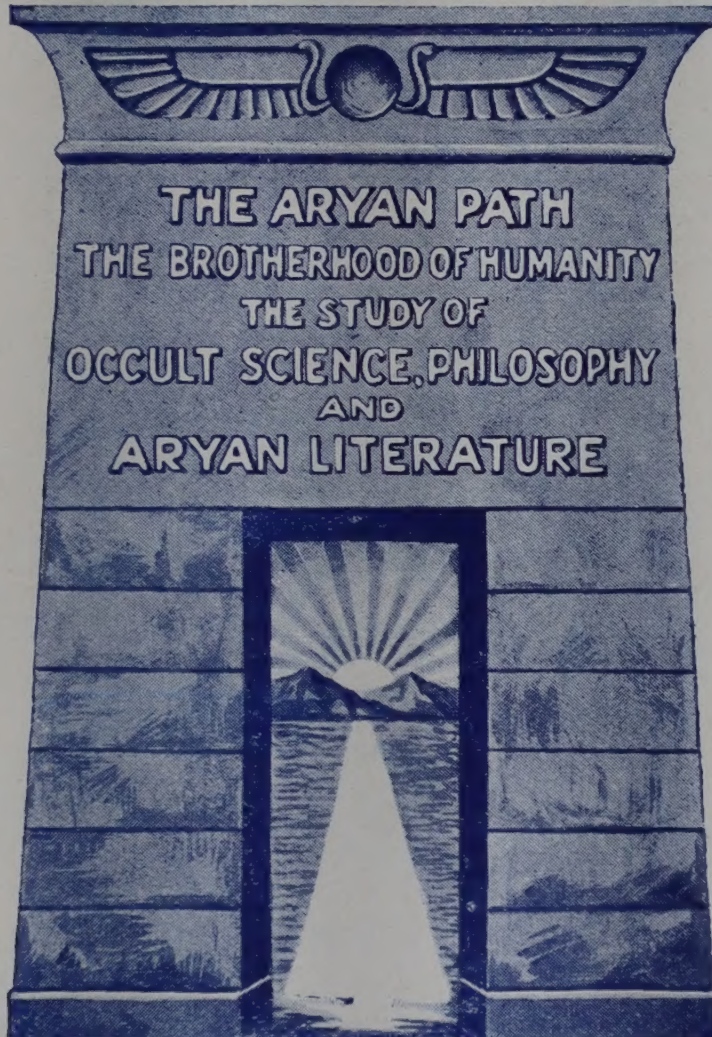




THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO



THE ARYAN PATH
THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY
THE STUDY OF
OCCULT SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY
AND
ARYAN LITERATURE

Vol. XXIV No. 11

September 17, 1954

There are several ways of acquiring knowledge: (a) by accepting blindly the dicta of the church or modern science; (b) by rejecting both and starting to find the truth for oneself. The first method is easy and leads to social respectability and the praise of men; the other is difficult and requires more than ordinary devotion to truth, a disregard for direct personal benefits and an unwavering perseverance. Thus it was in the days of old and so it is now, except perhaps, that such devotion to truth has been more rare in our own day than it was of yore.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;
- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।



There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth

BOMBAY, 17th September 1954.

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AUM

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

BOMBAY, 17th September 1954.

VOL. XXIV. No. II

“REACH SELF-KNOWLEDGE”

The perfectibility of man need not be for any one an insoluble problem. Along several lines of quiet reasoning one can gain the mental perception that the human soul must grow from power to Glory, from knowledge to Wisdom, from human love to Divine Compassion. The conviction comes to the sincere, earnest and persistent inquirer that the mortal animal-man can evolve into an immortal God-Man.

The Voice of the Silence teaches that “to reach Nirvana one must reach Self-Knowledge.” But what is implicit in this term? Each one of us lives by the force of what he regards as his own self-hood. Self-conscious man is a reflective intelligence: he reflects himself in the animal-man and has himself the latent power to reflect the Divine.

It is a truism that each man, each woman, has a dual nature—the lower, animal, egotistic and separative nature and also the higher, divine, altruistic and unifying one. We are taught in the *Gita* to raise the self by the Self. When one is centred in the lower self he has but vague intimations of the Divinity within him.

Modern schooling and the ways of modern society atrophy the faculty which can catch the intimations of the heavenly. It is therefore necessary that at the very starting point each must recognize that within his heart there is something higher and nobler—the seer of his own foibles and frailties, the speaker who warns and admonishes.

Once this is recognized a regular and steady examination of that lower self and its walk on the paths of this world should be undertaken. To pass this examination one needs knowledge: Whence this lower nature? Whither can it go?

How can the right turns on the perilous ways of daily life be taken? To seek sincerely the answers to these questions naturally brings us in contact with knowledge, however preliminary and elementary, of the nature of the Higher Self.

There are two processes simultaneously taking place in the earnest student who aspires to understand what the term “Self-Knowledge” stands for. As he gains perception of the Higher he is able to weaken the hold of the lower self. Self-Knowledge, we soon find, is the knowledge of what we must have been in the past to create what we are today; our weaknesses and our merits in the present are the outcome of our past achievements and failures. And, further, both achievements and failures are clear-cut opportunities for becoming whatever we aspire to be in the future, what we are destined to be in the hereafter.

On earth we sow; on earth we reap. There has been an interplay between Self and self in the past, and the result is what we are in the present. There is now an interplay between Self and self and the directives we gain by our knowledge and endeavour enable us to raise the self by the Self, and thus build our own future.

Now, *The Voice of the Silence* further says: “Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child.” The Heavenly Self expresses itself in thoughts and feelings and speech. But the most complete expression, the consummation is on the plane of actions. Loving deeds carry and convey the power of loving words, feelings and thoughts. But often loving deeds are mere appearances; for the inner force is not pure, unselfish, impersonal. Even a mother’s love for her son and her sacrifices on

his behalf often do not bring forth truly loving deeds.

The technique is to develop the inner attitude of remembrance by which our "doings" hour by hour are actuated and energized by the power of Love, Charity and Compassion. One cannot succeed in reaching Self-Knowledge by spasmodic deeds of love and charity. To do a loving deed is admirable, but it is necessary to sustain in our conscious mind the memory that all our deeds should have Love at their core.

In the early stages loss of memory occurs. We act without any remembrance that that particular act should carry and convey Love. We have to attempt to recall often the teaching that Love has to flow in the words we speak or accompany the food we offer; to find expression through the feet which walk and the heart which throbs; through the tone of the voice and the gesture of the hand. This exercise of the remembering establishes the psycho-mental habit till it becomes second nature.

Our attitude of pouring out love hour by hour, in the small, plain duties of life or the special acts which we are called upon to perform, comes naturally to us. Thus we learn to "sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future harvests." The concomitant of this natural flow is that we do not need to make an effort to remember and to recall. Such Loving Deeds bring us Self-Knowledge.

We know that in the Heart is the Light of Knowledge which, passing through the many-coloured threads of impartite Love, enables us to unite ourselves with all the selves which surround us. This is the experience of Brotherhood Universal, which makes of man a Mahatma, a Great Brother. Only the true Brothers *know* what Universal Brotherhood is. Only Their acts are flawless Loving Deeds. Their precepts coupled with Their example inspire the devotee to rise to the Terrace of Light where Self-Knowledge is One's Own Self, Nirvana is One's Own Sublimated Consciousness.

TRUE ETHICS

The misfortunes of the modern world seem to many simply an opportunity to announce smugly, "We told you so!" Among these, says an editorial on "Ethics in Eclipse" in *Manas* (Los Angeles) of July 28, 1954, are the orthodox moralizers who have never even understood why ethics have been out of favour with the last few generations. The eclipse of ethics was not due to "wickedness"; it was due to the collapse of the conventional religious supports of ethics under the questioning of the empiricists. *Manas* considers a single terrible fact: that people, even leaders, today feel no particular compulsion to tell the truth for its own sake. Naturally, no man is trusted on his bare word. This destroys the basis of civilization itself—the trust in one's fellows which makes co-operation possible. Co-operation weakened, tension and terror supervene.

What hope of a return of ethical sensitiveness there is lies in people who, by sheer insight into experience, have grasped the fact that man by his very nature cannot be mentally healthy, or build a healthy society, unless he practises certain ethical principles that seem ancient and universal.

Theosophically speaking, this realization is valuable; but the actual problems of ethical living cannot be successfully dealt with except with a knowledge of true metaphysics and psychology. As yet it is not admitted by modern "knowers and leaders" that behind the ethical principles common to mankind there lies a metaphysic once no less common and no less ancient. Theosophy offers a restatement of this metaphysic, and teaches that the comprehension of its philosophy, the understanding of its psychology and the living of its ethical precepts are inextricably interwoven strands in the fabric of the Theosophic life.

Hence the value of the thought-provoking suggestion which the editors of *Manas* make:—

...that a metaphysical reality may underlie man's need to honour truth—that truth is the actual substance which nourishes the spirit in man, even as food of another sort nourishes the body...

REINCARNATION IN ENGLISH POETRY

Sometimes . . . along the pathway of life we do see here and there men who are geniuses or great seers and prophets. In these the Higher powers of *Manas* are active and the person illuminated. Such were the great Sages of the past, men like Buddha, Jesus, Confucius, Zoroaster, and others. Poets, too, such as Tennyson, Longfellow, and others, are men in whom Higher *Manas* now and then sheds a bright ray on the man below, to be soon obscured, however, by the effect of dogmatic religious education which has given memory certain pictures that always prevent *Manas* from gaining full activity. (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, 2nd Indian ed., p. 61)

Both H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge have stressed, in more than one place, the value of literature in transforming the mind of the race and the influence of Theosophy on literature. Down the ages various methods have been used by the Great Fraternity, directly or indirectly to change the *Manas* and *Buddhi* of the race by imparting knowledge of the Eternal Verities, and literature has been one of the major channels.

In the firmament of literature, poetry has been acclaimed to be the sublimest and the noblest, for "Truth shines the brighter clad in verse." Poets are the truest diviners of nature and of Truth undying. For in the production of creative poetry, as of any genuine work of art, the poet's consciousness rises to a higher level and receives intimations from that higher faculty of intuition which, as H.P.B. puts it, "soars above the tardy processes of ratiocinative thought." Many a bard and poet has thus been able to catch glimpses of the Reality and to see the Divine Pattern of Life and has put it into his own great language.

Among the ideas that have fascinated poets and mystics of all times and of all climes is that of reincarnation. The idea that the soul with its inexplicable memories, its inborn characteristics and tendencies, must inevitably be the product of experiences gained in previous existences on this earth and elsewhere; the idea that it is compelled by the very law of its being to seek out ever new habitations, new bodies, new circumstances, until in the course of ages it has learnt all that such experiences can teach it—this is an idea that appeals powerfully to man's innate sense of justice, to his innate yearning for eternal progress and hope. The poet's intuition has whispered to him of this truth.

It is well known that the idea of reincarnation

abounds in Oriental poetry. Our purpose here is to demonstrate the prevalence of the same thought in English poetry and among poets many of whom were wholly independent of Eastern influence.

The idea of the pilgrim soul's pre-existence in some diviner sphere—a "lost Paradise" as it has been called—is very closely bound up with that of its recurrent visits to this school of experience, pleasure-ground, prison, or place of exile, as this earth has variously been described. It is not surprising that poets should have been more fully conscious than other men of the soul's separation from "her Prime Source, her Master and Delight," and also more successful in expressing its ardent desire for reunion, and its joy at even temporary accomplishment of this desire. Laurence Binyon, in "Unsated Memory," beautifully expresses this idea as follows:—

Where is that world that I am fallen from? . . .
Ah, surely I was rather native there
Where all desires were lovely . . .
Oh, we go shrouded from ourselves, and hide
The soul from its own splendour, and encrust
The virgin sense with thinking. Then some chance
Moment reveals us: we are deified,
Feeling and seeing; gold gleams from the rust;
And, marvelling at our lost inheritance,
We breathe the air of beauty.

Wordsworth, in his famous "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," envisages the soul descending from the bright realms of eternity to take on fleshly shape. To him

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.

He addresses man as

Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a master o'er a slave.

Often some chance sight, or sound, or circumstance once more begins to open doors in the memory, giving us that strange sensation of "having been there before"—of having witnessed previously a scene or an incident which, to our present worldly knowledge, was new to us. Dante Gabriel Rossetti writes in his "Sudden Light" of such a moment of intuition:—

I have been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell:
I know the grass beyond the door,
The sweet keen smell,
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before—
How long ago I may not know:
But just when at that swallow's soar
Your neck turned so,
Some veil did fall—I knew it all of yore.

Tennyson was yet another poet who could probe the depths of his soul and glimpse an inner truth:—

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood
And ebb into a former life, or seem
To lapse far back in a confused dream
To states of mystical similitude,
If one but speaks or hems or stirs a chair
Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,
So that we say, all this hath been before,
All this *hath* been, I know not when or where:—
So, friend, when first I looked upon your face,
Our thoughts gave answer, each to each, so true,
Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—
Although I knew not in what time or place,
Methought that I had often met with you,
And each had lived in other's mind and speech.

Again, Martin Tupper has the same thought in "Proverbial Philosophy":—

Be ye my judges, imaginative minds, full-fledged to
soar into the sun,
Whose grosser natural thoughts the chemistry of wisdom
hath sublimed,
Have ye not confessed to a feeling, a consciousness
strange and vague,
That ye have gone this way before, and walk again
your daily life,
Tracking an old routine, and on some foreign strand,

Where bodily ye have never stood, finding your own
footsteps?

Hath not at times some recent friend looked out, an
old familiar,

Some newest circumstance or place teemed as with
ancient memories?

A startling sudden flash lighteth up all for an instant,
And then it is quenched, as in darkness, and leaveth
the cold spirit trembling.

Browning's philosophical poems are permeated with the idea of reincarnation, and, as in "Paracelsus," he was continually guessing at some previous existence:—

At times I almost dream
I too have spent a life the sages' way,
And tread once more familiar paths.

Thomas Moore was more certain of his belief and expressed it in his "Lalla Rookh," not as a mere inkling but as a firm and settled conviction:—

Stranger, though new the frame
Thy soul inhabits now, I've traced its flame
For many an age, in every chance and change
Of that Existence, through whose varied range—
As through a torch-race, where, from hand to hand
The flying youths transmit their shining brand—
From frame to frame the unextinguished soul
Rapidly passes, till it reach the goal!

Matthew Arnold, too, in "Empedocles on Etna" speaks of the "circle of necessity" which none can escape:—

And then we shall unwillingly return
Back to this meadow of calamity,
This uncongenial place, this human life;
And in our individual human state
Go through the sad probation all again,
To see if we will poise our life at last,
To see if we will now at last be true
To our own only true deep-buried selves,
Being one with which we are one with the whole
world;
Or whether we will once more fall away
Into some bondage of the flesh or mind,
Some slough of sense, or some fantastic maze
Forg'd by the imperious lonely Thinking-Power.

Since the advent of the Theosophical Movement and the revival of interest in Oriental thought in the West, the belief in reincarnation has gradually taken a firmer hold upon the Western mind, and we find that it is more explicitly and emphatically voiced by some of the poets of the present

century, as, for instance, by John Masefield, England's Poet Laureate, in his "Creed":—

I hold that when a person dies
 His soul returns again to earth,
 Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise,
 Another mother gives him birth.
 With sturdier limbs and brighter brain
 The old soul takes the road again.
 Such is my own belief and trust;
 This hand, this hand that holds the pen,
 Has many a hundred times been dust
 And turned, as dust, to dust again;
 These eyes of mine have blinked and shone
 In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon.
 All that I rightly think or do,
 Or make, or spoil, or bless, or blast,
 Is curse or blessing justly due
 For sloth or effort in the past.
 My life's a statement of the sum
 Of vice indulged, or overcome.

He concludes:—

So shall I fight, so shall I tread,
 In this long war beneath the stars;
 So shall a glory wreath my head,
 So shall I faint and show the scars,
 Until this case, this clogging mould,
 Be smithied all to kingly gold.

It may seem a strange anomaly that not all the poets quoted above, and many others whom space does not permit us to quote but who have very beautifully expressed the doctrine in unequivocal terms, have claimed to be believers in reincarnation, and some have even openly scoffed at it. This may be explained by the fact that poets are men who have but fleeting moments of intuition, when they are privileged to pierce through the veil of Maya and catch glimpses of the Reality; but, returning to their normal level of consciousness, their vision is dimmed and obscured by custom and environment and, in the words of Mr. Judge quoted at the beginning of this article, "by the effect of dogmatic religious education which has given memory certain pictures that always prevent *Manas* from gaining full activity." Therefore did Plato say that "poets utter great and wise things which they do not themselves understand."

Nevertheless poets have made a powerful contribution to spiritual thought by affirming the idea of the immortality of the soul and successive lives

on earth. The more the idea is understood and applied, the sooner the way to Contentment and Enlightenment will be entered upon. On the mind which dwells upon reincarnation the great truth dawns: "Ye suffer from yourselves." In *Lucifer* for May 1889 H. P. Blavatsky wrote:—

If...its doctrines [those of Theosophy] of Reincarnation and Karma, in other words, of Hope and Responsibility, find a home in the lives of the new generations, then, indeed, will dawn the day of joy and gladness for all who now suffer and are outcast. ("Our Cycle and the Next": THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for August 1940, Vol. X, p. 160.)

CASTES IN INDIA

The Indian Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, has distinguished himself as a statesman who fears neither to touch "delicate issues" nor, when there is need, to repeat himself. This is wise; for he thus keeps the nation's mind on the essential questions of the times.

Inaugurating the Ajmer State Harijan Convention on July 27th, he said that the ancient heritage contained bad things as well as good. India was aiming at equality of opportunity but that demanded sweeping away the evils inherited from the past. Caste distinctions had to be rooted out; it was not enough to pass legislation condemning them; it was necessary also to sweep away "the cobwebs from men's minds."

The abolition of caste distinctions, a necessary step toward the Theosophical ideal of universal brotherhood, will also strengthen society by cleansing the land of one of its worst corruptions. And let no one plead the virtues of the original caste system now; for caste based on the birth of the body is far indeed from the *varnashramadharma* of ancient India. Justice demands the wiping out of these false distinctions. But the truth of the old classification can be applied to modern conditions. Why it is necessary and how it is possible is explained at length by Dr. Bhagavan Das in his great books, especially in *The Science of Social Organization*.

FRAGMENTS OF OCCULT TRUTH

NO. VII—THE HUMAN LIFE WAVE

BY A LAY CHELA

[This Fragment, which is from the pen of Mr. A. P. Sinnett, was published by Madame Blavatsky in *The Theosophist* for April 1883 (Vol. IV, pp. 161-164). His including Mars and Mercury in our Earth planetary chain is a blunder; it was properly corrected by H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 163, where she explains that this misapprehension had arisen out of misunderstanding the Master's statement that they belonged to "our system of worlds," viz., the solar system. And One of the Masters wrote to Colonel Olcott in the autumn of 1888 about *The Secret Doctrine*: "Every mistake or erroneous notion, corrected and explained by her from the works of other theosophists was corrected by me, or under my instruction."—EDS.]

Previous essays will have given the reader a general idea of the way in which the great evolutionary life-wave sweeps round and round the seven worlds which compose the planetary chain of which our earth is a part. Further assistance may now be offered with the view of expanding this general idea, into a fuller comprehension of the processes to which it relates. And no one additional chapter of the great story will do more towards rendering its character intelligible, than an explanation of certain phenomena connected with the progress of worlds, that may be conveniently called Obscurations.

Students of occult philosophy who enter on that pursuit with minds already abundantly furnished in other ways, are very liable to misinterpret its earlier statements. Everything cannot be said at once, and the first broad explanations are apt to suggest conceptions in regard to details which are most likely to be erroneous with the most active-minded and intelligent thinkers. Such readers are not content with shadowy outlines even for a moment. Imagination fills in the picture, and if its work is undisturbed for any length of time, the author will be surprised afterwards to find that later information is incompatible with that which he had come to regard as having been distinctly taught in the beginning. Now in these *Fragments* the writer's effort is to convey the information in such a way that hasty weed growths of the mind may be prevented as far as possible, but in this very effort it is necessary sometimes to run on quickly in advance, leaving details—even very important details—to be picked up during a

second journey over the old ground. So now the reader must be good enough to go back to the explanation given in Fragment IV of the evolutionary progress through the whole planetary chain.

Some few words were said even in that Fragment, concerning the manner in which the life impulse passed on from planet to planet in "rushes or gushes; not by an even continuous flow." Now the course of evolution in its earlier stages is so far continuous that the preparation of several planets for the final tidal wave of humanity may be going on simultaneously. Indeed the preparation of all the seven planets may, at one stage of the proceedings, be going on simultaneously, but the important point to remember is that the main wave of evolution—the foremost growing wave—cannot be in more than one place at a time. The process goes on in the way which may now be described, and which the reader may be the better able to follow, if he constructs either on paper or in his own mind a diagram consisting of seven circles (representing the worlds), arranged in a ring. Calling them A, B, C, &c., it will be observed from what has been already stated that circle (or globe) D, stands for our earth. Now the kingdoms of Nature as known to occultists, be it remembered, are seven in number, three, having to do with astral and elementary forces, preceding the grosser material kingdoms in the order of their development. Kingdom 1 evolves on globe A, and passes on to B, as kingdom 2 begins to evolve on A. Carry out this system and of course it will be seen that kingdom 1 is evolving on globe G, while kingdom 7, the human kingdom, is evolving

on globe A. But now what happens as kingdom 7 passes on to globe B. There is no eighth kingdom to engage the activities of globe A. The great processes of evolution have culminated in the final tide wave of humanity,—which as it sweeps on, leaves a temporary lethargy of nature behind. When the life wave goes on to B, in fact, globe A passes for the time, into a state of obscurity. This state is not one of decay, dissolution or anything that can properly be called death. Decay itself, though its aspect is apt to mislead the mind, is a condition of activity in a certain direction, this consideration affording a clue to the meaning of a great deal which is otherwise meaningless, in that part of Hindu mythology which relates to the deities presiding over destruction. The obscurity of a world is a total suspension of its activity: this does not mean that the moment the last human monad passes on from any given world, that world is paralysed by any convulsion, or subsides into the enchanted trance of a Sleeping Palace. The animal and vegetable life goes on as before, for a time, but its character begins to recede instead of to advance. The great life-wave has left it and the animal and vegetable kingdoms gradually return to the condition in which they were found when the great life-wave first reached them. Enormous periods of time are available for this slow process by which the obscured world settles into sleep, for it will be seen that obscurity in each case lasts six times¹ as long as the period of each world's occupation by the human life-wave. That is to say, the process which is accomplished as above described in connection with the passage of the life-wave from globe A to globe B, is repeated all along the chain. When the wave passes to C, B is left in obscurity as well as A. Then D receives the life-wave, and A, B, C are in obscurity. When the wave reaches G, all the preceding six worlds are in obscurity. Meanwhile the life-wave passes on in a certain regular progression, the symmetrical character of which is very satisfactory to scientific instincts. The

reader will be prepared to pick up the idea at once, in view of the explanations already given of the way in which humanity evolves through seven great races, during each round period on a planet—that is to say, during the occupation of such planet by the tidal wave of life. The fourth race is obviously the middle race of the series. As soon as this middle point is turned, and the evolution of the fifth race on any given planet begins, the preparation for humanity begins on the next. The evolution of the fifth race on D for example, is commensurate with the evolution, or rather with the revival of the mineral kingdom on E, and so on. That is to say, the evolution of the sixth race on D, coincides with the revival of the vegetable kingdom on E, the seventh race on D, with the revival of the animal kingdom on E, and then when the last monads of the seventh race on D, have passed into the subjective state or world of effects, the human period on E begins and the 1st race begins its development there. Meanwhile the twilight period on the world preceding D, has been deepening into the night of obscurity in the same progressive way, and obscurity there has definitely set in when the human period on D, is past its half way point. But just as the heart of a man beats and respiration continues, no matter how profound his sleep, there are processes of vital action which go on in the resting world even during the most profound depths of its repose. And these preserve, in view of the next return of the human wave, the results of the evolution that preceded its first arrival. Recovery for the reawakening planet is a larger process than its subsidence into rest, for it has to attain a higher degree of perfection against the return of the human life-wave, than that at which it was left when the wave last went onward from its shore. But with every new beginning, Nature is infused with a vigour of its own—the freshness of a morning—and the later obscurity period, which is a time of preparation and hopefulness as it were, invests evolution itself with a new momentum. By the time the great life-wave returns, all is ready for its reception.

¹ Or we may say five times, allowing for the half period of morning which precedes and the half period of evening which follows the day of full activity.

In the first essay on this subject it was roughly indicated, that the various worlds making up our

planetary chain were not all of the same materiality. Putting the conception of spirit at the north pole of the circle and that of matter at the south pole, the worlds of the descending arc vary in materiality and spirituality, like those of the ascending arc. This variation must now be considered more attentively if the reader wishes to realize the whole processes of evolution more fully than heretofore.

Besides the earth, which is at the lowest material point, there are only two other worlds of our chain which are visible to physical eyes—the one behind and the one in advance of it. These two worlds, as a matter of fact, are Mars and Mercury—Mars being behind and Mercury in advance of us—Mars in a state of entire obscurity now as regards the human life-wave, Mercury just beginning to prepare for its next human period.²

² It may be worth while here to remark for the benefit of people who may be disposed, from physical science reading, to object that Mercury is too near the Sun, and consequently too hot to be a suitable place of habitation for Man, that in the official report of the Astronomical Department of the United States on the recent "Mount Whitney observations," statements will be found that may check too confident criticisms of occult science along that line. The report in question was republished in *Nature*, and for the most part, within the last six months, in some of the Indian newspapers. The results of the Mount Whitney observations on selective absorption of solar rays showed, according to the official reporter, that it would no longer be impossible to suggest the conditions of an atmosphere which should render Mercury habitable, at the one extreme of the scale, and *Saturn* at the other. We have no concern with *Saturn* at present, nor if we had to explain on occult principles the habitability of Mercury, should we set to work with calculations about selective absorption. The fact is that ordinary science makes at once too much and too little of the Sun, as the store-house of force for the solar system,—too much in so far as the heat of planets has a great deal to do with another influence quite distinct from the Sun, an influence which will not be thoroughly understood till more is known than at present about the correlations of heat and magnetism, and of the magnetic, meteoric dust, with which interplanetary space is pervaded. However it is enough,—to rebut any objection that might be raised against the explanations now in progress, from the point of view of loyal devotees of last year's science,—to point out that such objections would be already out of date. Modern science is very progressive,—this is one of its greatest merits,—but it is not a meritorious habit with modern

The two planets of our chain that are behind Mars, and the two that are in advance of Mercury, are not composed of an order of matter which telescopes can take cognisance of. Four out of the seven are thus of an ethereal nature, which people who can only conceive matter in its earthly form, will be inclined to call immaterial. But they are not really immaterial at all. They are simply in a finer state of materiality than the Earth, but their finer state does not in any way defeat the uniformity of Nature's design in regard to the methods and stages of their evolution. Within the scale of their subtle "invisibility," the successive rounds and races of mankind pass through their stages of greater and less materiality just as on this Earth; but whoever would comprehend them, must comprehend this Earth first, and work out their delicate phenomena by correspondential inferences. Let us return therefore to the consideration of the great life-wave, in its aspects on this planet.

Just as the chain of worlds treated as a unity, has its north and south, its spiritual and material poles—working from spirituality down through materiality, up to spirituality again—so the rounds of mankind constitute a similar series which the chain of globes itself might be taken to symbolise. In the evolution of man in fact, on any one plane as on all, there is a descending and an ascending arc; spirit, so to speak, transforming itself into matter, and matter resolving itself into spirit. The lowest or most material point in the cycle thus becomes the inverted apex of physical intelligence, which is the masked manifestation of spiritual intelligence. Each round of mankind evolved on

scientists to think, at each stage of its progress, that all conceptions incompatible with the stage reached, must necessarily be absurd. If the present essay had been written twelve months ago, and remember that as regards the information it contains it might have been written twelve millenniums ago,—we could have said nothing more than the sentence last written, had some one argued in reference to Mercury, that Mr. Proctor had summed up all that could be said on the question, and had given judgment against its habitability. As it happens in this matter, Mount Whitney has risen up to refute the Proctorian judgment,—refuting it by wrong arguments indeed, but by arguments that will be acceptable in the Proctorian arena.

the downward arc (as each race of each round if we descend to the smaller mirror of the cosmos) must thus be more physically intelligent than its predecessor, and each in the upward arc must be invested with a more refined form of mentality commingled with greater spiritual intuitiveness. In the first Round therefore we find man, a relatively ethereal being compared even on earth with the state he has now attained here, not intellectual but super-spiritual. Like the animal and vegetable shapes around him, he inhabits an immense but loosely organized body. In the second Round he is still gigantic and ethereal, but growing firmer and more condensed in body—a more physical man, but still less intelligent than spiritual. In the third Round he has developed a perfectly concrete and compacted body, at first the form rather of a giant ape than of a true man, but with intelligence coming more and more into the ascendant. In the last half of the third Round his gigantic stature decreases, his body improves in texture, and he begins to be a rational man. In the fourth Round intellect, now fully developed, achieves enormous progress. The dumb races with which the Round begins, acquire human speech as we understand it. The world teems with the results of intellectual activity and spiritual decline. At the half way point of the fourth Round here, the polar point of the whole seven-world period is passed. From this point onwards the spiritual ego begins its real struggle with body and mind to manifest its transcendental powers. In the fifth Round the struggle continues, but the transcendental faculties are largely developed, though the struggle between these on the one hand, with physical intellect and propensity is fiercer than ever, for the intellect of the fifth Round as well as its spirituality is an advance on that of the fourth. In the sixth Round humanity attains a degree of perfection both of body and soul—of intellect and spirituality, which ordinary mortals of the present epoch will not readily realize in their imaginations. The most supreme combinations of wisdom, goodness and transcendental enlightenment which the world has ever seen or thought of, will represent the ordinary type of manhood. Those faculties which now, in the rare efflorescence of a generation, enable some extraordinarily gifted persons to ex-

plore the mysteries of Nature and gather the knowledge of which some crumbs are now being offered (through these writings and in other ways) to the ordinary world, will then be the common apanage of all. As to what the seventh Round will be like, the most communicative occult teachers are solemnly silent. Mankind in the seventh Round will be something altogether too god-like for mankind in the fourth Round to forecast its attributes.

During the occupation of any planet by the human life-wave, each individual monad is inevitably incarnated many times. This has been partly explained already in Fragment No. V. If one existence only be passed by the monad in each of the branch races through which it must pass at least once, the total number accomplished during a Round period on one planet, would be 343—the third power of 7. But as a matter of fact each monad is incarnated twice in each of the branch races, and also comes in, necessarily for some few extra incarnations as well. For reasons which it is not easy for the outsider to divine, the possessors of occult knowledge are especially reluctant to give out numerical facts relating to cosmogony, though it is hard for the uninitiated to understand why these should be withheld. At present, for example, we shall not be able to state what is the actual duration, in years, of the Round period. But a concession which only those who have long been students of occultism by the old method will fully appreciate, has been made about the numbers with which we are immediately concerned; and this concession is valuable at all events, as it helps to elucidate an interesting fact connected with evolution, on the threshold of which we have now arrived. This fact is that while the earth, for example, is inhabited as at present, by fourth Round humanity, by the wave of human life, that is to say, on its fourth journey round the circle of the worlds, there may be present among us some few persons, few in relation to the total number, who, properly speaking, belong to the fifth Round. Now, in the sense of the term at present employed, it must not be supposed that by any miraculous process, any individual unit has actually travelled round the whole chain of

worlds once more often than his compeers. Under the explanations just given as to the way the tide-wave of humanity progresses, it will be seen that this is impossible. Humanity has not yet paid its fifth visit even to the planet next in advance of our own. But individual monads may outstrip their companions as regards their individual development, and so become exactly as mankind generally will be when the fifth Round has been fully evolved. And this may be accomplished in two ways. A man born as an ordinary fourth Round man, may, by processes of occult training, convert himself into a man having all the attributes of a fifth Round man and so become what we may call an artificial fifth-Rounder. But independently of all exertions made by man in his present incarnation, a man may also be born a fifth-Rounder, though in the midst of fourth Round humanity, by virtue of the total number of his previous incarnations.

If x stands for the normal number of incarnations which in the course of nature a monad must go through during a round period on one planet, and y for the margin of extra incarnations into which by a strong desire for physical life he may force himself during such a period, then, as a matter of fact, $24\frac{1}{2} (x \times y)$ may exceed $28x$; that is to say, in $3\frac{1}{2}$ Rounds a monad may have accomplished as many incarnations as an ordinary monad would have accomplished in four complete Rounds. In less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ Rounds the result could not have been attained, so that it is only now that we have passed the half way point of evolution on this half way planet, that the fifth-Rounders are beginning to drop in.

It is not possible in the nature of things that a monad can do more than outstrip his companions by more than one Round. This consideration notwithstanding Buddha *was* a sixth Round man, but this fact has to do with a great mystery outside the limits of the present calculation. Enough for the moment to say that the evolution of a Buddha relates to something more than mere incarnations within the limits of one planetary chain.

Since large numbers of lives have been recognized in the above calculations as following one another in the successive incarnations of an individual monad, it is important here, with the view of averting misconceptions to point out that the periods of time over which these incarnations range are so great that vast intervals separate them, numerous as they are. As stated above, we cannot just now give the actual duration of the Round-periods. Nor indeed could any figures be quoted as indicating the duration of all Round-periods equally, for these vary in length within very wide limits. But here is a simple fact which has been definitely stated on the highest occult authority we are concerned with. The present *race* of humanity, the present 5th *race* of the 4th Round period, began to evolve about one million of years ago. Now it is not yet finished; but supposing that a million years had constituted the complete life of the race, how would it have been divided up for each individual monad? In a race there must be rather more than 100, and there can hardly be 120 incarnations for an individual monad. But say even there have been already 120 incarnations for monads in the present race already. And say that the average life of each incarnation was a century, even then we should only have 12,000 years out of the million spent in physical existence, against 988,000 years spent in the subjective sphere, or there would be an average of more than 8,000 years between each incarnation.³ Certainly these intervening periods are of very variable length, but they cannot contract to anything less than about 1,500 years, in any case—leaving out of account of course the case of adepts who have placed themselves quite outside the operation of the ordinary law—and 1,500 years if not a quite impossibly short, would be an extraordinarily brief interval between two rebirths.

³ See in this connection page 35 of Vol. I of *Isis Unveiled*, beginning at the last paragraph of page 34.

THE HEART PATH

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In considering the power of H.P.B.'s and W.Q.J.'s teachings to move through the years; to pass unscathed through all the miserable failures of societies of students and professed Theosophists, and with increasing power to go ever on awakening and illuminating new generations of workers in all lands, the student may merely think that it is all because of the colossal intellect, the vast mind, of H.P.B. manifested in those works.

But it is not so. The real reason is that the esoteric and exoteric Theosophy proceeded and proceeds from the Immortal Masters of the Heart Doctrine. That is what makes the teachings of Theosophy unique and *alive*. That is what gives a growing power to the Theosophical Movement not to be found in the work of those promulgating translations of the Ancient Sanskrit Scriptures.

Those who come into Theosophy in dead earnest must sooner or later realize that there are two paths. The one is that of liberation from the ceaseless rounds of rebirth. How is this accomplished? By *realizing* that each one is The Permanent Self. That alone is the real and all else is fleeting illusion. Such is the continual urge of the Upanishads and other scriptures that have come to the reading public. Thrice great is he who climbs this path to its lofty top. He becomes Pratyeka Buddha. Caring nothing for the woes of mankind or to help it—for he knows that those woes are illusionary and that he is The Real—but only for his own bliss, he enters Nirvana and disappears from the sight and hearts of men forever. The Pratyeka Buddha's is, indeed, "only a state of high intellectual development with no true spirituality."

There is now brought home to us the pregnant fact that had H.P.B. and W.Q.J. gone that Way there could not have been THEOSOPHY. Wherever and whenever the motive and end in view is final liberation for the devotee, it is the Open Path, and the head doctrine which takes one to and over it is really the embodiment of the external and non-existing, even though it calls for the sacrifice of the impermanent to The Permanent. For,

in truth, that permanent State of Absoluteness—Nirvana—enduring forever from the time measure of personal man, must come to an end some day.

Now the Heart Path, that taken by our "Friends of Old Time and of the Future," is the embodiment of the true divine wisdom: the Permanent and Everlasting. It is the path of self-sacrifice, of self-immolation, all the way. Yet it is not the path of horror the selfish may think it. The self-sacrifice is from the heart basis. We may get a little closer to a comprehension of it by considering the love of a mother. Her child is ill with infectious disease. Without thought of herself, she will enter the sick-room, take on all the risks, be in the loathsome conditions, and labour for the welfare of the beloved. To her no question of profit or loss arises; it is no state of horror or bone cracking sacrifice: she is irresistibly moved to help another. Many a loving mother, despite her ignorance of abstruse themes, is far nearer the occultism of the Heart Doctrine than aristocrats of philosophy.

It is very clear, then, that the true Theosophist, not having the individual determined purpose of himself attaining Nirvana, will make his own the motive, aim, and purpose of the Great Predecessors who beckon him on. He will endeavour to take each step in life, deal with each problem, in order by his example ("unseen" though it may be) to help others similarly placed; or others, who in the course of generations will be in such a position. If an aspect of *rajas* presses, he will deal with it from the basis of The Eternal. Why? That he may get cleaner, that he may "progress," that he may have peace? No. That all others struggling under the mesmerism of King Mara may receive help. If disappointment comes (or rather, as each one comes) he will not think: "I am working out *my* karma. I will overcome this because *I* want liberation, freedom from the bondage of the world." But he will consider: "Others—weaker ones—are right now faced with even greater discouragement"; he will send them help;

for their sake he will have perseverance as One who doth forevermore endure.

Everything of pain and trial that comes our way, is to be dealt with as helping all others similarly placed. Joyful conditions as measured by the world, have much power to delude and wreck. So we go through them also as we think others should. We work not to exhaust "our" karma—we have no personal karma; we seek not liberation for our SELF alone. We work for all mankind, the whole of Nature. Whatever comes now and to the endless end, we go through as the REAL, for them—The Great Orphan Humanity.

HISTORICAL CYCLES

"Is History Predictable?" is the question discussed by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, clergyman and author, in an article appearing under that title in the July issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. History, says Dr. Niebuhr, is drama, and the unpredictability of human actions adds to its charm. The question is: Unpredictability for whom? The conclusion is drawn:—

The miscalculations in regard to historical events in the immediate past are but instances of many miscalculations in recent history which prove the unpredictability of history. Since there are discernible patterns in history, we are right in speaking of "probable" events. But we can never speak of future events as "inevitable"...

Many of the historical miscalculations are due to mistaken analogies. History is fruitful of recurrences and therefore of analogies. If it were not so, no "lessons" could be learned from history. But since history also elaborates endless dramatic variations, none of the analogies are exact enough to become the basis for prediction... We can learn from historical analogies, but we must not rely upon them too much, simply because when "history repeats itself" it never does so exactly. There is an endless emergence of novel factors in each situation which makes every analogy and comparison inexact.

Theosophy postulates that this is a universe of Law in which nothing is left to chance. Rigid justice rules the world. No nation or nations can escape their Karmic fate any more than units or individuals can. The destinies of nations are shaped by the events of their past according to Karmic

law. Just as these past events cannot fail to leave their impress behind them, so, too, coming events cast their shadows before, for history, like everything else, proceeds in cycles. In her *Secret Doctrine* H. P. Blavatsky states that in ancient Wisdom

cycles meant something more than a mere succession of events, or a periodical space of time of more or less prolonged duration. For they were generally marked with recurrences of a more varied and intellectual character than are exhibited in the periodical return of seasons or of certain constellations. (I. 645)

She goes on to add that a knowledge of the law of cycles and mathematically correct computations enable the "WISE MEN OF THE EAST" to foretell with accuracy the return of some cyclic events, as, for instance, the rise and fall of nations and of races. This is no more of the nature of a prophecy or of prevision than the announcement of the return of a comet by an astronomer, several years before its appearance; it is the result of historical observation carried on through incalculable ages.

It is a matter of little wonder that present-day historians, men of myopic vision whose "experience is limited to a few thousand years, to less than a day in the whole age of Humanity," should make errors and confusion in every effort on their part to predict future historical events. But we should not overlook the fact that there are Eastern Initiates who "maintain that they have preserved records of the racial development and of events of universal import ever since the beginning of the Fourth Race," and who *can* predict with accuracy.

MUSIC AS FOOD

"Music as the Food of Health" is an interesting article in the August *Medical Features* issued by the Science Information Service, London.

Tracing the therapeutic use of music from the time of ancient Egypt up to the present when music is in fairly common use for allaying fears and anxieties of mental patients and as an adjunct to anæsthesia, the writer shows how music can be utilized in many ways to offset or change the "moods" of children and adults alike.

Speaking of the ancient Egyptians, H.P.B., in *Isis Unveiled*, describing their wide range of instruments, says that they "understood well the effect of musical harmony and its influence on the human spirit. . . . Music was used in the Healing Department of the temples for the cure of nervous disorders." (I. 544). She further stated that

sound has an attractive property; it draws out disease, which streams out to encounter the musical wave, and the two, blending together, disappear in space. Asclepiades employed music for the same purpose, some twenty centuries ago; he blew a trumpet to cure sciatica, and its prolonged sound making the fibres of the nerves to palpitate, the pain invariably subsided. (I. 215)

The Rosicrucian theory of the universe being a musical instrument was the same, H.P.B. said, as the Pythagorean doctrine of the music of the spheres and she explained:—

Sounds and colours are all spiritual numerals; as the seven prismatic rays proceed from one spot in heaven, so the seven powers of nature, each of them a number, are the seven radiations of the Unity, the central, spiritual SUN. (I. 514)

And she added a prophecy, that future experimenters would "reap the honour of demonstrating that musical tones have a wonderful effect upon the growth of vegetation."

RELIGION AND SECULARISM

Some correspondence on religion and secularism in *The Statesman* (Calcutta) of July 14th and 18th, besides also an editorial on the subject, reveals some confusion of thought. Taking the incident of the President's planting of a mango to inaugurate the *Vana Mahotsava* week and to encourage tree planting, a correspondent felt that, as tree planting was a task for all Indians irrespective of creedal belief, it should not be accompanied by religious ceremonies subscribed to by only one portion of the people. The new Indian democracy, he felt, needs the spirit of scientific planning and co-operative effort rather than the old reliance on the efficacy of "pujas and mantras" and our State dignitaries should set an example in this direction. The editorial suggested that if other

religious denominational leaders also and not only those of the Hindu majority were invited to participate in these religious functions it would remove the charge of partiality. The view was also advanced that the sanction of religion in the inauguration of public works did remove some of the deeply ingrained superstition among the masses about these innovations while the educated minority merely regarded the ritual as picturesque. Several correspondents saw no real harm accruing from the continuance of an old-established custom and held that it meant no disrespect to any other religion and that if a leader wanted to use any other religious practice, not Hindu, the people would accept that without demur.

The writers of such compromise suggestions have not correctly visualized the issue involved. It is not sufficient to say that a secular State is merely one in which no one religion shall be favoured to the detriment of the others. It seems also to imply that religion should not be allowed to meddle in State affairs, just as the State will not meddle with the private religious views of the citizens. As citizens of the country, the leaders are free to follow each his own religion but it would seem unwise for any among them, when acting as State officials, to bring his own creedal religious ceremonies into State functions.

In the correspondence that ensued only one contributor, Leela Dharmara of Cuttack, came out boldly with the statement: "Let us do away with religious ceremonies at official functions," and she suggested alternatively that "if we feel that public works and institutions should be opened in a spirit of faith and prayer, let all creeds be represented."

This is the correct position. The secular State does not mean an irreligious State. The Brotherhood of Religions is a major and fundamental expression of the grand principle of Universal Brotherhood without distinctions of caste or creed, race or religion, conservatism or bolshevism, nationalism or socialism. The Teachers and Prophets like Krishna and Buddha, Mahavir and Muhammad, Jesus and Zoroaster, are the guides, philosophers and friends of the devotees of the one True Religion of Wisdom and Compassion.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN PRESENT-DAY ASIA

"The Rôle of Religion in Present-day Asia" and "The Impact of the Twentieth Century on Asian Philosophical Systems" were two of the 18 subjects discussed at the International Conference on Asian Problems held last November in New York. The recently issued Report gives somewhat condensed accounts of the proceedings but these reports were approved by each speaker prior to publication. There were 73 participants, divided into small panel groups according to subjects.

Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre presented Hindu thought on religion and Dr. Subodh Chandra Roy, on Indian philosophy. Prof. Chung-Yuan Chang of the Asia Institute spoke for China at both meetings. Prof. Raphael Patai of Princeton University was chairman of the discussion on Religion and Prof. F. S. C. Northrop of Yale University took the chair at the session on Philosophy.

Swami Nikhilananda said: "Of all the forces working in India at the present time, religion is the most vital one." This is taking an ideal position, for Gandhiji forcibly pronounced India today not a religious but an irreligious country. The Swami traced the key-notes of ancient Indian religious life such as the ideal of *Dharma* and not of individual rights, the fourfold caste system, the four *ashramas* or stages in life, and the four goals: righteousness, wealth, sense-pleasure and liberation. The caste system, he said, aimed at eliminating ruthless competition and establishing harmony. This again is an ideal stand-point and fails to admit that the present caste system, based on heredity and not on qualities as described in the *Gita*, is a distortion of the original one and therefore makes for disharmony and the break-up of society. India still suffers from the curse of untouchability.

The dire heresy of separateness has injured the country. The "I am holier than thou" attitude of the Brahmin pushed the Sudra and the Pariah further and further down; the Kshatriya failed to protect his people and so the country fell an easy prey to the invader. Unless this state of affairs is admitted and a fresh attempt made to

achieve solidarity, India will be unable convincingly to deliver her spiritual message to the world. The Swami pointed out the fact that religion in India was not in conflict with the modern concepts of science, freedom, democracy, social justice, etc., and religion. This is undoubtedly true—in theory, not in practice.

The Ramakrishna Mission itself is setting a fresh ideal and the Swami pointed to Vivekananda's as well as Ramakrishna's emphasis on serving the people. This new aim will help to create a more brotherly feeling and is a necessary step; but still more necessary is the correct understanding, not merely a theoretical acceptance, of the spiritual identity of all beings, which is expressed in "the Vedantic ideal of the oneness of existence." If this was recognized in everyday living, then priestly domination and caste restrictions would have no place.

That India has a spiritual message for the present and future world is clear, but to let its waters of life flow freely and purely demands the clearing away of the pollution of past centuries here at home.

Professor Chang's review of the Chinese position in religion is discriminative. He is not afraid that it will be displaced by Marxism. He says:—

Judging from past experience, as long as certain religious characteristics are deeply rooted in the life of the Chinese people, the religion of China will go on even though outward forms may change.

These religious characteristics he names as a sense of retribution, similar to the Indian concept of Karma, a consecrative attitude, a need for a spiritual and psychological symbol of some kind and a desire for "peace of soul." These values and goals are common, he says, to Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, and even the old ancestor worship shows recognition of the third.

The "consecrative attitude," says Professor Chang, is that of profound faith or *ch'eng*. He quotes the Confucian *Chung Yung* (The Doctrine of the Mean) where it is written that

the man of perfect *ch'eng* is like a spirit. Perfect *ch'eng* makes man so high and brilliant that he can

be the coequal of heaven. So far-reaching and long-continuing it makes him infinite.

This is the recognition of man as a spiritual being and hence immune to the vicissitudes of life and death. Here again we are compelled to ask: Why then did China become the prey of the spoiler and the invader, for could a people thus rooted in faith have succumbed to the purely material forces of the West? But we find China too at odds with herself. If, however, the new China practises these four traditional ideals she can play an effective rôle.

Professor Chang made an equally interesting contribution on how Chinese philosophy could help man meet the 20th-century impact. He put forward the Confucian idea of "self-transformation" as of the essence of Chinese philosophy and said that its power was still available at the present time to help in achieving integrity of the mind. According to Confucianism, self-realization was to be achieved in three stages: (1) The development of a conscious sense of right and wrong; (2) Confronting the "shadow" or "dark aspect" of the self fearlessly and coming to grips with it; and (3) Such disciplined exploration of the conscious and the unconscious makes it possible to attain a spiritual unity free from arrogance, worry, selfishness, foolishness or confusion.

Professor Northrop remarked that the use of terms such as "materialistic" and "spiritualistic" in reference to Western and Eastern thought, respectively, tended to exaggerate differences.

Modern empirical philosophy, with its concept of the psychological or neutral monistic theory of matter, is fully as "spiritual" as Oriental philosophies are often held to be. The difference instead centres in the contrast between the Oriental indeterminate, more existential, and intuitive concept of the spiritual and the Western more determinate and theoretical concept of spirit.

Nevertheless, this is a vital difference and in it lies the whole difference between the "Eye" and the "Heart" Doctrines. Not that the East has the one and the West the other, for there is as much hair-splitting in philosophy in the East as in the West, nor is the West devoid of a great deal of intuitive thinking, if not so much on the part of

her philosophers, at least among her poets and mystics.

To return, however, to Professor Northrop's point, H.P.B. states in *The Secret Doctrine*:—

MONISM, or the Single Substance Doctrine, is the more subtle form of negative psychology, which one of its advocates, Professor Bain, ably terms "guarded Materialism." This doctrine... while positing thought and mental phenomena generally as radically contrasted with matter, regards both as equal to the two sides, or aspects, of one and the same substance in some of its conditions. (I. 124-5 fn.)

Later she shows that even Herbert Spencer "speaks of the 'Unknowable' occasionally in terms that demonstrate the lethal influence of materialistic thought" and she gives an instance:—

... when he terms the "First Cause"—the UNKNOWABLE—a "power manifesting through phenomena," and "an infinite eternal Energy" (?) it is clear that he has grasped solely the *physical* aspect of the mystery of Being—the Energies of Cosmic Substance only. The co-eternal aspect of the ONE REALITY—Cosmic Ideation... is absolutely omitted from consideration. (I. 327 fn.)

Dr. Roy cited Tagore and Aurobindo as examples of Eastern reaction to Western thought. Both, after close contact with it, had retained firmly their traditional bases of thought. Dr. Roy pointed to the error common in the West of regarding "an uncompromising denial of the reality of the external world" as fundamental to Eastern thought while in the West the reality of matter was emphasized. There was a middle course. Both Tagore and Aurobindo, he pointed out, had protested against attributing to Indian thought the ideas of the absorption of the individual in society and of his having no reality in his own self.

Theosophy has some very valuable ideas to present in this cycle when, as H.P.B. prophesied, "not a few accounts will be settled and squared between the races" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. xlv). Among such accounts is the transaction between Religion and religions, Mysticism and creedalism. A Temple of Universal Wisdom is being erected by the Great Master Masons and the masses will intuitively feel the right and righteousness of the Voice of the Silence, streaming forth from the Temple of True Knowledge.

AFTER DEATH

When the review of the life that is closing is accomplished and the soul has finally withdrawn its energy from that vast and marvellously organized community of atoms or "lives" which we call the body, the millions of components thereof enter upon a new phase of experience. They are now like children let out of school or labourers whose day's work is over. They are no longer subject to the authority of their teacher or foreman; the soul, whose instruments they had formed and whose rules they had been obliged to obey, no longer binds them. Each goes its own way, alone or with the group that is most nearly allied to it. This process is what we know as decomposition; and, because it is not a healthy one from the point of view of the "living" bodies of souls still using such vehicles, we should cremate the dead so as to minimize the undesirable influence.

Occultism regards cremation as vastly preferable to burial and the Theosophical Movement of the present cycle did pioneer work in this connection. That quick and cleanly method of disposing of a dead body has the great advantage of hastening the natural process of decomposition, thereby reducing the unhealthy aspect thereof to almost nothing. It is a well-known fact that the earth's power of assimilating decaying matter, though great, is limited and the noxious gases from decaying corpses a few feet underground must affect adversely the health of the living. Since the soul is in no way benefited by the preservation of the body which it has left and the living are distinctly harmed by its very slow decomposition after disposal under the earth or in a tomb, it is much better for the West to adopt the well-tried way of reducing it to ashes. H.P.B. states that "*Cremation was universal* till a comparatively recent period—some 80, or 100,000 years ago." (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 753) (This "recent period" will, no doubt, make modern men of science smile!)

In view of the above it is not surprising that the artificial preservation of the body by embalming, which of late years has been in vogue in some lands, is also discouraged by occultism.

So much for the body. Meanwhile the real man

finds himself still embodied but his vehicle is now an astral one, that important principle which during life permeates the physical body and after its death becomes in turn man's outermost covering. In this the soul now lives, but, instead of turning outward and striving to gain experience from the world around, its one interest is to disentangle itself from this astral phantom. For people who die while still very deeply immersed in worldly concerns, or full of the coarser physical desires and passions, that task is comparatively difficult and may take considerable time to be accomplished. But when death has come in the natural course and the life just closed has been a reasonably pure and controlled one, no great difficulties arise. The soul subsides into a kind of somnolence and Nature does the rest, like a mother undressing a child already half asleep.

As Mr. Judge has put it: "Natural death is like the falling of a leaf near the winter time"; the time being ripe, its stem has but a slight hold on the branch and it lets go without resistance. So, too, the vehicles of man fall apart when the cohesive force that has held the threefold man together and made of him a unity weakens and finally becomes ineffective. After this the soul is free to live its own life in the blissful condition already referred to, known in Theosophical terminology as Devachan; and the discarded astral body, the more ethereal physical corpse, as we may call it, is, like the denser one, left to disintegrate.

A great deal can be learned from Theosophical literature, ancient and modern, about the fate of this astral corpse or shell. If it was properly used and cleansed by its creator before he died and was obliged to leave it uncontrolled, its process of falling to pieces is quick and causes no trouble. If this was not the case, or if the astral shell is molested by mediums and thus drawn into unnatural contact with earth life by means of spiritualistic practices, its existence may be prolonged to the detriment of those among the living with whom it comes in touch, as well as of the man who owned it and has shaken it off. We can-

not here go into the complications to be met with and solved by the soul in its next incarnation as the result of the vicarious life an astral shell may be made to live under the influence of a medium, but they are many.

Meanwhile, the reincarnating Ego is now ready to enter upon its real "life after death." It awakens and finds itself in that state of consciousness for which the modern Theosophical Movement has selected the term "Devachan," or "Land of the Gods," because it is the condition in which the immortal Soul is happy and "at home."

It is to this that H.P.B. refers when she speaks of the bliss that awaits us in the intervals between earth lives. In the Devachanic state the soul garners the results of all its experiences on earth in so far as they are susceptible of spiritual elaboration. Any thoughts or aims inspired by unselfish love, for instance, revive in the mind of the Devachanee and become a seed of happiness. We are told that there is scarcely a soul who has not sown some such seeds while on earth, however mean and undesirable its life may have seemed.

The evil that men do cannot find expression in that state; bad tendencies lie latent while they are in Devachan; they will have to be corrected and compensated for in another incarnation but, for the time being, those who had such tendencies in life are at rest from them, as we are from irritation when the person whose presence arouses it in us is absent. For only that part of the astral body which becomes the discarded shell contains those elements which respond to what is inharmonious and self-seeking.

For the vast majority of those human beings who are not entirely absorbed in the pleasures of the flesh and in money-grabbing a very important factor in their happiness is the presence of those whom they love. We cannot imagine bliss apart from our dear ones. The question therefore naturally arises: "What becomes of the friends that mean so much to us, when their physical presence is withdrawn by death?" H.P.B. answers:—

We are with those whom we have lost in material form, and far, far nearer to them now, than when they were alive. And it is not only in the fancy of

the *Devachanee*, as some may imagine, but in reality. For pure divine love is not merely the blossom of a human heart, but has its roots in eternity.... Again we say that love beyond the grave, illusion though you may call it, has a magic and divine potency which reacts on the living.... It will manifest in their dreams, and often in various events—in *providential* protections and escapes, for love is a strong shield, and is not limited by space or time. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 148)

A word about what is often called abnormal death. Unnatural death is not really death at all in the proper sense, because the force of cohesion mentioned above pertains to the whole man, and therefore the second death—the disintegration of the astral body—is not yet possible in such cases. In cases of unnatural death what happens is that the physical envelope is suddenly put out of commission. The man himself remains clothed in the complete astral body and, instead of coming to rest and being divested of his astral garment, preparatory to proceeding to the refreshment of Devachan, he struggles to "live," that is, to maintain contact with the physical world of men which is still the field of natural expression for him. The fact that he no longer has a physical instrument is a source of much suffering, and the shock of prematurely losing it brings in its train a number of consequences fraught with great evil. The sufferers from this abnormal form of departing from this life are suicides, victims of capital punishment and all who die before their natural term, through violence.

In regard to the first and last of these three groups, motive and circumstances play a very important rôle in mitigating the ill effects of the pseudo-death. The condition of the criminal may be sketched as follows:— At death,

...when the final tremor comes the various inner component parts of the man fall away from each other and let the soul go free. But the poor criminal has not come to the natural end of his life....these parts are not ready to separate...because they are bound together by law and a force over which only great Nature has control.

When such a premature separation is effected, the inner man

is merely dazed for a time, after which he wakes up in the atmosphere of the earth, fully a sentient living being save for the body. He sees the people, he sees

and feels again the pursuit of him by the law. His passions are alive. He has become a raging fire...the victim of his fellows and of his own crime...the criminal has only hate and desire for revenge...he has become a menace to the living...he carries with him...the pictures of his crimes, and these are ever living creatures, as it were...in the very realm in which our mind and senses operate, he is for ever coming in contact with the mind and senses of the living. More people than we suspect are nervous and sensitive. If these sensitives are touched by this invisible criminal they have injected into them at once the pictures of his crime and punishment, the vibrations from his hate, malice and revenge.... Many a person has been impelled by some unknown force to commit crime; and that force came from such an inhabitant of our sphere. (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 217-18)

Enough has perhaps been said, and a great deal more can be learned from Theosophical literature, to show how important it is to begin informing oneself regarding the life after death and not to wait till our last hour on earth approaches. Death is unavoidable and the earlier we find out what it entails for the soul the better for us.

PLOTINUS

Mr. Philip Merlan in *Isis* for December 1953 defends Plotinus, as a practising magician or theurgist, against some recent writers who think that his theurgy was merely speculative. He takes three well-known incidents in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* to prove his case. There was the attempt of Olympius, a jealous rival, to harm Plotinus by magic spells. But the soul of Plotinus was powerful enough to resist the spells and they reacted like a boomerang upon Olympius, who had to desist. Porphyry calls the spells *astrobolai* and Mr. Merlan translates this as star-rays. Plotinus is said to have felt their effect as a form of cramps in the intestines. In the 4th *Ennead* Plotinus explains:—

Just as the irrational part [of his own nature] will be affected by incantations, so he himself will by counterincantations undo these forces. But [even the sage] might suffer death and all kinds of physical conditions from them.

The second case described is the evocation of Plotinus' "Daimon" by an Egyptian, when a god

and not an ordinary daimon appeared. The writer refers to Plotinus' essay entitled "Concerning the Daimon who Has Chosen Us," in which Plotinus, in a commentary on Plato's views, discourses on the various classes of ensouling entities or tutelary spirits. Mr. Merlan goes on to discuss what Plotinus has to say about the nature of the interaction between man and his inner god. He writes:—

...because of the principle of universal sympathy... every part of the universe is in rapport with some other part. It is for this reason that the stars and their powers can influence us. And precisely for the same reason we can influence them...this mutual influence must be explained as a sympathetic co-vibration, according to which for each change in one part of the universe there is a corresponding change in some other part. What the magician does by assuming a certain posture or by some arrangement of things is to start a change in the universe to which there is immediate response.

This response, he explains, is not merely a link in a chain of mechanical causes and effects but

is strictly an action at a distance, without any medium interposed to convey by its change the action of the changer to the thing changed. The two examples given by Plotinus are the fascination of a man by a serpent and the string that starts vibrating when another distant string that is in tune with it, emits a sound.

Prayers, according to Plotinus, are also magical formulæ. He says:—

...if they are granted it is not because the god to whom they were directed listened to them and responded by an act of his will. The god *must* respond according to the rules of universal sympathy.

So "Plotinus' universe is a magic universe indeed," Mr. Merlan declares.

The third incident is that of Amelius, who wanted Plotinus to accompany him to participate in some religious ceremonies, and was told: "It is not up to me to go to the gods—it is up to them to come to me." Thus Mr. Merlan adduces proof of Plotinus' magic powers. H.P.B. says in *Isis Unveiled*: "The adept actively controls himself and all inferior potencies," including the so-called gods.

Mr. Merlan refers also, after mentioning Plotinus' universe being one of magic, "and that he

explains it by means of a fully elaborated system of magic," to Plotinus' explanation in *Ennead* IV of the presence of deities in some statues. "Sages of old knew how to build such statues (obviously with regard to both shape and material) so that they would irresistibly attract certain deities." H.P.B. wrote in "Animated Statues," reprinted in our pages in Vol. X, p. 35, January 1940:—

...the theory that certain objects, images, and *amulets* for example—serve as a temporary or even constant habitation to a "god," "genius" or *spirit* simply, has been shared by some of the most intellectual men known to history.

Mr. Merlan quotes Plotinus' own views:—

In a sense, everything that is not completely self-contained is under the spell of everything that affects it. Only what is completely self-centred and self-contained remains unbewitched. To the extent that we are not our own, we can be bewitched...Who, then, is completely self-centred and self-contained? Who is not liable to any magic spells? It is he who lives a life of contemplation...and has become one with the object of his contemplation.

By this turn, the writer says, "Plotinus succeeds in surrounding his whole discussion with an aura of sublimity." It is such passages that those who admire Plotinus as the philosopher rely upon. Mr. Merlan points out that, while Prospero and Faust relinquish their magic, with Plotinus it is different. The gods themselves, being subject to the power of magic, are not the highest beings. This being so, says Mr. Merlan:—

Plotinus' transcendence of magic is quite obviously not a call to resume one's station as man. It is on the contrary a call to become more than man, to become more than even the gods.

Madame Blavatsky in *The Theosophical Glossary* calls Plotinus "the noblest, highest and grandest of all the neo-Platonists after the founder of the school, Ammonius Saccas."

Another writer on Plotinus, Joseph Katz of Vassar College, discusses in the April *Journal of the History of Ideas* "Plotinus and the Gnostics." The title of Plotinus' essay, "Against the Gnostics," may appear conclusive as to what his position is, but it has to be remembered, as Thomas Taylor was also careful to mention, that the title was

invented by Porphyry, for no names of persons occur in the essay, not even the generic name "Gnostic" occurs. It is amazing, says Mr. Katz,

that almost all of the ideas that Plotinus finds objectionable in the Gnostics have been asserted by himself too in one form or another...To see Plotinus as in some sense a Gnostic *manque* is to discover an important aspect of his many-faceted philosophy.

Considering that the true *gnosis* is the very root-base of Plotinus' whole system, the case is analogous to that of H.P.B., who was made out to deny the fundamental doctrine of the reincarnation of the human soul because of her strictures on the Allan Kardec theory of the reincarnation of the personality or astral body. Plotinus' philosophy is saturated through and through with the immemorial *gnosis*, the ancient wisdom-religion. Porphyry himself gives another title to the essay, as the writer points out, *viz.*, "Against those who say that the maker of the world is evil and that the world is evil." This gives a much more restricted field of thought and the matter becomes one merely of his stand in regard to a special point on which certain Gnostic schools were taking up a particular position whereas Plotinus was holding to the wider field of cosmic evolution. It has to do in part with the so-called "Fall," a subject dealt with in great detail in *The Secret Doctrine* by H.P.B.

But Thomas Taylor, in introducing this essay of Plotinus in his *Select Works of Plotinus*, gives Porphyry's own explanation of the purport of the thesis, which was that Plotinus wrote it against the "many Christians and others, who, departing from the ancient philosophy, became heretics" and he names a number of these. He continues: "Hence Plotinus in his conferences adduced many arguments against them, and also wrote a book which we have inscribed 'Against the Gnostics.'" Mr. Katz himself says:—

It should be noted that it is the claim of the present article that Plotinus, rather than presenting a philosophical version of Gnosticism, presents a much restricted view when compared with Gnosticism.

As shown, Porphyry has explained why its scope is limited.

SPECIALIZATION

This is an era of specialization which leads to the one-track mind and inevitably to statistics, regimentation, etc. It leads to limited and often incorrect premises, on which a true idea or understanding cannot be built. It is leading us into a civilization which is divided against itself, and in which the "wholeness" of life is completely lost sight of. Man is more than his body; famine is more than lack of a certain *amount* of food; war is more than the deaths of many bodies or the ruin of much land. These things have to do also with that life which is within the food, the man, the land, that which is the vital part of all. Statistics of how much land is needed to grow a sufficient quantity of rice to feed so many people are useless as a means of avoiding famine. It is not sufficient to judge how much food can be forced from the earth by this means and that. It is equally necessary to know the quality of the food that is given, its effects on the human being, the value of the earth as a food producer. What is fertility? What is the relationship between the earth and those it supports? Does war end with the last shot? A shot maims a human being—is that the end? Does the toll of pain and suffering mean anything as regards the end aimed at in war? What does it mean in connection with famine or with any aspect of life?

The tendency today is also towards large units comprising many smaller units, towards the centralization of production, administration, etc. But here, too, the human element is left out of account and towns and villages with all that they stand for are lost in a maze of pin-points on a vast map, and people become pawns in the statistical game. Yet, fundamentally the unit-being, man, is invincible when he becomes aware of being an individual. He becomes the synthesizer of all the specialists' functions when he begins to live his own life, self-governed and self-ruled. Hence there is always a minority whose members act as thorns in the flesh of the specialists, the vested interests and the established authorities, sometimes joining forces with others in strikes, sometimes asserting

themselves as individualists, as reformers, or even as breakers of established laws.

This same process goes on in the inner life of the student who has begun to be individual in his approach to his life. He, too, suffers from specialization and in his specialized knowledge he finds his stumbling-block. It is true that, constituted as we are, we have certain tendencies towards learning and must have specialized knowledge along certain lines, yet we need to be constantly on the alert that we have a correct *background* for that specialization. Otherwise we shall never see another's point of view, we shall never seek to find the similarities among different points of view, but shall emphasize only the divergences. A good test as to whether our knowledge is specialized—isolated, as it were, from other knowledge—is to see how we view the ideas of another who does not see eye to eye with us. A religionist cannot bear criticism of his religion, a scientist a criticism of science, a student of Theosophy a criticism of Theosophy. When listening to someone whose approach to life is different from our own we often put a disproportionate emphasis on a chance remark, so that we miss whatever value there might be in the whole idea put forward. In specialization we cannot see the forest for the trees, as in a too sweeping generalization we miss seeing the trees and see only the forest.

What then shall we do? We need as background for our specialization, consideration for the good of all. With such a background all specialists can learn to co-operate. The student of Theosophy who has such a background will see his need of the religionist who has the same background, of the scientist whose motive force is the good of all. Even the religionist and the scientist with a different background are still part of the all and therefore the student must learn to help, not fight them. He will seek for points of agreement, not disagreement; for friendship, not antagonism.

This way is hard: it is easier to "fight" than to educate correctly; to scorn than to love deeply. But the Great Ones are "Lovers of Humanity." It is only the "small" that hate.

STRAY THOUGHTS ON THE PERSONALITY

How wonderful the personality is! Sometimes in trying to think and live as an "Ego" we forget this and think of the personality as a thing to fight, to conquer, as, in fact, a nuisance.

Perhaps this is inevitable at first, but if we pause for a moment to think of the relationship between Ego and personality as that between father and child, friend and loved one, we may get a different slant on the problem of our twofold life.

Take what we know of birth, death and Devachan. What a wonderful thing it is to start on a journey, and with what zest we set out! What a wonderful thing death is, for then we gather up the fruits and experiences gained on the journey, and what a glorious holiday and relaxation comes in Devachan in company with the father or loved friend! And all through birth, life and death there is the friend behind us, the one for whom we are undertaking this journey and to whom we give the benefits that accrue. All through life we can have the sense of benediction when we pause to think and at death we have the wealth of his love and sustenance. And throughout the period of rest we share with him our experiences while he shows us their full value.

Even a holiday palls at last and there comes the time when we are ready once more to go on the next journey, full of confidence, full of expectation, with the benefit of the knowledge gathered from past experiences. We have to clear up many things which we had left undone, or badly done. It does not matter that our clothes will be new and the country new; we still are the same individual.

What matters is how we live and act and think; what kind of impression we make on those we meet, and on great Nature who, after all, is our Mother. Are we "like sweet airs passing by," or like the prickly cactus? Do we radiate kindness and well-being, giving of ourselves to others as the flower does its scent? Have we achieved anything? Do we try to make ourselves beautiful all through, to make our effect on all

things beautiful, *i.e.*, to work in harmony with all things—even with a recalcitrant fountain-pen that will not run smoothly? Will we leave behind us "footprints on the sands of time" that will help another? Do we live in joy and work with joy? None of these things would be possible without a personality. What a wonderful thing it is!

Rarely do we pause to think that others do not know our Ego; they know only our personality—and we know only theirs.

A personality is necessary for us; it is necessary also for the Ego. The two are fellow travellers, however much greater the experience of the one is than that of the other; and this relationship we need to foster. Each has something to give to the other.

That is life: I and my Friend, my Friend and I!

ACCEPTANCE

"Resist not evil," said Christ—a phrase which has worried the would-be practitioner of spiritual ethics all through the centuries.

"Fight," "slay," "return again and again to the fight until victory is achieved."

The Voice of the Silence tells us to "accept the woes of birth." What else can we do when we are already born! Yet this phrase is used for "The Few."

How shall we gain the knowledge which will harmonize these apparently conflicting statements?

Perhaps the key is "acceptance" rightly understood.

Acceptance can be passive, which is acquiescence, or positive, which means to take into oneself, as part of oneself. When the Buddha and the Christ said that the sins of the world should fall on them they meant that by accepting evil fully into themselves it could be burnt in the fire of their natures and transmuted into good. We are not at this stage but we can begin with the idea of acceptance. The voluntary act of accepting everything that comes, evil as well as good, seems to alter the very nature of the effect it makes on

oneself. What we accept we can use; there is no feeling against the giver but gratitude for the gift. This is, of course, very hard to realize when pain and suffering and all kinds of evil seem to follow us all the time, but the effort has to be made.

Just as the acme of pain becomes bliss, as excessive love verges on hatred, and intense hatred is so akin to love, and as devachan merges into kama-loka, so to accept life in its fullness, by a voluntary effort of the will, means a foundational change in our inner attitude. The fullness of acceptance cannot be reached except through the fullness of suffering, *i.e.*, suffering *worked* through and *thought* through to its very end so that "we know the worst" as Mr. Crosbie has said, and *know* that we are greater than it. Would the suicide, at the moment before his act, but work through in his thought the whole story of his terror and the after effects of the act he is contemplating, he would desist and find joy surging up in his heart, for he would have conquered, *i.e.*, accepted the conditions of his life.

To learn to break down our hard walls of resistance and take in and digest the lesson of whatever comes to us—for it is but payment due for past errors—that is our task. Accept, admit, transmute—these three things make us truly free in life.

GENIUS

The magazine *Life* for March 22nd contains a brief account of "A Little, Lonely Genius," an eight-year-old boy with an intelligence quotient of 185. (One with an intelligence quotient of 140 is accounted a "potential genius.") Already a 10th-grader, Brian Van Dale of Chartley, Massachusetts, was three years old before he tried to talk, but he very soon took to reading newspapers aloud and, at the age of four, performed the amazing feat of reading a high school biology text-book.

His teacher expects Brian, who can think of two

subjects at once and get both and handle a class, to be ready for college by the time he is 10... With his capacity for concentration Brian has worn out two dictionaries at home and has learned the Greek and Hebrew alphabets. Having completed his high school physics course, he already is working on first year college biology.

This report, like many others about child prodigies, gives no explanation of such a phenomenon. The answer, of course, lies in the doctrine of reincarnation. In a foot-note in *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 69), Mme. Blavatsky says that "genius is without exception a talent or aptitude brought from another birth." But in the majority of such cases as that reported in *Life* the advantageous start given by striking precocity, while undoubtedly bearing witness to acquirements in a previous life, seems not to be followed by commensurate achievement. One wonders what has become of the child prodigies of some years ago. This is not to deny the possibility, of which Indian tradition gives examples, of high souls displaying rare wisdom and sagacity from childhood until death. There is, however, a great difference between "ordinary" child prodigies and what Theosophy would call real genius. Great intellectual development is not necessarily a sign of true genius, and that is the reason why it so often fades out. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between what H.P.B. described as "the true and the artificial genius, one born from the light of the immortal Ego, the other from the evanescent will-o'-the-wisp of the terrestrial or purely human intellect and the animal soul." ("Genius": *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13*, p. 6) Of those who hold that genius is simply a matter of cultivation of the intellect, H.P.B. wrote:—

It is useless to argue with such, or tell them that original, and great genius puts out the most dazzling rays of human intellectuality, as the sun quenches the flame-light of a fire in an open field; that it is never eccentric; though always *sui generis*; and that no man endowed with true genius can ever give way to his physical animal passions. In the view of an humble Occultist, only such a grand altruistic character as that of Buddha or Jesus, and of their few close imitators, can be regarded, in our historical cycle, as fully developed GENIUS. (*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Bhikshu Sangharakshita lectured on July 15th at the Indian Institute of Culture, Basavangudi, Bangalore, on *The Voice of the Silence*, which he said contained spiritual truth and appealed to the heart. Like so many other great scriptures, it tried to create in us Soul-wisdom, which it did well to differentiate from Head-learning. It resorted to poetry and paradox to express spiritual experience, which was virtually inexpressible.

Though set up as prose, it was full of most beautiful poetry. Madame Blavatsky seemed to have been concerned not only to reproduce the spiritual meaning in her translation but also to make use of the power of sound by reproducing in English poetic rhythms mantraic vibrations, which might awaken spiritual consciousness. It also abounded in metaphors and similes, which were of the essence of poetry. The comparisons which poets made were not arbitrary, Bhikshu Sangharakshita said, but were based on a definite system of correspondences which the poets intuitively perceived.

The book abounded in paradoxes, e.g., "the voidness of the seeming full, the fulness of the seeming void," "the endless end" and "Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself," the Path being within us, a succession of our thoughts, words and deeds. "Silence" in the paradoxical title was used in its highest and deepest sense, which in Buddhism was *Sunyata*, the Voidness, full to overflowing with Compassion, the dynamic aspect of Wisdom.

The speaker mentioned that Stanzas 2 to 4 on p. 14 expressed the essence of the Bodhisattva ideal in verses that satisfied fully the requirements of English prosody. Tibetan monks hearing some of the verses of *The Voice of the Silence* translated had at once recognized it as giving Mahayana teachings.

Isis, Official Quarterly Journal of the History of Science Society, U.S.A., published in May "Theophrastus and the Firewalk" by Mr. Victor Coutant. Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor, referred to several practices in handling fire (*De Ignis*, Sections 57-58), and investigation had convinced Mr. Coutant that he was "dealing with realities, and that soberly and critically." These practices included walking through fire, and Mr. Coutant reviews the two successful fire-walks by Kuda Bux of Kashmir at Carshalton, England, in September 1935. (See "Treading Fire" in our March 1936 issue, Vol. VI, p. 69)

Scientific opinion had been sharply divided on those demonstrations. The "psychic-minded" mentioned insensitivity to fire owing to suggestion, hypnosis or religious ecstasy; the materialists long had no tenable hypothesis, no chemicals having been found used to harden the fire-walker's feet. Two British witnesses trying to duplicate the performance had been severely burned, but Reginald Adcock had duplicated it successfully a few years later and was himself convinced that it was scientifically explicable, though his explanation does not carry conviction. Kuda Bux had ascribed his immunity to faith, but dared not walk a third time, saying he had lost his faith.

"The weird and formidable potency existing in the human will and imagination, whether exercised consciously or otherwise" (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 384) is suggestive in this connection, for insensitivity to fire is a phenomenon associated with mediumship in certain cases. Elsewhere in *Isis Unveiled*, invulnerability is mentioned as achievable by compressing the astral fluid about a person, "so as to form an elastic shell, absolutely non-penetrable by any physical object," and such invulnerability, it is said, can be imparted to persons by spirits as well as by adepts, or it can be done by an act of self-will. (I. 378-9)

The sumptuously illustrated first volume of *Studies in Proto-Indo-Mediterranean Culture* by the Rev. H. Heras, S.J. (Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay. Rs. 175/-), was orally reviewed at the Indian Institute of Culture, Basavangudi, Bangalore, on June 12th, by a fellow Indologist, Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri of the University of Mysore. Prof. Nilakanta Sastri was critical of Father Heras's methods of interpreting the Indus Valley scripts and doubtful of his conclusions, including the Indus Valley remains being of Dravidian origin and there having been early Indian migrations to Egypt via Mesopotamia.

Father Heras in his Chapter III, nevertheless, assembles impressive anthropological and archaeological evidence for a racial and cultural relationship between members of the "Proto-Dravidian Hamitic race" in ancient India and in Egypt. This is of special interest in connection with Madame H. P. Blavatsky's prediction in 1877 that sooner or later "authorities" would have to accept Egypt's owing her civilization, her civil institutions and her arts to India. (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 431) She was, moreover, prepared to maintain that it was to *pre-Vedic* India that Egypt owed these, especially the art of building. (*Ibid.*, II. 435)

It matters little whether or not the race preceding the Vedic Aryans in India are today called Dravidians. "The original and primitive masters of India" were, according to her, "the mighty race of builders, whether we call them Eastern Æthiopians, or dark-skinned Aryans (the word meaning simply 'noble warrior,' a 'brave')." And she added: "They ruled supreme at one time over the whole of ancient India" and

it was a colony of the dark-skinned Aryans, or those whom Homer and Herodotus term the eastern Æthiopians, *i.e.*, the inhabitants of Southern India, who brought to it [Egypt] their ready-made civilization in the ante-chronological ages. (*Ibid.*, II. 435)

In the July *New Lanka* Dr. G. P. Malalasekhara, Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon and a leading Buddhist scholar, writes on Dr. Rajendra Prasad's hope, expressed in his Message of Greetings to the Sixth Buddhist Council, which on Buddha Jayanti opened its long session just outside Rangoon, that "the Buddhist University will soon become a reality."

The Burmese Government, he says, have this project well under way. The plan, as mentioned in our July issue (p. 223) is to utilize for the Buddhist University the buildings erected for the Sixth Council meetings. Interestingly, the elevated extensive grounds at Yegu, four miles from Rangoon, are said to have been pointed out to the Prime Minister, U Nu, in a dream. It was in accordance with his dream, according to Dr. Edward Conze, writing in *The Manchester Guardian* a few months ago, that the great assembly hall, seating thousands, where the Recital of Buddhist Texts is being held, was modelled on the famous Rajagriha Cave. This was called by H.P.B. the Saptaparna cave, where Lord Buddha, according to *The Theosophical Glossary* ("Saptaparna"), used to meditate and teach his Arhats and where, after his death, the first Synod was held. (See also *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. xx). That hall, called by Dr. Conze the "World Peace Cave," will, according to Dr. Malalasekhara, be the Buddhist University's Convocation Hall.

Especially welcome to Theosophical students will be Dr. Malalasekhara's hope that Mahayana as well as Theravada texts will be studied in the Buddhist University, and that all Buddhist texts, irrespective of country of origin, may be made available in print. This is a truly liberal spirit, in harmony with the best Buddhist tradition and hopeful for that blending of the philosophy of the Southern Church with the metaphysics of the Northern Schools which H.P.B. said was necessary for the appreciation of real Buddhism in the present age.

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

The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Correspondence should be addressed to: The U.L.T., 51 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay.

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