth were meat-eaters, and that wicked or gross thoughts are more hurtful than the eating of a ton of flesh. In fact,...

Don't fail to exercise your common sense on all and every occasion.

W. Q. J.

IMPERSONALITY

Work unselfishly for humanity...while striving to get rid of the strength of the personal idea.
—*Letters That Have Helped Me*

Weakening the hold of the personal idea upon himself is one of the most difficult tasks the aspirant must essay. Until he undertakes it seriously he has no idea of the strength and cunning of the lower self. Repulsed in a direct charge on the stronghold, the foe shifts his forces and stages a flank attack. The tendency to open boastfulness overcome, for instance, the lower man may seek by self-depreciation to spur others on to voice the praise he craves and will win his end by indirection.

Let us notice just for a brief space of time how frequently the pronoun "I" and the first person possessive come to our lips—what *I* did, said, felt,

thought, *my* experiences, *my* acquaintances, *my* interests. A man who lets his personality occupy the centre of his own stage may be a paragon of goodness according to the world's standards, but he cannot be a spiritual man. In fact, the attraction of the limelight is normally in inverse ratio to awakened spirituality, which is impersonality in one aspect.

Impersonality has no room for petty resentments or sensitive feelings. If we are busy enough for Theosophy we are neither keeping a jealous eye on the treatment accorded us by others nor being solicitous about our prominence in the Work. Even supposing an extreme case of there being so many workers in the Lodge that our active participation is rarely called for, none can prevent our devoting to Theosophy all the time that we can spare from other duties. Who will interfere with our studying the Teachings as deeply and understandingly as lies in our power, until we have made them an integral part of our mental and moral equipment? Who can forbid our devoting the energy and strength of each moment to the effort of embodying those Teachings in practice, thus building them into the permanent or soul part of us? But ever let us watch—are we getting personal satisfaction out of whatever we do?

The very presence of an earnest and well-disposed listener strengthens every meeting so that each one there derives a little more from that lecture or class than if the sympathetic individual were absent. The spirit in which one attends the meetings not only affects the atmosphere of the Lodge but determines largely what benefit he himself shall receive. Those who go for help and instruction will get in some measure what they seek, but they whose motive is to give of their store, be it wealth or pittance, get vastly more, provided they forget themselves in their interest in the Work.

Impersonality is necessary for the right performance of any service to others and especially for Theosophical service. Most of our failures to do our best come from self-consciousness—from being overcome by the sense of our inadequacy. But it is indulging in personalities to think of how well others would perform the task we are essaying. The humblest match can fire a mighty torch, if it but burns with clear and steady flame. That steadiness we cannot attain so long as we are looking for results—our spirits leaping high in pride at every good achievement and flickering in shame at every failure to measure up to the standard we have set, even when we have done our best. The aspirant has to learn to become an impersonal, beneficent force in nature,

FANCIES AND IMPULSES

To live and reap experience, the mind needs breadth and depth and points to draw it towards the Diamond Soul. Seek not those points in Maya's realm; but soar beyond illusions, search the eternal and the changeless SAT, mistrusting fancy's false suggestions.—THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE.

Theosophy is our light, our medium for seeing. Without it we should be unable to see really, that is we should not be truly cognisant of phenomena. What the light of the sun is to the physical eye that Theosophy should be to the mind of the student.

It has become our habit to look at life through the medium of home breeding and school training, of our own inclinations and tendencies. The mental discipline which the earnest student has to adopt is this: uniformly he should try to look at all phenomena of life by the light of Theosophy.

An inner change in his mind has to take place. Nothing will aid him so much in producing that change as forming and maintaining the habit of constantly consulting his philosophy—which task is sometimes called Searching the Scripture. Regular study is a valuable factor; daily self-examination is another necessity; but these Theosophical matins and vespers are not sufficient. Impulse and fancy have long been indulged in by man and their recurrence sweeps him off his feet in the struggle of the day. It therefore becomes necessary that we form the habit of staying both impulsive action and indulgence in fancy. But merely saying to the lower-nature "hold on, don't stray" will not help. Living in a world of contacts we have to act—discharge our duties and face the ensuing conflict. We are sure to be swept into a whirlpool of impulsive actions which are thought-less and therefore soul-less. Again, in periods when we are alone there is the force of fancy rooted in ahankara—egotism which rises up—is bound to. Impulsive actions and indulgence in fancy are our two great foes and they are very subtle.

Impulsive action is born of fancy and in turn produces nourishment for further fancy. Morning study and nightly self-examination themselves suffer from attack by these two enemies who work hand in hand. Therefore we need this other habit: not to act until we have determined the Theosophical course of action. The process is—Searching the Scripture. We say what comes to the tongue; we do what comes to the finger-tips; this is wrong, though the world's civilization moves that way. Actions may be good or bad; are they deliberate?

To examine by the light of our philosophy what we are about to say or do may compel us to be slow; but it will be only temporary, and, after

all, hurry is no virtue. The formation of this habit is greatly helped by exercising a control over fancy. If we give to our minds nourishing ideas on which to build they will come to our rescue when a tendency toward impulsive action arises. Imagination is the opposite of fancy and the creator of deliberate action.

The spiritual soul is promethean while most of us are epimethean—wise after the event. The habit we want to form is to be promethean; to visualize before acting, and to determine the various possibilities of action. True visualization cannot take place without ideas and principles; without them there will be but fancy-built castles in the air. Therefore we must learn to be in good time with our actions; if we do not wish to be rushed by duties, we must take time (by elimination of unnecessary deeds) and determine our course. Still we may err, will err, but the very effort to form the habit of consulting the philosophy will grow, and time will come when errors will not often occur and when they do we shall know how to utilize them.

We have to analyse our motive for every action; and then determine the right method of executing that action. This twofold process must be rooted in principles of our great philosophy which must be searched for before the action is commenced.

Thus only by taking counsel with our textbooks will assimilation of teachings take place. When full assimilation will have been achieved we shall know how to act Theosophically under any given circumstance.

As every action performed affects in some degree the whole of vast nature, the basis of a spiritual action is the consideration of that sublime fact. Pure motive considers the effect of an action on others, on all humanity, on the whole of Nature. A pure action implies purity of motive, for motive is ever the cause of actions. Therefore to become a doer of pure deeds one has to give thought to the effects likely to follow when the action has been consummated.

The purifying or polluting effects of thoughts and feelings, of words and deeds are difficult to determine; but with the aid of Holy Writ the student-aspirant gradually learns to discern. This very process develops Vairagya—desireless indifference towards the longings of the lower self and the world of senses and selfishness. To act without caring for the fruit of action for ourselves does not mean we should act without thinking. It was easy for Arjuna to consent to fight when he was in his own camp; his difficulties began when he surveyed the armies on both sides and saw what the carnage would be. It was then that Krishna told him to put aside all desire for any benefit from the action which before was pleasing to him but

which became painful when the Charioteer placed him in the midst of the two armies.

Therefore in deciding what is fit or what unfit to be done, thou shouldst perform actions on earth with a knowledge of what is declared in Holy Writ.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

"Let us compare all things, and, putting aside emotionalism as unworthy of the logician and the experimentalist, hold fast only to that which passes the ordeal of ultimate analysis."—H. P. B.

चित्रं वटसरोवरे बृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्देवा ।

गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यातं शिष्यास्तु चिन्नसंशयाः ॥

"Ah! the wonder of the Banyan Tree. There sits the Guru Deva a youth, and the disciples are elders; the teaching is silence and still the disciples' doubts are dispelled."

Q. In the process of self-reform what should be one's attitude in regard to customs belonging to the religion of one's birth? Should it be to submit passively or to ignore everything?

Ans. Why do either? To submit passively is wrong. To ignore everything is also wrong.

If Theosophy is "the philosophy of the rational explanation of things" and if "it alone can furnish the beacon-light needed to guide humanity on its true path" (see *Five Messages*, p. 5), the duty of the student is clear. Seek for a rational explanation of any custom and examine it by the light of Theosophy. Seek the value of any custom by looking at the effects it produces. It will not be difficult to conclude that some religious customs are injurious, some are irrational, and others have a basis in knowledge or virtue. It is a Hindu religious custom (we take an example from Hinduism because the questioner is a Hindu, but the arguments and applications remain true for customs of other religious creeds) that a Brahmana should not eat with a Shudra. Here is a custom which has done positive harm to the country because it has been practised without a rational enquiry into its meaning and purpose. What should a Theosophical student who happens to be a Brahmana do? Seek the rational explanation: to eat food in the company of people who have unclean habits, whose personal magnetism is impure is unwise. The rule was good when the caste institution was real. To-day there are members

of the Brahmana caste whose habits of life, whose characters, whose orthodoxy and religiosity and consequently whose magnetism make them very objectionable company to which that of even a meat-eating mlechchha is preferable. But for that reason to disregard the principle underlying the practice and mix and mingle and eat in the company of any kind of men and women is wrong. To break caste does not mean to eat meat, to drink alcohol and to do things which orthodoxy forbids; nor to disregard the principle of good company.

Take another religious custom—performance of ceremonies for the dead. Looking rationally at the mental and moral condition of the priest called in to perform the rites there could never be any efficacious results, even if we were to presume that such ceremonies are magic-rites. To procure beneficent results through magic-rites they must be performed by wise magicians. Let alone absence of wisdom, the Brahmana-priest, or the Parsi-mobed is often not even morally fit, nor physically clean. Further, are these prevailing ceremonies for the dead magic-rites? On this our reader's attention is called to a full Theosophical explanation printed in our issue for last February under the caption "Ceremonies for the Dead" (pp. 53-5). Under the circumstances what should an earnest student of Theosophy do? Refuse to perform such ceremonies which are useless formalities. But this does not mean that he shall not respect and remember those called the "dead"; he must use his knowledge of Theosophy and not neglect to remember "the existence of another world."

In every instance the student's duty is to seek a rational explanation and make his application on the basis of the Theosophical fundamental, *viz.* that all processes in nature proceed from within without; motive and thought are much more important than outer observances.

But in all these matters the Theosophical student must remember not to interfere with the actions of another. He must respect the feelings of the non-theosophists to whom their own religion is sacred and true. And further he should avoid causing pain and becoming unkind. Sound knowledge and a sense of proportion will always help the student to adjust himself to his environment without becoming untrue to his own perceptions and soul-resolves and also without causing unnecessary turmoil to others who may be concerned.

There is a very beautiful story of Guru Nanak, the great religious reformer which was published in our last volume (December 1933, p. 26) but it will bear reprinting:—

At the time of Nanak's sacred thread ceremony his iconoclastic spirit expressed itself most forcibly.

Everything was ready. The priest called the boy to attention. Nanak looked into his eyes and asked :—"Pandit, what is the use of this thread? What purpose does it serve? What is the meaning of wearing it?" The purohit explained: "You see, dear boy, no one can perform any rite, social or religious, without it. The thread purifies, and will entitle you to be a man of your caste, who has religious rights and religious duties. No thread, no religion." But Nanak argued: "Yet, if a man puts it on and changes not his ways? All our caste men are not pure; yet they all wear the thread and they all perform ceremonies; therefore the thread has not purified them all." The purohit did not know what to say. "Argue not," he shouted, "it is so written in the Shastras and our forefathers have all done it. Enough!" Then the influence of the Infinite and Invisible Presence came upon Nanak, and he uttered the memorable words: "O Pandit, from the cotton of compassion spin out the thread of love. Make the knots of purity, truth and self-control. Let the mind remain concentrated on that thread. That thread never breaks, never need be changed, never can be lost. Revere those who wear such thread!" The purohit was touched. The wise words of the young boy, gently yet firmly spoken, awakened the priest-initiator to some perception. He spoke: "Good and true are the words you have uttered. But now look at all this expense and trouble taken on your behalf. Surely, you can see that you must accept the thread and wear it." "Enslave myself?" enquired Nanak. "No, I would rather give my life. I cannot put it on. True conviction gains respect. True and truthful living brings perfection. No, I cannot wear this." Imagine the confusion in the assembly! There was much entreaty. The priest threatened, and the friends flattered. Both threats and flatteries alike failed. His own mother, at last, said: "Please do it for my sake. Do not disappoint me, son!" "Mother, I obey you," answered Nanak and he took the thread. He had shown the way, had set the example by his words. He had made it clear that the form matters nothing without life. He who has real Life needs no form, though he may use it for some good reason of the outer life. In Nanak's case he took the form side only out of filial obedience.

HYLOZOISM

Unless the Occult teaching is accepted, we are compelled...to face a *miracle*; to accept the theory of a *personal, anthropomorphic Creator*, the attributes and definitions of whom, as formulated by the Monotheists, clash as much with philosophy and logic, as they degrade the ideal of an infinite

Universal deity, before whose incomprehensible awful grandeur the highest human intellect feels dwarfed. Let not the modern philosopher, while arbitrarily placing himself on the highest pinnacle of human intellectuality hitherto evolved, show himself spiritually and intuitionally so far below the conceptions of even the ancient Greeks, themselves on a far lower level, in these respects, than the philosophers of Eastern Aryan antiquity. Hylozoism, when philosophically understood, is the highest aspect of Pantheism. It is the only possible escape from idiotic atheism based on lethal materiality, and the still more idiotic anthropomorphic conceptions of the monotheists; between which two it stands on its own entirely neutral ground. Hylozoism *demands* absolute Divine Thought, which would *pervade* the numberless active, creating Forces, or "Creators"; which *entities* are moved by, and have their being in, from, and through that Divine Thought; the latter, nevertheless, having no more personal concern in them or *their* creations, than the Sun has in the sun-flower and its seeds, or in vegetation in general. Such active "Creators" are known to exist and are believed in, because perceived and sensed by the *inner* man in the Occultist. Thus the latter says that an ABSOLUTE Deity, having to be unconditioned and unrelated, cannot be thought of at the same time as an active, creating, one living god, without immediate degradation of the ideal. A Deity that manifests in *Space* and *Time*—these two being simply the forms of THAT which is the Absolute ALL—can be but a fractional part of the whole. And since that "all" cannot be divided in its absoluteness, therefore that *sensed* creator (we say *Creators*) can be at best but the mere *aspect* thereof. To use the same metaphor—inadequate to express the full idea, yet well adapted to the case in hand—these creators are like the numerous rays of the solar orb, which remains unconscious of, and unconcerned in, the work; while its mediating agents, the rays, become the instrumental media every spring—the Manvantaric dawn of the Earth—in fructifying and awakening the dormant vitality inherent in Nature and its differentiated matter. This was so well understood in antiquity, that even the moderately religious Aristotle remarked that such work of direct creation would be quite *unbecoming* to God.... Plato and other philosophers taught the same: deity cannot set its own hand to creation, ... This Cudworth calls "Hylozoism." As old Zeno is credited by Laertius with having said, "Nature is a habit moved from itself, according to seminal principles; perfecting and containing those several things which in determinate times are produced from it, and acting agreeably to that from which it was secreted."

VIJAYĀ-DASHAMI

This year the Hindus will celebrate on the 7th of October the Festival of Victory which falls on the tenth day of the bright fortnight of the Hindu month of Ashwin. It is popularly known as Dasarā. Though all castes observe it, the Kshatriyas and especially the ruling princes of India celebrate the feast with great pomp and *éclat*. Vijayotsava is a very old festival and was celebrated in honour of Vishnu.

In the Rāmāyaṇa it is narrated that the Sage Varatantu of Paithana had a pupil Kautsa who, on completing his studies, begged of his teacher to accept a gift from him. Varatantu replied that he had already received Dakshinā (gift-fee) through his joy at the great learning of the pupil. But the chela would not accept that answer ! So Varatantu asked for fourteen crores of Mudras (gold-coins) with the stipulation that all of them must come from a single individual. This was well-nigh impossible. All the same, Kautsa approached Raghu, a forefather of Rama, a mighty king and a holy one. He, however, had given away most of his gold in a rite of sacrifice ; but he undertook to supply the fourteen crores in three days. He planned a war against the Lord of Heaven, Indra. Aware of Raghu's sanctity and strength, for sheer self-preservation, Indra ordered his servant Kubera, the God of Treasures, to send a shower of Mudras on the Shami Tree on the outskirts of Ayodhyā, Raghu's capital. This was done. The day was Vijayā-Dashami. Raghu gave the fourteen crores of coins to Kautsa, but there were more and neither the king nor the pupil of Varatantu would take the remainder ; the people of Ayodhyā were given freedom to take what they liked. Even to-day in memory of this event people gather leaves of the Shami tree on Dasarā day as a symbolic token of gold coins.

It is said that Rāma started on his march against the Atlantian Rāvaṇa of Lanka on this day. Also it was the day on which the Divine King Rāma after vanquishing Rāvaṇa started back with Sita and Lakshmaṇa and Hanuman in his aeroplane (*vimāna*) which "rose up like a great cloud driven by the wind" (see Rāmāyaṇa) on his return journey to Ayodhyā.

In the other epic, the *Mahābhārata*, also the day is made famous. After the successful completion of their vow of exile, Arjuna and his brothers, resumed the use of their celestial weapons which ultimately brought them the Victory of Kurukshetra. Like other stories of the Epics this one about the exile, the obtaining and the using of celestial weapons,

etc., has a spiritual significance. Actual historical events have been used to convey to the populace, for whom the epics were prepared, some idea of deep occult truths ; these were garbed in symbols and in story form, and while the heart-devotion of the masses was awakened by narration of the stories, the intuitive among them felt that there was more in them than met the eye ; some of these were led to study, to ferret out the meaning of the myths and thus learn the hidden truths of Soul-Science.

In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* the famous bow of Arjuna is mentioned—Gāṇḍīva, which slips from his hand (I. 30) when despondency overtakes him. Gāṇḍīva is one of the three celestial bows mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*, (*Udyoga Parva*- CLVIII)—the other two are Vijaya in possession of Rukmi, the brother of Rukmiṇi, the wife of Shri Krishna ; Sharaṅga was the third celestial weapon and it was the bow of Krishna Himself. Very interesting genealogies of these three bows are narrated.

The Pāṇḍava brothers and their common wife Draupadi were exiles from their home and kingdom because of a vow. They were to wander the forests for twelve years ; they were to remain, unrecognised by any mortal for the thirteenth year ; then only would they obtain their lost kingdom.

During their twelve years' wandering Arjuna was the hero of a hundred exploits, in one of which he obtained the Gāṇḍīva. The *Virāṭa Parva* (XLIII) states :—

Worshipped by the gods, the *Dānavas*, and the *Gandharvas*, for ever and ever, and variegated with excellent colours, this large and smooth bow is without a knot or stain anywhere. Brahmā, held it first for 1000 years. Afterwards Prajāpati, held it for 500 years. After that, Shakra, for 580. And then Soma held it for 500 years. And after that, *Varuṇa* held it for 100 years.

Agni, the Fire-God procured it, under peculiar circumstances from Varuṇa for Arjuna, and the Mighty Archer carried it till the hour of death, when it was cast off by him at the injunction of the same Fire-God. It is narrated that when Arjuna was on the point of showing Gāṇḍīva to his brothers, Nārada, the Deva-Rishi suddenly appeared and stopped him.

"O Arjuna, Arjuna, do thou not discharge the celestial weapons. These should never be discharged when there is no object. And when there is an object they should also by no means be hurled, unless one is sore pressed ; for, O son of the Kurus, to discharge the weapons (without occasion), is fraught with great evil.

And, being duly kept, as thou hast been instructed, these powerful weapons will doubtless conduce to thy strength and happiness. But if they are not properly kept, they will become the instruments for the destruction of the worlds. So, thou shouldst not act in this way again."

The twelve years of wandering were over. The thirteenth year, "hard to spend, hath now come" and the brothers decided to go to the Matsya kingdom ruled by the virtuous, powerful and generous Virāta, and enter his service *incognito*. Completing their plans they set out with their bows and arrows, and after a long journey "looking wan and wearing beards" entered King Virāta's dominion. And then Yudhishthira said: "Where shall we deposit our weapons before entering the city? Gāṇḍīva is known to all men, so that people will recognize us without doubt and very soon." Arjuna answered:

Hard by yon cemetery and near that inaccessible peak is a mighty Shami tree, throwing about its gigantic branches and difficult to ascend. Nor is there any human being who will espy us depositing our arms at that place! That tree is in the midst of an out-of-the way forest abounding in beasts and snakes, and is in the vicinity of a dreary cemetery. Stowing away our weapons on the Shami tree, let us go to the city, and live there, free from anxiety!

Saying this Arjuna loosed the string of Gāṇḍīva and his brothers followed suit. Nakula ascended the tree and on it deposited the bows, swords and other weapons. And they hung up a corpse on the tree, knowing that people smelling it would avoid the tree from a distance. On being asked by the cow-herds regarding the corpse they said: "This is our mother, aged 180 years. We have hung up her dead body, in accordance with the custom observed by our forefathers." Then they entered the great city and succeeded in carrying out their plan. "Ministering unto one another's wants those mighty warriors lived in the capital of Virāta as hidden from view as if they were once more in their mother's womb."

It was nearly the end of the thirteenth year when an old foe of Virāta attacked the kingdom, "seized the immense wealth of kine." He had gained as his ally Duryodhana, the enemy of the Pāṇḍavas and between them they seized "thousands of excellent kine furnished with auspicious marks." Virāta aided by the brothers met the enemy and great was the carnage. It was on this occasion that Gāṇḍīva and the other celestial weapons were used, and the day on which they were brought down from the Shami tree was the tenth day of the bright fortnight of Ashwin.

While it is true that the Mahābhārata heroes are historical characters they are also, as H. P. B. points out, "highly important personified symbols in esoteric philosophy." Gāṇḍīva, the bow of Arjuna,

may be said to represent the Esoteric Wisdom which he obtained with the aid of the Fire-God from Varuṇa the God of Waters of Wisdom in Vedic Tradition. Soma, the Moon, says H.P.B., is "the symbol of Secret Wisdom." Shakra is the name of the Himalayan Ascetic Mahadeva. Prajapati, the Progenitor and Brahmā the Creator were first in possession of it.

Understandable is the instruction and advice of the mysterious Nārada who suddenly appears to Arjuna and enjoins him from displaying knowledge merely to satisfy the curiosity of his brothers.

Vijayā-Dashami may be said to represent the opening of a cycle propitious to the Higher Wisdom, during which its opponents and enemies can be routed. It is most probably because of this that even now the custom is on that day to start a child to learn the alphabet; the ritual has been known as Aksharārambha and the day is also called Vidyā-Dashami—the tenth day which brings knowledge.

The year of hiding may be said to represent the peculiar stage of chelaship when the chela-soul is thrown on his own resources, when he lives as "a resting-adept" without the aid of the special knowledge and powers obtained from his Guru. It is called the "state of exile" from the Occult World. It is generally a condition, it is said, ere the Great War for the chela beings.

The Shami tree on which Gāṇḍīva and the other celestial weapons were hidden has also a strange history. Its wood is supposed to contain fire and was employed to kindle the sacred fire by rubbing two dried pieces together. A legend relates that Purūravas generated primeval fire by friction of two branches of the Shami and the Ashwattha trees. In the *Bhagavat Purana* it is said that Purūravas prayed to the Gandharvas for the boon of Urvashi, whose beauty "set the whole heaven ablaze." But the Gandharvas gave him only a *sthāli* (a kind of saucer in which fire is lit). Disappointed, Purūravas left it in the woods and abandoning his tapas went to the city. But he continued to meditate on the *sthāli*. As a result one night were born into his mind the three Vedas teaching Karma-Mārga, the Path of Action. Pleased with the result of his meditation and grateful to the *sthāli* he went to the woods. In its place was an *ashwattha* tree growing out of a *shami* tree. By rubbing the two woods he created Fire, called Jāta-Veda Fire. Using the power of the Three Vedas which were incarnated in his mind he purified the Fire and produced Three more Fires—Ahavaniya, Garhapatya and Dakshinagni.

Purūravas, says H.P.B., is the "son of Budha, the Son of Soma and of Ilā." He made the fire "triple" and is "an occult character." The reader's

attention is drawn to the following from H.P.B.'s *Secret Doctrine* (I. pp. 522-3)

Truly the young Brahmin who graduates in the universities and colleges of India with the highest honours ; who starts in life as an M.A. and an LL.B., with a tail initialed from Alpha to Omega after his name, and a contempt for his national gods proportioned to the honours received in his education in physical sciences ; truly he has but to read in the light of the latter, and with an eye to the correlation of physical Forces, certain passages in his Purânas, if he would learn how much more his ancestors knew than he will ever know—unless he becomes an occultist. Let him turn to the allegory of Purûravas and the celestial *Gandharva*, who furnished the former with a vessel full of heavenly fire. The primeval mode of obtaining fire by friction has its scientific explanation in the Vedas, and is pregnant with meaning for him who reads between the lines. The *Tretagni* (sacred triad of fires) obtained by the attrition of sticks made of the wood of the *Aswattha* tree (the Bo-tree, of Wisdom and Knowledge)—sticks "as many finger-breadths long as there are syllables in the gayâtri" must have a secret meaning, or else the writers of the Vedas and Purânas were no sacred writers but mysticifiers.

In this connection we may draw attention to Mr. Judge's article, "Hit the Mark," reprinted in this magazine for November 1932.

Here are some conclusions of a special committee of the British Medical Association reporting on the relation of alcohol to road accidents :—

After taking just a little alcohol a motorist may believe he is driving better—but, in fact, his body works less efficiently.

Investigation shows that the consumption of amounts corresponding to two to three ounces of whisky usually affects adversely the power of making movements dependent on rapid and accurate co-ordination.

Small amounts of alcohol usually diminish the rapidity and accuracy of neuro-muscular co-ordination.

The effect of alcohol leads many persons to take risks and to make rapid decisions less judiciously than they would otherwise do.

Elsewhere in this issue it is stated that Theosophy advocates total abstinence for several reasons. This is one more.

THE BRIDGE OF TRUTH

The world of reality interpenetrates the world of illusion in which we live, touches it at every point; but for the average man appearances almost completely veil the real and true. Still, most men and women catch now and then a glimpse, however fleeting and intangible, of the reality behind phenomena, the symmetry and order beneath the outward confusion, the harmony and rhythm underlying the medley of audible sound. Each would hold these glimpses as background for a nobler life, but all too soon they are overlaid with the crowding impressions of sense, of desire and of concrete thought. The power to see clearly is not within the deliberate control of the undeveloped man. The thick clouds of matter may part for a second now and then to reveal the radiance they hide, but only progress in the spiritual life can make them grow steadily translucent and finally transparent to the eye of Soul.

Although it interpenetrates the world of sense, the world of real existence is for most men most of the time removed from the phenomenal as by a wide and fathomless abyss. There are two groups whose labours serve to narrow that gulf between reality and illusion. The artist is one of these builders of a bridge. He seeks to fix in permanence his flash of beauty which is truth. His experience is not unique otherwise none could recognize his expression of it. He is the voice of the inarticulate ; he helps us to hold fast or to recall our own half-glimpse of truth. He works deliberately to span the gulf, to bring the truth of the real world within the ken of man. He sets in place the far end of the bridge. The modern scientist may not suspect that back of all appearances exists the real but, none the less, by ascertaining laws of the phenomenal he approaches their source in the noumenal world. He builds his bridge-end from the world of sense.

The scientist and artist work on opposite sides of the abyss. Each builds at his own bridge-end and strengthens it, and neither grasps that his work is useless unless the two ends meet. Only divine philosophy can span the truths established in the laboratory with those intuited by human hearts. That central span is ready for the bridge—fashioned long ages since by the Sages, kept by the Custodians of changeless Truth. Setting that span in place will make the bridge complete, will make it possible for all to find their way, unhampered, to the heart of Truth. All who study the immemorial philosophy of Theosophy, the ancient Wisdom-Religion, and try to apply its tenets in their lives, are contributing their mite to the swinging into place of that great central span which alone can complete the bridge over which men may pass to Truth and Light.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Gerald Barry writing under the caption "Black and White" (*News Chronicle*, London 12th July), on Italy's attitude towards Abyssinia says :—

Conquest and subjugation have always been undertaken in the name of some pious crusade for the betterment of the conquered. It is a lie invented by the strong to dull the twinge of conscience.

The West has its millions of suffering peasantry all right, and it might do worse than look to them before embarking on altruistic campaigns to rescue the groaning millions of Abyssinia. Europe has its own problems, much nearer home, of squalor, degradation and cruelty.

The obvious truth is that the economic and social systems of the West (even omitting from the arguments the tyrannies of Western Dictatorship) have their own oppressions and their own slaveries which the native of Africa may not relish. He gets electric light, cheap jewellery, pots and pans, railways, aeroplanes; he learns accountancy, how to fill in bills of lading, the vagaries of the Trade Cycle; he is taught to kill with bombs and poison gas instead of with spears and poisoned arrows. Alas for the Black Man's Burden!

The African native is not the hopelessly backward and degraded creature our arch-Imperialists would have us believe.

The only ultimate solution of the black-and-white problem in Africa is through a peaceable blending of cultures.

These are true words and they can be applied to "whites" other than Italians in their relation to the "coloured" other than Ethiopians.

Most men who commit crimes do so because they are unable to limit their desires and needs to their capacity for satisfying them, not because they are inherently subnormal, declares Dr. Olga Bridgman of the University of California in one of the *Essays in Social Economics* just published by the University. Professor Bridgman's position is a wholesome challenge to the attitude towards criminals as helpless victims of heredity or circumstance.

Criminals have the same blind, driving impulses and in large part the same values as are important for non-criminal persons. That their ideas of comfort and security are not proportional to their capacities for attaining these ends is in large measure the fault of the social order. Without doubt, there are many persons living in high places who would respond to interference by criminal means if necessary, whose ability to forego material satisfactions and to inhibit aggressive or vengeful impulses is no greater than that of many criminals, but whose lines have fallen into pleasant places where the exercise of control and adaptation concerns only matters of minor importance.

If a millennium ever arrives in which the greatest imagined good comes to mean a triumphant domination of mind, not only over the external environment, but over primitive impulses as well, there will be no place for

crime that constitutes a reaction against social repression. Only a long, careful training in subordinating the individual to the group will be effective in producing consistent amenability to the social will.

That training involves translating into practice the objects of true education as defined by H.P.B. :—

Teach the disinherited and hapless people to carry with fortitude the burden of life (allotted them by Karma); to strengthen their will; to inculcate in them the love of one's neighbour and the feeling of mutual interdependence and brotherhood; and thus to train and form the character for practical life. (*Key to Theosophy*, p. 222)

The contest of wills occasionally staged by the Mission Indians of California (U.S.A.) is described by an American ethnologist, Dr. John P. Harrington (Smithsonian Institution) as "the strangest fights on earth—knock-out contests with no weapon but the mind." An outside medicine man who seeks recognition as the equal or superior of the local medicine men must accept their challenge to walk across a line they draw in the centre of the road.

He retires to a ravine, takes off his clothes, adorns himself with feathers, pronounces various magical incantations, and comes striding straight toward the medicine men who are to contest with their power his crossing of the line. As he strides along he goes through the motions of catching invisible balls from the air. He is accumulating the spiritual forces by which he hopes to conquer. Whenever he makes a "catch," he presses his hands to his heart, thus supposedly pushing the magic strength into his body.

Meanwhile the "home town boys" are doing something—just what, is a dark secret. As the visitor approaches the line, the spectators are breathless. Sometimes he falls, struggles as in an epileptic fit, rises, falls again, and finally struggles over the line. Sometimes he falls in a coma, as from a real knock-out. There have been many instances in the past, Mr. Harrington says, of the "knock-out" ending in death. Then the man is given an elaborate funeral.

Sometimes he walks over the line without difficulty, to be received as the champion.

The similarity of this contest to the exploits of Du Potet and Regazzoni (*Isis Unveiled* I, 142-3) indicate the mesmeric character of the phenomenon. Those successful in crossing the line prove themselves sufficiently positive and strong to resist the combined will of their would be mesmerizers.

THE U. L. T. DECLARATION

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

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

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

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and it welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

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

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire, to be enrolled as an Associate; it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists.

Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance given to Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local lodges. There are no dues of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

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