

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. XXXIX. No. 11

17th September 1969

GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHY

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vol. XVIII, pp. 182-85, for October 1948.—EDS.]

It will be time enough to pronounce a verdict upon my work after my eyes are closed and this tabernacle is consigned to the flames.—GANDHIJI

III.—THE BHAGAVAD-GITA: BIBLE OF THE SATYAGRAHI

The *Gita* has become for us a spiritual reference book. I am aware that we ever fail to act in perfect accord with the teaching. The failure is not due to want of effort, but is in spite of it. Even through the failures we seem to see rays of hope.—GANDHIJI

It answers all my difficulties and has been my *Kamadhenu*, my guide, my open sesame in hundreds of moments of doubt and difficulty. I cannot recall a single occasion when it has failed me.—GANDHIJI

Spiritual knowledge includes every action. Inquirers ought to read the *Bhagavad-Gita*. It will give them food for centuries if they read with spiritual eyes at all. Underneath its shell is the living spirit that will light us all. I read it ten times before I saw things that I did not see at first. In the night the ideas contained in it are digested and returned partly next day to the mind. It is the study of adepts.—W. Q. JUDGE

I would therefore advise you to study and meditate over the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is a book that has done me more good than all others in the whole range of books, and is the one that can be studied all the time.—W. Q. JUDGE

GANDHIJI was *the Satyagrahi*. He was the author of the philosophy of *Satyagraha*, which he did not think out first but, following his own instincts, tested as principles in daily living — in the small, plain duties of life as in national affairs, including the fight for India's political emancipation. Application during experiment with his instincts and then drawing conclusions — this was his chief *dharma*, this was his technique. Experiment through and in living experience. Often the very task of promulgating ideas which he felt to be true was done during the process of experimental application. He had more than one source of inspiration, but the greatest and most compelling was the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

The circumstances which brought him in contact with the *Gita* are mentioned in the first instalment of this series. Edwin Arnold's *Song Celestial* was the first rendering. Afterwards he went to the Gujarati translations and then to the original Sanskrit. The story of the study of the *Gita* leading to his Gujarati translation and then the translation into English is narrated by him in *Young India* of 6th August 1931.

Like every devotee of the *Gita* he found the Song of the Master unfold that which was enshrined in him. His *samskaras* or *skandhas* revealed to him how Truth and Non-Violence, *Satya* and *Ahimsa*, were the Soul of the *Gita*. The *Gita* is large-hearted and myriad-minded; it tells each sincere and earnest student what its message for him is. The *Gita* though sung in Sanskrit and born in India is impersonal: it speaks to each differently — to each it unveils the next step and not only the distant goal. In India different exponents and commentators have seen in it their own favourite Path. Some have called it the book of devotion; others have extolled its metaphysics; and others have seen it exhort the religion of works and the good life. The Devil can quote scriptures for his purpose and so it has been with the *Gita*; its imagery and its symbolism have been exploited and the strain of martial ardour for the Greatest of all Wars, which leads to Peace and Enlightenment, has been applied to bloodshed by sepoys and soldiers using guns and bombs, ever retarding human progress and ending ultimately in the defeat of the victors. This message of the *Mahabharata* seen by Gandhiji, and others before him, has been conveniently overlooked by the revolutionary whose aim is to change the outer order of society without a change in his own Manas and Buddhi. Gandhiji perceived the message of the great epic. He writes:

The poet Vyasa has demonstrated the futility of war by means of that epic of wonderful beauty. What, he asks, if the Kauravas were vanquished? And what if the Pandavas won? How many

were left of the victors and what was their lot? What an end Mother Kunti came to? And where are the Yadavas today? Where the description of the fight and justification of violence are not the subject-matter of the epic, it is quite wrong to emphasize those aspects. And if it is difficult to reconcile certain verses with the teaching of Non-Violence, it is far more difficult to set the whole of the *Gita* in the framework of violence.

Further, Gandhiji explains:

The *Mahabharata* has a better message even than the demonstration of war as a delusion and a folly. It is the spiritual history of man considered as an immortal being. The *Mahabharata* depicts for all time the eternal struggle that goes on daily between the forces of good and evil in the human breast and in which, though good is ever victorious, evil does put up a brave show and baffles even the keenest conscience. It shows also the only way to right action.

As we saw last month, Gandhiji called himself a Hindu and said that his religion was Hinduism, and yet he was a special kind of a Hindu and described his creed from a broad universal standpoint. Similarly in reference to the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The grand universality and the unsectarianism of the book recognized by Gandhiji were coloured by the view that it was a Hindu text. Thus, in speaking to the students of Mannargudi in 1927 he did not emphasize the truth of the *Gita's* being a universal book, but for obvious reasons stressed the Hindu aspect:

And so whilst I would welcome your learning the *Gospels* and your learning the *Koran*, I would certainly insist on all of you, Hindu boys, if I had the power of insistence, learning the *Gita*. It is because I see the same God in the *Bhagavad-Gita* as I see in the *Bible* and the *Koran* that I say to Hindu boys that they will derive greater inspiration from the *Bhagavad-Gita* because they will be tuned to the *Gita* more than to any other book.

We must not, however, overlook what he said to the students of the Kashi Vishva-Vidyalyaya:

The *Gita* is the Universal Mother. She turns away nobody. Her door is wide open to anyone who knocks if.

Though Gandhiji has also warned enthusiasts:

The *Gita* will never be universal by compulsion from without. It will be so if its admirers will not seek to force it down the

throats of others and if they will illustrate its teachings in their own lives.

Perhaps in Gandhiji's opinion the time had not yet come to give the *Gita* its real place as a book of Universal Religion, of Eclecticism, of Theosophy which is the Source-Synthesis of religion, philosophy and science. In his view Gandhiji approximates H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge. Under the influence and guidance of the former, his guru and colleague, W. Q. Judge rendered the *Gita* into English so far back as 1890 and, further, wrote most valuable comments on the *Gita* chapters in his magazine *The Path* from 1887 onwards. It was the same influence of H. P. B. which energized "the two brothers" who were her students and who drew Gandhiji's attention to the *Bhagavad-Gita*. It might be mentioned in passing that Gandhiji did see H. P. Blavatsky in 1889-90. She regarded the *Gita* as a book of great antiquity, its subject-matter being "the highest spiritual philosophy. The work is pre-eminently occult or esoteric." In 1877 she wrote:

The work is purely metaphysical and ethical, and in a certain sense it is *anti-Vedic*; so far, at least, that it is in opposition to many of the later Brahmanical interpretations of the *Vedas*. How comes it, then, that instead of destroying the work, or, at least, of sentencing it as uncanonical — an expedient to which the Christian Church would never have failed to resort — the Brahmans show it the greatest reverence? Perfectly *unitarian* in its aim, it clashes with the popular idol-worship. Still, the only precaution taken by the Brahmans to keep its tenets from becoming too well known is to preserve it more secretly than any other religious book from every caste except the sacerdotal; and, to impose upon that even, in many cases, certain restrictions. The grandest mysteries of the Brahmanical religion are embraced within this magnificent poem; and even the Buddhists recognize it, explaining certain dogmatic difficulties in their own way. "Be unselfish, subdue your senses and passions, which obscure reason and lead to deceit," says Krishna to his disciple Arjuna, thus enunciating a purely Buddhist principle. "Low men follow examples, great men give them. . . . The soul ought to free itself from the bonds of action, and act absolutely according to its divine origin. *There is but one God*, and all other *devatas* are inferior, and mere forms (powers) of Brahma or of myself. *Worship by deeds predominates over that of contemplation.*" (See the *Gita*, translated by Charles Wilkins, in 1785; and the *Bhagavata-Purana*, containing the history of Krishna, translated into French by

Eugène Burnouf, 1840.) This doctrine coincides perfectly with that of Jesus himself. Faith alone, unaccompanied by "works," is reduced to naught in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 562-3)

H.P.B. goes so far as to hint in the same work:

The theory of Anquetil du Perron that the *Bhagavad-Gita* is an independent work, as it is absent from several manuscripts of the *Mahabharata*, may be as much a plea for a still greater antiquity as the reverse.

Further, she recommends that mystical Christians should study their own Gnostic and other texts in the light of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. (See *The Secret Doctrine*, II. 569.)

The *Bhagavad-Gita* is not history as known by our learned men. It is an allegory of certain historical events. Its correct understanding depends upon the comprehension that its archetypal key unlocks the indissoluble links subsisting between the Universe and Man, Macrocosm and Microcosm. Each link can be apprehended, dimly to begin with, by different turns of this key. Gandhiji used one of these methods to understand the *Gita*. Stating that "one has to be guided, not by the intellect, but by the heart," and that one "who would interpret the scriptures must have the spiritual discipline," Gandhiji says:

I do not believe that the *Gita* teaches violence for doing good. It is pre-eminently a description of the duel that goes on in our own hearts. The divine author has used a historical incident for inculcating the lesson of doing one's duty even at the peril of one's life. It inculcates performance of duty irrespective of the consequences, for, we mortals, limited by our physical frames, are incapable of controlling actions save our own. The *Gita* distinguishes between the powers of light and darkness and demonstrates their incompatibility.

Self-realization and its means is the theme of the *Gita*, the fight between two armies being but the occasion to expound the theme.

And who are Dhritarashtra and Yudhishtira and Arjuna? Who is Krishna? Were they all historical characters? And does the *Gita* describe them as such? Is it true that Arjuna suddenly stops in the midst of the fight and puts the question to Krishna, and Krishna repeats the whole of the *Gita* before him?

I regard Duryodhana and his party as the baser impulses in man, and Arjuna and his party as the higher impulses. The field of battle is our own body. An eternal battle is going on between

the two camps and the poet seer has vividly described it. Krishna is the Dweller within, ever whispering in a pure heart. Like the watch the heart needs the winding of purity, or the Dweller ceases to speak. Not that actual physical battle is out of the question.

These words were written in the thirties of this century. How very similar the Theosophical exposition of W. Q. Judge about the symbol of the Song Celestial and the cipher in which its teachings and message are cast! W. Q. Judge wrote:

Many European translators and commentators, being ignorant of the psychological system of the Hindus — which really underlies every word of this poem — have regarded this plain and the battle as just those two things and no more; some have gone so far as to give the commercial products of the country at the supposed period, so that readers might be able, forsooth, in that way to know the motives that prompted the two princes to enter into a bloody internecine conflict. No doubt such a conflict did take place, for man is continually imitating the higher spiritual planes; and a great sage could easily adopt a human event in order to erect a noble philosophical system upon such an allegorical foundation. In one aspect history gives us merely the small or great occurrences of man's progress; but in another, any one great historical epoch will give us a picture of the evolution in man, in the mass, of any corresponding faculty of the Individual Soul. So we see, here and there, Western minds wondering why such a highly tuned metaphysical discussion should be "disfigured by a warfare of savages." Such is the materializing influence of Western culture that it is hardly able to admit any higher meaning in a portion of the poem which confessedly it has not yet come to fully understand. (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 2-3)

We must bear in mind the existence among the Aryans of a psychological system that gives substance and impulse to utterances declared by many Orientalists to be folly unworthy of attention from a man of the nineteenth-century civilization. Nor need we be repulsed from our task because of a small acquaintance with that Aryan psychology. The moment we are aware of its existence in the poem, our inner self is ready to help the outer man to grasp after it, and in the noble pursuit of these great philosophical and moral truths, which is only our eternal endeavour to realize them as a part of our being, we can patiently wait for a perfect knowledge of the anatomy and functions of the inner man. (*Ibid.*, p. 8)

Looking at it from the Theosophical point of view, the King Dhritarashtra is the human body which is acquired by the immortal Monad in order to go through the evolutionary journey; the mortal envelope is brought into existence by means of Tanha, or thirst for life. He is blind because the body without the faculties within is merely senseless matter, and thus is "incapacitated for governing," and some other person is represented in the *Mahabharata* as being the governor of the state, the nominal king being the body — Dhritarashtra. As the Theosophical scheme holds that there is a double line of evolution within us, we find that the Kurus spoken of in the poem represent the more material side of those two lines, and the Pandava princes, of whom Arjuna is one, stand for the spiritual side of the stream — that is, Arjuna represents the immortal Spark. (*The Bhagavad-Gita*, "Antecedent Words," p. xiii)

The alleged celestial origin for the two branches of the family, the Kurus and Pandavas, is in perfect consonance with this, for the body, or Dhritarashtra, being solely material and the lower plane in which the development takes place, the Kurus and Pandavas are our inheritance from the celestial beings often referred to in Mme. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, the one tending towards materiality, the other being spiritual. The Kurus, then, the lower portion of our nature earliest developed, obtain the power on this plane for the time being, and one of them, Duryodhana, "prevails," so that the Pandavas, or the more spiritual parts of our nature, are banished temporarily from the country, that is, from governing Man. "The long wanderings and varied hardships" of the Pandavas are wanderings caused by the necessities of evolution before these better parts are able to make a stand for the purpose of gaining the control in Man's evolutionary struggle. This also has reference to the cyclic rise and fall of nations and the race.

The hostile armies, then, who meet on the plain of the Kurus are these two collections of the human faculties and powers, those on one side tending to drag us down, those on the other aspiring towards spiritual illumination. The battle refers not only to the great warfare that mankind as a whole carries on, but also to the struggle which is inevitable as soon as any one unit in the human family resolves to allow his higher nature to govern him in his life. Hence, we see that Arjuna, called Nara, represents not only Man as a race, but also any individual who resolves upon the task of developing his better nature. What is described as happening in the poem to him will come to every

such individual. Opposition from friends and from all the habits he has acquired, and also that which naturally arises from hereditary tendencies, will confront him, and then it will depend upon how he listens to Krishna, who is the Logos shining within and speaking within, whether he will succeed or fail. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. xiv-xv)

The above was penned by W. Q. Judge in the last decade of the 19th century. The great American Theosophist was teaching the *Gita* to his many pupils, some of whom were Indians, and he unravelled its symbol and allegory a quarter of a century previous to Gandhiji.

Our next article will be on "The Kernel of Gandhiji's Philosophy."

My mission is not merely brotherhood of Indian humanity. My mission is not merely freedom of India, though today it undoubtedly engrosses practically the whole of my life and the whole of my time. But through realization of freedom of India I hope to realize and carry on the mission of the brotherhood of man. My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all embracing and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress or the exploitation of other nationalities. The conception of my patriotism is nothing if it is not always, in every case without exception, consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large. Not only that, but my religion and my patriotism derived from my religion embrace all life. I want to realize brotherhood or identity not merely with the beings called human, but I want to realize identity with all life, even with such things as crawl upon earth. I want, if I don't give a shock, to realize identity with even the crawling things upon earth, because we claim descent from the same God, and that being so, all life in whatever form it appears must be essentially one. . . .

I am a humble servant of India and in trying to serve India, I serve humanity at large. . . . After nearly fifty years of public life, I am able to say today that my faith in the doctrine that the service of one's nation is not inconsistent with the service of the world has grown. It is a good doctrine. Its acceptance alone will ease the situation in the world and stop the mutual jealousies between nations inhabiting this globe of ours.

—M. K. GANDHI

RELIGION AND REFORM FROM A THEOSOPHICAL VIEWPOINT

[This article by W. Q. Judge was first published in the *Twentieth Century* (New York) for March 12, 1891, and was reprinted in *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT* for April 1952.—EDS.]

TWO GREAT SHADOWY SHAPES remain fixed in the attention of the mind of the day, threatening to become in the 20th century more formidable and engrossing than ever. They are religion and reform, and in their sweep they include every question of pressing human need; for the first arises through the introspective experience of the race out of its aspirations toward the unknown and the ever present desire to solve the questions whence and why, while the second has its birth in the conditions surrounding the bodies of the questioners of fate who struggle helplessly in the ocean of material existence.

Many men wielding small or weighty pens have wrestled with these questions, attacking them in ways as various as the minds of those who have taken them up for consideration, but it still remains for the theosophist to bring forward his views and obtain a hearing. This he should always do as a matter of duty, and not from the pride of fame or the self-assertion which would see itself proclaimed before men. For he knows that, even if he should not speak or could not get a hearing, the march of that evolution in which he thoroughly believes will force these views upon humanity, even if that has to be accomplished by suffering endured by every human unit.

The Theosophist can see no possibility of reform in existing abuses, in politics or social relations, unless the plan of reform is one which grows out of a true religion, and he does not think that any of the prevailing religions of the Occident are true or adequate. They do not go to the root of the evil which causes the pain and sorrow that call for reform or alleviation. And in his opinion Theosophy — the essence or concentrated virtue of every religion — alone has power to offer and effect the cure.

None of the present attempts at reform will meet success so long as they are devoid of the true doctrine as to man, his nature and destiny, and respecting the universe, its origin and future course. Every one of these essays leaves man where it finds him, neglecting the lessons to be drawn from the cycles in their never-ceasing revolution. While efforts are made to meliorate his mere physical condition, the real mover,

the man within, is left without a guide, and is therefore certain to produce from no matter how good a system the same evils which are designed to be destroyed. At every change he once more proceeds to vitiate the effect of any new regimen by the very defects in human nature that cannot be reached by legislation or by dogmatic creeds and impossible hells, because they are beyond the reach of everything except the power of his own thought. Nationalism, Socialism, Liberalism, Conservatism, Communism, and Anarchism are each and all ineffective in the end. The beautiful dream depicted by Nationalism cannot be made a physical fact, since it has no binding inward sanction; Communism could not stand, because in time the Communist would react back into the holder of individual rights and protector of property which his human nature would demand ought not to be dissipated among others less worthy. And the continuance of the present system, in which the amasser of wealth is allowed to retain and dispose of what he has acquired, will, in the end, result in the very riot and bloodshed which legislation is meant to prevent and suppress.

Indeed, the great popular right of universal suffrage, instead of bringing about the true reign of liberty and law, will be the very engine through which the crash will come, unless with it the Theosophic doctrines are inculcated. We have seen the suffrage gradually extended so as to be universal in the United States, but the people are used by the demagogues and the suffrage is put to waste. Meanwhile, the struggle between capital and labour grows more intense, and in time will rage with such fury that the poor and unlearned, feeling the gad of poverty strike deeper, will cast their votes for measures respecting property in land or chattels so revolutionary that capital will combine to right the supposed invasion by sword and bullet. This is the end toward which it is all tending, and none of the reforms so sincerely put forward will avert it for one hour after the causes have been sufficiently fixed and crystallized. This final formation of the efficient causes is not yet complete, but is rapidly approaching the point where no cure will be possible.

The cold acquirements of science give us, it is true, magnificent physical results, but fail like creeds and reforms by legislative acts in the end. Using her own methods and instruments, she fails to find the soul and denies its existence; while the churches assert a soul but cannot explain it, and at the same time shock human reason by postulating the incineration by material fire of that which they admit is immortal. As a means of escape from this dilemma nothing is offered

save a vicarious atonement and a retreat behind a blind acceptance of incongruities and injustice in a God who is supposed by all to be infinitely merciful and just.

Thus, on the one hand, science has no terrors and no reformatory force for the wicked and the selfish; on the other, the creeds, losing their hold in consequence of the inroads of knowledge, grow less and less useful and respected every year. The people seem to be approaching an era of wild unbelief. Just such a state of thought prevailed before the French Revolution of 1793.

Theosophy here suggests the reconciliation of science and religion by showing that there is a common foundation for all religions and that the soul exists with all the psychic forces proceeding therefrom. As to the universe, Theosophy teaches a never-ending evolution and involution. Evolution begins when the Great Breath — Herbert Spencer's "Unknowable" which manifests as universal energy — goes forth; and involution, or the disappearance of the universe, obtains when the same breath returns to itself. This coming forth lasts millions upon millions of years, and involution prevails for an equal length of time. As soon as the breath goes forth, universal mind together with universal basic matter appears. In the ancient system this mind is called *Mahat*, and matter *Prakriti*. *Mahat* has the plan of evolution which it impresses upon *Prakriti*, causing it to ceaselessly proceed with the evolution of forms and the perfecting of the units composing the cosmos. The crown of this perfection is man, and he contains in himself the whole plan of the universe copied in miniature but universally potential.

This brings us to ourselves, surrounded as we are by an environment that appears to us to cause pain and sorrow, no matter where we turn. But as the immutable laws of cause and effect brought about our own evolution, the same laws become our saviours from the miseries of existence. The two great laws postulated by Theosophy for the world's reform are those of Karma and Reincarnation. Karma is the law of action which decrees that man must suffer and enjoy solely through his own thoughts and acts. His thoughts, being the smaller copy of the universal mind, lie at the root of every act and constitute the force that brings about the particular body he may inhabit. So Reincarnation in an earthly body is as necessary for him as the ceaseless reincarnation of the universal mind in evolution after evolution is needful for it. And as no man is a unit separate from the others in the Cosmos, he must think and act in such a way that no discord is produced by him

in the great universal stream of evolution. It is the disturbance of this harmony which alone brings on the miseries of life, whether that be of a single man or of the whole nation. As he has acted in his last life or lives, so will he be acted upon in succeeding ones. This is why the rich are often unworthy, and the worthy so frequently poor and afflicted. All appeals to force are useless, as they only create new causes sure to react upon us in future lives as well as in the present. But if all men believed in this just and comprehensive law of Karma, knowing well that whatever they do will be punished or rewarded in this or other new lives, the evils of existence would begin to disappear. The rich would know that they are only trustees for the wealth they have and are bound to use it for the good of their fellows, and the poor, satisfied that their lot is the just desert for prior acts and aided by the more fortunate, would work out old bad Karma and sow the seeds of only that which is good and harmonious.

National misery, such as that of Whitechapel in London (to be imitated ere long in New York), is the result of national Karma, which in its turn is composed of the aggregation of not only the Karma of the individuals concerned but also that belonging to the rest of the nation. Ordinary reforms, whether by law or otherwise, will not compass the end in view. This is demonstrated by experience. But given that the ruling and richer classes believe in Karma and Reincarnation, a universal widespread effort would at once be made by those favourites of fortune toward not only present alleviation of miserable conditions, but also in the line of educating the vulgar who now consider themselves oppressed as well by their superiors as by fate. The opposite is now the case, for we cannot call individual sporadic or sectarian efforts of beneficence a national or universal attempt. Just now we have the General of the Salvation Army proposing a huge scheme of colonization which is denounced by a master of science, Professor Huxley, as utopian, inefficient, and full of menace for the future. And he, in the course of his comment, candidly admits the great danger to be feared from the criminal and dissatisfied classes. But if the poorer and less discriminating see the richer and the learned offering physical assistance and intelligent explanations of the apparent injustice of life — which can be found only in Theosophy — there would soon arise a possibility of making effective the fine laws and regulations which many are ready to add to those already proposed. Without such Theosophic philosophy and religion, the constantly increasing concessions made to the clamour of the uneducated democracy's demands will only end in inflating the

actual majority with an undue sense of their real power, and thus precipitate the convulsion which might be averted by the other course.

This is a general statement of the only panacea, for if once believed in — even from a selfish motive — it will compel, by a force that works from within all men, the endeavour to escape from future unhappiness which is inevitable if they violate the laws inhering in the universal mind.

MANKIND has stemmed from one root, though it is split into different communities. It is now striving for the recovery of its basic unity and the reconciliation of different cultures. . . .

We are living in a period of disintegration of faith and growing disillusionment of traditional values which have come down to us. All eras of transition are periods of disintegration and renewal. People nurtured in the spirit of science and ethical humanism are unwilling to accept anything on authority.

The only attitude we can adopt in the present context is an attitude not of exclusiveness but of comprehension, not of intolerance but of understanding, not of hatred and fanaticism but of appreciation and assimilation of whatever is valuable.

Religion, science and humanism were sisters in ancient India, they were allies in Greece. They must combine today if we are to attract all those who are equally indifferent to organized religion or atheism. We need a spiritual home where we can live without surrendering the rights of reason and the needs of humanity. Reverence for truth is a moral value.

We do not want a new religion but we need a new and enlarged understanding of the old religions. The future of religion is bound up, not with the acceptance of one religion by all, or a state of conflict and anarchy among religions, or vague incongruous eclecticism, but with the acceptance of a fundamental unity with free differentiation.

Unity is not uniformity.

—S. RADHAKRISHNAN

THE GREAT DEDICATION

The sceptical laugh at faith and pride themselves on its absence from their own minds. The truth is that faith is a great engine, an enormous power, which in fact can accomplish all things.

—*Light on the Path*

WIDE INDEED is the gulf that separates the dedicated man from the man of ambition. The patriot and the educationist, the reformer and the mystic may each be dedicated to the principles that govern his walk in life. Each, in a greater or lesser measure, is an altruist so engrossed in his own work that he lets the world and its chaos pass him by without being drawn to it by either sympathy or antipathy. Thus may the mathematician and the poet be dedicated in their own selected spheres. They cling to the subject of their dedication to the exclusion of all else. The theme of their life runs through their days and years, is constantly purposeful and is devoid of the lure for gain. To them, all else is incidental, all else serves merely as the background drapery to their dramatic efforts.

Not so for the man of ambition. He works for a reward in the sense that it is effects that motivate his actions. The miser, the politician and the professional may by a determined and sustained effort reach the height of success. History has miscalled them "great" and adulation has been showered on them by the ordinary run of men. Their efforts and their motives were bereft of altruism, and to the thinker and the student they must remain mere butterflies pressed between the pages of history. Their efforts could bear no lasting good and are best forgotten. In the final analysis, each will have been found to have worked for himself and the selfishness of his motives becomes traceable within his endeavours. Though these may be acclaimed national heroes and even saviours, they were powerless to inject into their actions that which alone could transmute them into engines of beneficence. Selfishness of motive suffused their being and left them destitute of peace or contentment — disgruntled beings in the midst of worldly pomp and the affluence of wealth.

The line which separates dedication from ambition is thin yet well defined, though in the initial stages it may be that the man may delude himself and pass off his ambition as a specialized form of devotion. The patriot, the educationist and the reformer are not necessarily devoted, though in confrontation with the miser and the politician their honesty

of purpose may seem all too apparent. The patriot who in his heart sought only power and popularity; the educationist who used his noble profession to lead the minds of his charges to ignoble ends; the reformer who, suffering mass unpopularity, expected to rise through that torture to dizzy heights of fame — have each to be accounted ambitious. The poison drop of selfishness spreads through their being and makes it blank and bleak and incapable of reflecting truth or goodness or beauty.

For the mystic and the disciple, ambition becomes a curse — a poison weed that chokes out growth; a scourge which will render him powerless to unite his mind to his soul. When the man for the first time turns his face godwards, he does not by that mere act accomplish a metamorphosis — a change so radical as to cut his moorings in the past. His habits of thought still crowd around him. His old vices and weaknesses assume a more alluring form and tempt him to return to his old and familiar grounds of sensuous enjoyments. They may even assume the semblance of virtue and righteousness and under a new garb and pleasing appearance seek to wean him away from his unfamiliar ways. Greed, which is the urge to add continually to one's exclusive hoard, may now transform itself into the pleasing yet passionate desire to amass knowledge for oneself alone, to add to one's private treasury the gems of position, wealth (physical and spiritual) and power, and deny these to rightful aspirants or even to those who groan for the lack of these.

So with the other weaknesses. They transform themselves into forms which hide the ugliness within. But their bite is as lethal or even more so now than previously. *Kama* (Desire); *Krodha* (Anger), *Lobha* (Greed) are the three gates of Hell. Their attraction for the man does not lessen when for the first time he vows to come out of the herd of mortals. It increases. The craving that forgets the rights, the interests and the precedence of others; the anger that is twin brother to ambition and that moves relentlessly towards its goal over the shattered lives of countless victims; the greed that forces the man to a lonely self-adoration till death puts an end to the sordidness of purpose — each of these if present makes the man unfit for progress. Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

Beware lest thou should'st set a foot still soiled upon the ladder's lowest rung. Woe unto him who dares pollute one rung with miry feet. The foul and viscous mud will dry, become tenacious, then glue his feet unto the spot.

It is this hardening of the mud, this blatant assuming to oneself of the ambition to rise superior to one's fellows which has to be avoided at all cost, for in the stifling atmosphere created by selfishness, no devotion, no dedication can survive. In greater or lesser measure, each disciple comes within the reach and grip of either lust, greed or anger. The ensuing struggle will show the measure of his strength. Can he by the help of a dawning perception learn to pass safely through the unclean places to which he is led by Karma without inviting their taint and without leaving a part of his heart behind? It is this initial struggle, this success in bringing the heart back and placing it upon the spirit, that makes of a man a disciple and that will ultimately arouse the will to move towards dedication. Till then, no outward semblances, no donning of the robes of a *sannyasi* or a martyr, no going down on bended knees, no ringing of bells and burning of candles and incense, can turn a man of the world into a student of the perennial philosophy. Unless the man has become in heart and soul a disciple, he cannot be accepted by those who are the teachers of disciples.

Students who have been fired by the truths of Theosophy have oft-times stopped and marked time, unable to pass on because some hidden motive, some clogging attachment roots them to a particular spot. Only if they knew it, they have become devoted and turned worshippers of the mortal, the evanescent and the perishable. When this phase of life comes, many a promising pupil abandons the attempt at a change in the fabric of his life and goes back to the joys and griefs of his earthly attractions. This continues to be so because reasoning, intellectual gymnastics and emotional upsurges serve only the passing moment. They are incapable of giving him guidance. They are no movers of the spiritual will. What, then, is lacking which may work the transformation? What gets added to character that makes the coward, brave; the roué, chaste; the renegade, a pillar of strength and a man of purpose? When the Soul really shakes off its stupor of the ages and awakens to action, it does not grope about with the accumulation of the dust of age-long incarnations. The undesirable is swept clean away with no regrets, the desirable if absent is searched for, found, adopted and made an integral part of the being. Will the body, the mind and the psychic nature be able to absorb the new force or will they reject the new afflatus as not consubstantial, and so rejecting, meet their own disintegration? The whole nature of the man is to be used wisely, is to be tuned to a particular pitch before the divine will can be invoked with safety. A miniature Brotherhood has to be set up between mind and

heart, aspirations and feelings, piety and good health. This is achieved, not by charms and simples, but by the gentle yet continuous pressure of the divine will on each mortal part of the man. The wine has to be poured into a bottle that is made fit and ready to receive it.

Dedication has many stations. The student becomes dedicated to his studies; the aspirant to his search of the known and the unknown; the disciple to his teacher, his instructions and his larger duties. But if at any stage the man remains content with his limited objective and seeks to plow his lonely furrow, he misses out the goal which had dawned upon his vision at the beginning of the path. Here, there can be no case of an assumed humility, no observance of a meek content. Any stoppage at intermediate stations becomes an error, a damper of the enthusiasm and a slackener of the will. True dedication leads to one goal only and to none other. The authors of the Upanishads put this in their own great language. Says the *Katha Upanishad*:

Brahman is the end of the journey. Brahman is the Supreme Goal. This Brahman, this Self, deep-hidden in all beings, is not revealed to all; but to the seers pure in heart, concentrated in mind, to them is it revealed.

Dedication is thus twofold — to the Brahman, the Self within, and also to Brahman, the Self which is deep-hidden in the Selves of all beings. Since that which is within and that which is without are One, there can arise no conflict of interest, no division of duties. He who truly and faithfully serves the one does his duty to both. In true fact, the bliss of Brahman is unattainable unless devotion to the interests of others is entered upon to the exclusion of all else. The personal and even the individual have to be submerged into the ocean from which both did radiate. This, the only true objective, the forgetting of oneself in the larger dedication to the Race, has to become the theme and tempo of life. All else is lost sight of; all other sounds are refused entry to a mind which is unwaveringly aimed at the goal. In the course of this attempt, the man leaves all combativeness behind; his mind no longer discriminates between things which are pleasant and things which are unpleasant. The pettiness of human endeavours is left far, far behind and only the pure altruistic impulse remains as the breath of the divine life remains — a pulsation and a beating of the immortal Heart. Sacrifice, charity and austerity are no longer to be cultivated; powers and potencies are no longer to be sought after. These become what they indubitably are — the marks of dedication. Theirs is not a

forced growth, not a laboured assumption of appearances. They flower because their seeds have found the right soil. They grow because their roots are now embedded in the True.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* speaks of the supreme summation thus:

Let a man meditate upon Brahman as support and he will be supported. Let him meditate upon Brahman as greatness and he will be great. Let him meditate upon Brahman as mind and he will be endowed with intellectual power. Let him meditate upon Brahman as adoration and he will be adored. Let him worship Brahman and he will become Brahman. •

He who is the Self in man and he who is the Self in the Sun, are one.

YOUTH

YOUTH is not a time of life, it is a state of mind. It is not a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips and supple knees, it is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigour of the emotions; it is a freshness of the deep springs of life.

Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over love of ease. This often exists in a man of fifty more than in a boy of twenty. Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years; people grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.

Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair — these are the long years that bow the head. Whether seventy or sixteen, there is in every being's heart the love of wonder, the sweet amazement at the stars and the undaunted challenge of events, the unfailing childlike appetite for what next, and the joy in the game of life.

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope. In the central place in your heart there is a wireless station; so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, courage, grandeur and power from the earth, from men, and from the Infinite, *so long are you young.*

THE LESSON OF THE LAW OF SPIRITUAL ADVANCEMENT

TO BE A GARDENER tending the grounds of a fine estate might be accounted a pleasant lot, and Nikhil knew that he was fortunate to pass his days in such fair surroundings and in the service of a master who was generous, kind and good. The dissatisfaction that haunted him was not due to his circumstances; indeed it had first come upon him in childhood, when life was carefree and sunny; and though all had gone smoothly with him since, it had continued — a vague dissatisfaction which Nikhil could not understand.

Precisely when he realized that it was dissatisfaction with himself, he could not have said, but there was a certain gloomy comfort in knowing the cause at long last. "How can I be content," he thought, "full of faults as I am, even as a plot is full of weeds? Yet a plot, through steady toil, may be redeemed, whereas all my efforts at self-improvement come to nothing."

He had once overheard his master in conversation with a friend — two old scholars discoursing together while he pruned a creeper near by — and part of a sentence had caught his ear strangely, almost as if it were something once known that was being recalled to him: "*Advancement on the higher planes of thought and spiritual life.*"

"I make no advancement *there*," he reflected sadly, when, perhaps, he lost his temper and aimed a blow at an idle underling, or when he mistakenly accused a seedsman of dishonesty and was too proud to admit it and ask pardon, or when he envied a fellow-gardener's success in producing a finer strain of some plant, or when a beggar passed the gate and besought alms and Nikhil had neither the time nor the inclination to heed him. True, he never committed the same fault twice. In sincere repentance he uprooted it like a weed. But lo, another and another would follow fast. The soil of his nature seemed full of them. "I make no advancement," he mourned confusedly, "in what my good master called the spiritual life." The words had lingered on with him and were often in his mind. If he could live that life aright, he felt, he would be rid of his strange dissatisfaction.

Meanwhile, he worked faithfully. The lovely garden was a model of neatness, with every flower and shrub cared for, every weed removed the moment it appeared, and a certain portion, which a former owner had called "the wilderness," nicely reclaimed and set with fruit-trees.

Yet Nikhil himself remained unhappy, and at last his sad face caught his master's attention as the latter strolled along a shady path one autumn morning, enjoying the sight of his fair domain. "Why, Nikhil," said the master, rallying him, "what a countenance of woe! Has some mischief-making bird been at odds with you? Have you lost a prize bloom?"

Nikhil struck his spade in the earth and leant on it. "That I have," he said. "The prize bloom of hope. Do not mock a man at odds with *himself*, Master, a man well-nigh in despair."

"What is this?" cried the master. "My poor fellow, is aught really wrong? I spoke lightly, but you seem indeed troubled. What hope have you lost?"

"The hope," answered Nikhil heavily, "of advancement in the spiritual life. Nay, the words are not my own, Master. I heard you use them once and their import seemed to flash on me."

The master eyed him closely. "This," he said, "goes deeper than I thought. Lay aside your spade, Nikhil. Let us sit awhile and speak of it. What I began I must endeavour to complete." Leading the way to a near-by seat, "Now," continued the master, "unburden yourself. Trust me fully with all that weighs upon your mind. I shall do my best to help you."

Too much in earnest to feel any self-consciousness, in fact made eloquent by his very distress, Nikhil poured out his woes. "Ever," he said, "I aim afresh at self-improvement, and ever again I fail. I conquer a fault, and lo, I see another. Now, I have finally lost hope."

With this doleful conclusion, he sat silent, and his master too was mute. Many minutes elapsed and both remained speechless. Only some birds twittered softly.

"Tell me," said the master at length, gazing across the garden, "why you planted those fruit-trees. Why, in the first place, you cleared the wilderness, imposing order where all had been unkempt?"

"Because fruit-trees," Nikhil answered promptly, "are of value, and what grew formerly was worthless. It was, as you know, Master, a long, laborious task, but we looked ahead to future gain."

"Good!" said the master, smiling. "Now tell me why you weed the beds so diligently. If it is in the nature of weeds to grow again, why trouble? Why not let them work their will?"

"Surely, Master, you need not ask, you who love flowers," said Nikhil swiftly. "Would you have your roses and lilies choked by

mere weeds? It may be a tedious task, but above all others it is necessary."

"Good!" said the master again. "You are a man of common sense. But what grounds have you for believing that all these things will come about — that a wilderness, when tended, will bear fruit-trees, that if weeds are removed, flowers will thrive? For that matter, why sow seeds? How do you know that flowers will spring from them?"

"You have me there, Master," said Nikhil, smiling wanly in response. "I only know it is so — well, because it always *is* so. A poor reason, doubtless."

"Nay, the best!" said his master gravely. "For by giving it you bear witness to the Law. All is under Law, Nikhil, be it a garden or a soul, and the Law for all things is advancement — from less to more, from the imperfect to perfection. You have answered my questions well, showing that you honour that Law instinctively; yes, even when you give me what, in words, you deem a poor reason, for you prove by your actions that you know it is a good one. Yet in your own inner cultivation you tell me you have failed. There, Nikhil, you would have me see you as a lawbreaker."

Nikhil looked uneasy, only half understanding, and once again fell silent. The Master, too, held his peace awhile, evidently reflecting, as if anxious to make the matter crystal-clear. It was none too easy to reassure a seeking soul in language adapted to the mind's capacity.

"Nikhil," he said, "listen to me. You have faults, as a garden has weeds. You uproot one and another takes its place. That also you destroy. This is not oft-repeated failure as you think. It is the very thing you long for — advancement. With every weed the less, or let us say with every fault you conquer, so much nearer comes the ultimate perfection, though as a gardener you know well that the process is but slow, only to be accomplished stage by stage. It was in no short time that you transformed a wilderness to a fruitful orchard! Now, Nikhil —" The master laid his hand upon his servant's, the one worn thin with age, the other sinewy with toil, as though to emphasize his final words of comfort. "All this cheers you, does it not? Ah, but wait, for the best is yet to come. Bethink you that the process itself, the long, slow, often-painful process, is observance of the Law of Spiritual Advancement. When you feel the sting of self-dissatisfaction, you observe it. When your eyes are opened to fresh faults, you observe it. When your egoism seems so monstrous to you that you despair of over-

throwing it and can only bemoan its long tyranny and its many occasions of hurt to others, yes, even then you observe the Law, for only the Law itself can bring such things about. Ah, Nikhil, you crave perfection. But until you attain to it through the long Karmic stages — till the garden is crowned with the Ultimate Rose, till the wilderness is transformed to a fruitful orchard — till then be content, my son, to fulfil the Law patiently. Cleanse the soil, sow good seed — yes, ten thousand times, if necessary. The Law of Advancement will not fail you. A weed once gone, is gone for ever. 'Tis even as written here of the warrior" — the master took out a little book and read from it — "The enemies he slew in the last battle will not return to life in the next birth that will be his.'"¹

And with that he seemed to settle himself to study, perhaps as a gentle hint to Nikhil that the colloquy was ended and that for the present the Law of Advancement could best be served by completing the digging of the flower-beds in preparation for next spring.

I have three treasures, which I hold and keep safe:
 The first is called love;
 The second is called moderation;
 The third is called not venturing to go ahead of the world.
 Being loving, one can be brave;
 Being moderate, one can be ample;
 Not venturing to go ahead of the world, one can be the chief
 of all officials.
 Instead of love, one has only bravery;
 Instead of moderation, one has only amplitude;
 Instead of keeping behind, one goes ahead:
 These lead to nothing but death.
 For he who fights with love will win the battle;
 He who defends with love will be secure.
 Heaven will save him, and protect him with love.

—*Tao Te King*

¹ *The Voice of the Silence.*

WHAT OF TODAY?

HUMANITY AT THIS MOMENT seems to be in the same position as a boy faced with an examination paper. What he can answer will be in terms of what he has learnt. If he has assimilated his study he can see his way through the questions; if not, he will be in despair and will not know what to do. Can any one of us honestly say that we know exactly what to think or what to do in the present world conditions? Can we truly sense what is happening in terms of cycles, and feel confident of the right course which humanity must take?

One of the problems facing us is youth discontent, which has assumed more ominous proportions than ever before. What should be our basis for considering this problem?

Each generation is the outcome of preceding generations. The world has been brought to the state in which it is today by the present adult generation and the generations which preceded it. But we must also take into consideration the law of reincarnation, which brings to birth at a particular time and in a particular civilization those souls who are drawn to it under Karma. The evolutionary background of the young men and women of today, and the reasons for their incarnating at the present time, must therefore be looked into.

Those who are in middle-aged or old bodies today will have to admit that they, too, when young, thought that the world was being ruled wrongly by the adults of their time, and "reforms," new ideas, etc., came to birth. Adults have always believed the youth to have less knowledge and experience than themselves, and the youth of any century have felt that they have been let down by the adults.

The evolution of ideas, ideas of religion, of science, of philosophy, of social conditions and morality, is a fascinating study, if only we would not think that the ideas we hold are superior to those of others!

Few of us, today, look for ideas. We are mainly concerned with trying to keep the peace, with planting memorials on the vast graveyards created by wars, and hiding or turning our faces away from the bad spots in our civilization. We just keep hoping for a better time. However bountiful the flowers that may grow in a graveyard, the miasma of the putrefying flesh and blood poisons the living.

The idea of war as wrong, as something to be avoided, is prominent in our minds because of its appalling consequences, the misery it brings to combatants and non-combatants alike, and peace movements are

active. But who pauses to see the various causes which bring about wars — wars of conquest, or of personal ambition, or for freedom? To go to the help of the afflicted is the only righteous war; any other kind of war is fraught with disaster, morally as well as physically. The one is the willing sacrifice for the sake of others, or the conflict between right and might; the other involves the use of force and selfishness, cruelty and separateness. Wars bring out the worst qualities of the human being and destroy much of real value in life. On the other hand, we should not forget that according to the character of the soldier will be the strengthening of the good in him.

Let us remember that though, from one point of view, nothing can be gained by war, from another point of view it is the working of cyclic law, which we cannot avoid. All we can do is to gain what we can from cyclic events. All of us know of the marvellous courage displayed during the wars within our memory, not the least by the medical corps, the Quakers, etc., and by the non-combatants when the bombs rained down. "Patriots may break their hearts in vain," it is said, if the cycle is against them!

One aspect of the question is not sufficiently brought out. At present there is conscription during a war. There is no longer the voluntary giving up of comfort and of life. Of course any conscripted soldier can have his ideals, but the fact remains that the inner, unseen value of the sacrifice is not noted today. There was no conscription in England at the beginning of World War I. Those first slaughtered thousands had voluntarily gone to what seemed to be the rescue of a nation.

It is a tragic fact that when danger does not threaten we tend to become apathetic; when danger threatens it brings out the best as well as the worst in us. Theosophical students have a better chance of getting to the core of this problem if they wish to help the world.

There are, of course, many kinds of war, but fundamentally there is no difference, except in degree, between the riots of students, the strikes of workers, the "fights" in Parliament. War is violence: the burning of cars, buses, flags, the dislocation of traffic and loss of revenue thereby — all these things are in a sense "war." There is little difference between the policeman's truncheon and the bullet except in degree of damage caused. "Might is right" is the slogan in all cases. And yet what other method of reform is possible? Is reform needed? Who can doubt but that the world is sick, both the "haves" and the "have-nots"?

We know what H.P.B. had to say about our modern civilization. Just as, in *Isis Unveiled*, she was iconoclastic with reference to science and religion, so that the field was somewhat cleared for her *Secret Doctrine*, so we find that her many articles are iconoclastic with reference to the standard views of life in her day. She summed up her attitude in *The Key to Theosophy*, where she deals with social reforms, education, etc.

But what have *we* made our own from this knowledge she gave? Do we, students, want a new social order for the sake of the depressed and poor in many lands, or for the sake of the selfish (at both ends of the social scale) in the so-called "developed" nations?

Not only *what* we can give by way of help in this new world order, but *how* we can give it, needs to be considered. What do we really think of the youth of today? They, too, are iconoclastic, but with this difference, that they do not know what they really want, or how to obtain it, being mainly preoccupied with getting rid of restraints.

As long as the problem is viewed as a collective one, we shall never see it clearly, for each man is a unit and must be seen as such within the wider unity. The world is a unity, but not a unity of units. It must be seen as an inseparable whole.

It is here that our philosophy is truly of help. We should emphasize, as H.P.B. said, the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation, as both give a wider view of life than is held today. Reincarnation, with Karma, makes us realize that we are what we make ourselves. Karma with Reincarnation shows us that we cannot escape the consequences of our actions. But today we need one more idea — that of the immortality of the soul, the real man, itself divine. Each man is a budding Christ or Buddha — or devil. No man can escape his destiny; the only thing in his power is the time element — how soon he shall blossom forth as one or the other, how long it will be before he loses his apparent individuality and separateness and becomes the perfect God-man.

Peace can only come when *all* men desire it and create peaceful conditions in their present environment by a life of willing and joyous self-sacrifice, based on knowledge, not on emotion or on individual opinion.

The question is a vital one: What contribution can students of Theosophy make to the world of thought, for the improvement of world conditions? How shall we find and join hands with those whose ideas of a *practical* Brotherhood are the same as our own? How shall we

realize, except on the basis of ethical law, what attitude we should have towards all others?

“Come ye out from among them and be ye separate” has as its corollary — “Seek for those with a similar aim, purpose and teaching, and become part of the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood.”

IT IS NOT ONLY TRUE that most people misunderstand freedom, but I sometimes think I have not yet met one person who rightly understood it. The whole universe is absolute Law.

Freedom only opens entire activity and license *under the law*.

To the degraded and undeveloped — and even to too many others — the thought of freedom is a thought of escape from law which, of course, is impossible. More precious than all worldly riches is Freedom — freedom from the painful constipation and poor narrowness of ecclesiasticism — freedom in manners, habiliments, furniture, from the silliness and tyranny of local fashions — entire freedom from party rings and mere conventions in politics — and better than all, a general freedom of one's self from the tyrannic domination of vices, habits, appetites, under which nearly every man of us (often the greatest brawler for freedom) is enslaved.

Can we attain such enfranchisement — the true Democracy, and the height of it? While we are from birth to death the subjects of irresistible law, enclosing every movement and minute, we yet escape, by a paradox, into true free will. Strange as it may seem, we only attain to freedom by a knowledge of, and implicit obedience to Law. Great — unspeakably great — is the Will, the free Soul of man; at its greatest, understanding and obeying the laws, it can then, and then only, maintain true liberty. For there is to the highest that law as absolute as any — more absolute than any — the Law of Liberty.

The shallow, as intimated, consider liberty a release from all law, from every constraint. The wise see in it, on the contrary, the potent Law of Laws, namely, the fusion and combination of the conscious will or partial individual with those universal, eternal, unconscious ones, which run through all Time, pervade history, prove immortality, give moral purpose to the entire objective world, and the last dignity to human life.

—WALT WHITMAN

LETTERS ON THE TRUE

IV

[Reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. II, pp. 161-68, for September 1887.—EDS.]

MY COMRADES:

That the way to the Immortal lies through the heart of man is evident to him who observes that in it arise all those feelings which drive him into thought and action and constitute the sum of his life. A primary study of the office and nature of the heart then suggests itself to the wise student, for it is far easier to sink back into the eternal than to dive. The diver must needs have power to retain breath against the rush caused by diving, while to sink back gives time to get and keep breath.

As to the office of the heart of man — by heart I mean that physiological organ which is also the psychological seat of the various emotions and desires whose total we call “mind.” “I have changed my mind” is really to say I have changed my desire. The Hindu philosopher calls it “Manas; the heart; the internal organ of perception which receives the external impressions of the senses and transmits them through the consciousness (*Ahankara*) and the intellect (*Buddhi*) to the soul, and is the seat of the passions.”¹ The seat of the astral soul being in the heart, that spark causes the systole and diastole of the heart by its own vibration in unison with the whole body of Astral Light. We can thus conceive of the heart as “pumping up” such light along the nervous system (just as it does the blood through the circulatory system), whence it is transmitted in rhythmic shocks to the brain, and reflected by the grey matter there to its mysterious inhabitant, Consciousness. If the heart’s action be disturbed by passion or emotion, the rhythm of such shocks is altered. These passions and emotions have a twofold source. They may take their rise in outside astral currents proceeding from other lives; they stream into the heart, which — if it accepts the insidious suggestions — passes them along as we have seen, and the man carries them out to pleasure himself unless he controls them by his will. Or such thoughts may proceed from the Universal Mind in original purity, and be misconceived by the elemental self of man. The heart may be either (or both) an organ of action or an organ of percep-

¹ *Sankhya Karika*, Thomson’s trans.

tion. As the former, it hurries man along the bustling highways of action and fatally commits him to a return to life. As the latter, it perceives the influx of emotions and classes each as a petition of the body which the calm judge within refuses to entertain. Hence we have the saying, "Keep a steady heart," and hence the repeated injunctions of Vedic literature. It is the object of this letter to examine into the methods of such control, but a word as to the nature of soul is first in order.

Brief statements are necessarily incomplete, but it suffices our present purpose to say that the soul has also two offices. Its higher part communicates with the Divine Spirit; the lower elemental part collects the essential experiences of earth life and transfers them to that higher self. Here is a most important link, because these selections determine the tenor of experience, its spirituality or materiality. These selections, again, are governed by the heart, or feeder of the elemental self, and it has in turn the option between the pure or the impure, being, however, like all other parts of man, controllable by his supreme will. As we have seen, the heart must take note of all transmissions from without, but if it remains equilibrated, neither recoiling in horror nor eagerly attracting the material, and "free from the pairs of opposites,"² they are not recorded upon the brain with sufficient vividness to become deeds. In other words, the consciousness does not refer them to self and the man is not moved to action. The intellect has another choice: it may discover the *true nature* within all thoughts, and return them, thus raised to their highest power, to strengthen the heart. It thus becomes apparent that we must secure the entire co-operation of the heart in order to train the lower nature to submit to the diviner will of man. We must control and regenerate the mind.

The universal mind is the first production of nature, by which I mean the eternal nature, the material (so to say and in a sublimated sense) essence of Deity. Evidently the first issuing outward or manifestation of the Unknown, was a Thought. Mind is the link between soul and body; it is a subtle form of matter, and is the vehicle of the soul, whether in an individual or a universal sense. Even a mode of motion, such as mind, is "matter" as compared with spirit. Mind serving to transmit the outward to the inward, may also convey the internal to the external. It may look forward or back. Be it remembered that spirituality is not what we understand by the words "virtue" or "goodness." It is the power of perceiving formless, spiritual essences. It may

² *Bhagavad-Gita* : Ch. II

be used for good or evil purposes. The heart may be preoccupied with the eternal or the transitory in either (or both) outward and inward, for selfish or unselfish ends. Hence the initial importance of purifying the natural. Within the beast is that luminelle of the World-Soul, the Archeus³ which is the medium between God and man, and it may be alchemized⁴ to be the Christ or Chrestos which is the mediator "for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."⁵ Thus along the whole line, at every station and in every part, we have the power of choice; we may depart or return. While man is unconscious of his possible destiny, Karma governs automatically. When he becomes integrally conscious of it and the "moment of choice" is reached, he may turn the faculties of every organ either way. The responsibility of that Knowledge is then upon him and all his actions have a centupled power.⁶ We must not forget that no part of his body or constitution stands by itself alone, but, reacting and interacting, forms a compact whole.

When the student examines his heart, he first discovers that he does not at all know it; he is not what he appears to himself to be. Perhaps he recovers from some grief which he thought would end his life or his interest in life; or he has longed apparently to end physical suffering by death and finds he has lived on because the real inner man had still the will to live and finds the intermissions of pain as sweet as bygone joys. Some withered part of his nature puts forth new buds, or the deadened senses resume the simplicity of youth, and with the dying Falstaff he "babbles of green fields."

Festus, strange secrets are let out by Death,
Who blabs so oft the follies of this world:
And I am Death's familiar, as you know.
I helped a man to die, some few weeks since,
Warped even from his go-cart to one end —
The living on Prince's smiles, reflected from
A mighty herd of favourites. No mean trick
He left untried; and truly well-nigh wormed
All traces of God's finger out of him.
Then died, grown old; and just an hour before —
Having lain long with blank and soulless eyes —

³ *Isis*, Vol. II, page 35.

⁴ *Isis*, Vol. II, page 12, fn: "Ether is both *pure* and *impure* fire. . . . The difference is purely alchemical."

⁵ Christian Bible.

⁶ *Light on the Path*.

He sate up suddenly, and with natural voice
 Said, that in spite of thick air and closed doors
 God told him it was June; and he knew well
 Without such telling; harebells grew in June;
 And all that kings could ever give or take
 Would not be precious as those blooms to him.⁷

Perhaps sudden revulsions from the path of evil or pleasure have surprised him; or at the wizard touch of realization, the lover, the miser, the votary, the worshipper in him kneel no more but pursue the nimble chameleon desire to some remoter shrine. Behold the profound wisdom of Truth, which places the ultimate forever beyond his reach!

Seeing then that he can predicate nothing of himself, the student confines himself to an observation of the feelings welling up from those unfathomed deeps. It is here that I am fain to meet him with a few suggestions, for as I watch that tidal ebb and flow within my breast I see that I tasted so much of the gross sweetness of life in other lives that I know most of it now by reason of its being in me.

It appears insufficient to restrain passion or to check action so that they are pent up within us and wait over for their chance in another life. Under the law of attraction those accumulated forces will draw themselves forcibly together within the dreaming soul, and driving outward, propel it back to earth and form. So Behmen tells us that the magnet or essential desire of nature compresses itself into a substance to become a plant and in this compression of the desire becomes a feeling or working, whence comes the growing and smell of the plant, and he goes on to remind us that if it were not for such an outgoing and working of the trinity in the eternal unity, the unity were but a stillness, and there would be no nature, no colour, shape or figure, nor any world at all. This is the pattern by which all things proceed.

Neither is it wise to rush on in deliberate expenditure. While the burnt-out nature may leave us in sight of the spiritual, we may stand there too exhausted to put forward the immense effort required to pass through.⁸ It is not needful to plunge again into the mud of sensation to know it. Nor yet should we ignore those parts of us which produce such experience, but admit them and test them. We should not willingly rush back into desires of the past, but accept all situations and study them, the heart fixed on the True. Then they do not sweep us off into

⁷ "Paracelsus," by Robert Browning.

⁸ See *Gates of Gold*.

delirious action, but we convert them into true action. Every man may misinterpret or pervert a true ray; he may reflect or deflect. The particular disposition of each man determines the direction, the mode of expression which he may give to any impulse instilled into his mind; this disposition is regulated by the preponderance and proportions of the "three qualities" in his nature. I shall hope to show that all impulse is based upon the True. We must then carefully watch those indices of old fires which are now only banked, and try to turn their powers, by inwardly knowing them, into our service. The discovery and right use of the true essence of Being — this is the whole secret.

The case standing thus, we ask ourselves what is the strongest motor of man. Is it not Desire? When I look out over life I see this strange potency dissimulating yet forcing its underground current along in defiance of laws and civilizations, asserting itself now and then in colossal upheaval, sacrificing health, wealth, fame, honour, love, and life for the intoxicating passion of the hour. I see also, in the arc of life, how the first fierce colour of Desire, burning higher, blends here and there to purer hues in the solvent of the one light, and nerves men to sublime self-sacrifice. Then I understand that the cohesion of life is in the True, and that this force, properly understood, must be the clue to man's whole nature. Back of its multiform expressions I find one meaning — desire to be. In lovers, in the poet, in the hero's leap to the deed, in the sensualist's longing to be born anew to joy, even in dumb brutes this vigorous stir of force means to expand one's finest essences for a new result on some one of many planes, and the truth of the eternal creative impulse shines through the low act, as the fire soul through the opal's cloudy heart. Even in passion, tho' I find six drops of poison to the seventh, in that last drop hides the sublime counterpart. It is fed by some experience. Do not the intense sympathies for others feed and express it? I find that the desire of things is the love of them; this is the "desire which produces will, and it is will which develops force,⁹ and the latter generates matter,¹⁰ or an object having form."¹¹ As the Deity first feels desire "to beget His heart or son," so man follows the divine example, and by transubstantiation, begets a new heart or nature, and a new inner form.

Taking up the fact that man may misunderstand his own heart, I remind you that there are in nature three great forces:

⁹ The magnetic force; the soul force.

¹⁰ Which is that force condensed.

¹¹ *Isis*, Vol. II, page 320.

1st.—The creative. It corresponds to “Love in man.” It is “Brahma, the universal, expansive force in nature”; the Creator.

2nd.—The preservative. It is Maya, the formative power of illusion or ideation; this stands for Vishnu, the preserver, and takes the form of Vanity in man.

3rd.—The destructive force. Shiva the destroyer; in nature the great separator which, annihilating forms or illusions, brings us back to the re-combinations of love and closes the circle. This force is Anger in man, and these three, Love, Vanity, Anger, are the three great gates of life and death.

As the author of *Primary Concepts* has most admirably shown us, all things are dual or polar. The other pole of love is lust; of illusion, falsehood; of anger, justice. Duality is the condition of manifestation; without it the Deity must remain forever unseen. There is nothing finally and eternally “good” save the mysterious unit. Neither good nor evil is inherent in manifestations, forms or powers, but they depend upon the uses to which these emanations are put. The moment departure from Deity takes place, the free-will of Being becomes apparent; two paths present themselves for choice — duality and division. Duality is the harmonious interaction of two opposites in force. Duality in action is a trinity in unity, composed of two forces and the resultant; this is the condition of life. Division is the discordant or disconnected working of two forces, whereby one overpowers the other, acts for a time in sterile isolation, and then ceases to exist in that shape or form. This is the condition of change or death. Without intercorrelation, without attraction and repulsion, we are without the attributes of life. As the life of the material universe can thus be traced to magnetism or desire, so all our personal desires have a common aim: sensation, or the realization of life. This is also the law of the Deity!

Tracing special desires back to their causes, I find each to be rooted in the True. Ambition is a perverted love of excellence. Falsehood is a misshapen desire to create. Fame is a restricted thirst for the immortal, and so on with all the originally pure thoughts of the universal mind, which have been appropriated and misconstrued by the elementary nature of man. Division has occurred through man’s forcible adaptation of a true principle to personal and selfish ends. He ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge on that day when he first conceived good and evil to be single, separate modes of progression, instead of counterbalancing powers working together for the same end and confined to the expres-

sion of harmony. He will regain his lost Eden on that day when he can look at every desire in the broad, quiet light of this question: How can I give desire such vent as shall conduce to the benefit of other men? The great watchword of the True is this: in the last analysis all things are Divine!

To instance such a mode of dealing with any master passion, we will take up love, itself the basis of all desire. Continuity is said to be the law of laws in the world of effect. Love — the ethical expression of continuity — holds an identical position in the world of cause. Gravitation, polarity, attraction, cyclic necessity; hope, faith, aspiration; the sum of each and all of these is love. By this force, raised to its highest power, Masters become. Their great attainment consists in this — that they embody the law of love.

It would seem then that we should recognize the existence of this huge force of passion within us, so that we may drag it out on our mental and spiritual planes and clutch it so tight that we are master. This is not done by pretending to ourselves that such-and-such a propensity does not exist. All things must exist in each one of us, and we must understand them all as a figure of the real. For example — the contest of the sexes. Why do women lure men? Why do men rush after them? And do not women act with those who seek them just as nature does with us? She shows a part, and then retreats behind the bars. Then again she comes out and sometimes throws herself into our arms, this latter not so often. Although men and women differ much, either is to the other the mysterious undiscovered, to be conquered and known. Especially does this attraction come out when we have started upon the path, unless where a person is wholly devoid of it by nature, having burnt it out in other lives. What, then, are we to do? To yield is a mistake; it is the high spring of the impulse that we must understand, and then stand master of the lower form. This is the method spoken of in the *Gita* as burning it out in the fire of spiritual wisdom, for being bent upon finding the True, we naturally discard these false disguises. This same fight and self-examination is to be carried on with the other traits, such as anger, vanity and so on, not referring it to self, but as sharing in the processes of nature, and for the sake of all those who are deluded by their own perversions of the True.

The heart sends out its impulses in circular and magnetic waves of feeling which surge through the man until they reach the coarse outer shell which renders them into the gross terms of matter. That

does not suffice the inner man, much less the soul, for what they clamour for so loudly in that throb of fire and blood is the large sensation of those rich fields beyond the Gates of Gold. If we could catch that vibration before it reached the outer body, we should find that the inner man gave it a finer meaning, and if we will drop back within ourselves, we may by introspection come to understand somewhat of this higher language. We can arrest the ripples of feeling further and further within ourselves if we will to do it, and work off their impulse by the expenditure of higher energies which, reacting, feed the soul itself. When we are attacked by an adversary, the universal mind says "separation"; the individual heart translates "anger." When a current of invincible attraction reaches us, the body shouts "passion," but the pure heart whispers "divine love," and gives a thought or act of brotherhood to all. Ah, my comrades, have not we and desire come together to learn this deathless lesson — that joy enduring is not in matter and that even its most tender love cannot long contain the strange, the universal heart of man? We must then readjust our comprehension to its real meanings. This great victory can be won by supreme effort, and we are preparing ourselves for it by the daily efforts we do make. We may look to the natural laws of energy and growth for further help.

—JASPER NIEMAND, F.T.S.

A CERTAIN PRINCE, born under an evil star, was cast out from the city, and fed by a certain woodman. So he came to think: "I am a woodman." Knowing that he was living there, a certain minister told him: "You are no woodman, but a prince!" And he, at once putting away the delusion that he was a woodman, takes on his true princely state, saying: "I am a King!"

Thus, indeed, through kindly teaching, the soul learns: "Thou hast, verily, been sent forth by the primal Spirit, manifest only in pure consciousness. Of that Spirit, thou art a part!" Then putting away the delusion of its material origin, the soul declares: "In that I am a son of the Eternal, I am the Eternal, and none other; nor am I subject to birth and death!" and thus rests on its own nature.

—*Sankhya Aphorisms*: iv, 1, Commentary

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The detection of gaseous ammonia and methane in the lower atmosphere of Mars and the scientific conclusion that these indicate the existence of some form of life on that planet has been heralded as marking "the beginning of a new epoch of immense physical and philosophical significance." It would mean that we are not alone in the universe. Also, some of the prevalent notions about our origin and destiny will have to be radically revised. Further probes might reveal more about the Martian atmosphere, but this first clear evidence of extra-terrestrial life will not come as a surprise to many who have always held that life is a cosmic principle and a property of matter which induces it to become organized and complexified, at the same time strictly observing the laws of evolution.

The metaphysical implications of the discovery are even more important than the physical. It is highly significant and in a way comforting to know that the universe is not just a cold, disorganized conglomeration of matter in random motion, but a living, vibrant, throbbing, ever-evolving organism. This knowledge will perhaps bring present-day investigators closer to the grander cosmology of which the ancients knew, and probably yield a sounder, profounder theology as well.

Science and astrology have for long been at loggerheads over the issue of influences from outer space having an effect on our everyday lives. Research at several institutes now appears to indicate that the chemical make-up of our minds and bodies can be altered as the earth speeds through the cosmos, and that influences millions of light years away have a direct bearing on the sort of life we live today. According to the latest theories, the human body could be more sensitive to the constant bombardment of cosmic radiation than any other living thing on our planet. (*The Hindu*, July 20).

The first indications that the stars affect our lives came to the scientists when Professor Gino Piccardi, research director at Florence University, found that an identical chemical experiment yielded different results every time it was carried out. The water was carefully filtered before the start of each experiment and the quality of the chemicals remained unchanged; yet some unknown agent was playing

havoc with the laws of science. When Professor Piccardi surrounded his test-tubes with sheets of lead, the irregular reactions ceased at once. This led him to the conclusion that the mysterious agent must have been some kind of radiation coming from outer space. The discovery provided science with the first step towards proving that chemical reactions can be disturbed and altered as the earth passes through galactic fields of force.

Subsequent experiments have shown that some creatures are extremely sensitive to cosmic rays — particularly the vinegar fly, whose cycle of reproduction actually depends on the amount of cosmic radiation it receives.

Scientists also know that some of the cosmic radiation that reaches us has been travelling through space for thousands of years, but the rays that come to us from nearer bodies in the solar system are a great deal stronger, often blanketing radiation from a more distant source. The sun, in particular, emits enormous quantities of radiation which interferes with the earth's magnetism from time to time. It is now held that the whole human body, not just the nervous system, can suffer from these attacks of cosmic radiation. Some parts of the body contain a positive charge of electricity and others a negative one, and the sudden arrival of electromagnetic waves can seriously upset the delicate balance between the two.

Soviet scientist Nicolas Schulz discovered that human blood underwent considerable changes in relation to the amount of solar radiation it received. Blood samples taken from thousands of subjects showed that the white corpuscles increased or decreased depending on the sun's behaviour. Schulz also proved that agitation of the blood by solar radiation could sometimes result in coronary diseases.

The moon, too, scientists admit, plays an important part in our physical and mental well-being. As well as deflecting outbursts of solar and other cosmic radiation heading for our planet, it has a tremendous effect on the earth's magnetic field. It influences the electromagnetic forces of the solar system, and, in this way, can have a pronounced effect on mental stability. Some scientists even think that the moon's effect on the human nervous system has been responsible for unexplained relapses following otherwise successful operations. In fact, a noted American surgeon refuses, whenever possible, to carry out operations except when the moon is in its first and last quarter, maintaining that a patient is in the greatest danger of a relapse at the time of

the full moon.

But although an increasing number of scientists now agree that cosmic forces do act directly on the human mind and body, they have yet to discover exactly why. One thing, at least, is certain. The more science probes the mysteries of space influences, the more apparent it becomes that astrology — held in scorn for so long — is due for a serious and impartial reassessment.

What has Theosophy to say on the subject? Can it show humanity that there is a real and a false use of astrology and point to the dangers of the latter and the value of the former? Are we at the mercy of the heavenly bodies? Are we caught in a vast clockwork Universe, moved hither and thither without our will? Who are we? What are the stars and the planets? Will a knowledge of astrology help us to understand the meaning of life? Or must we go beyond it to the Occult Science, and start our research into the subject with this as a basis? These are the questions that need to be looked into.

There is an interrelationship between the Sun, the planets, the stars and Man (and the earth). Why such a relationship exists is shown by the following quotation:

The one Cosmic atom becomes seven atoms on the plane of matter, and each is transformed into a centre of energy; that same atom becomes seven rays on the plane of spirit, and the seven creative forces of nature radiating from the root-essence ... follow, one the right, the other the left path, separate till the end of the Kalpa, and yet are in close embrace. What united them? KARMA. The atoms emanated from the Central Point emanate in their turn new centres of energy, which ... begin their work from within without, and multiply other minor centres. These, in the course of evolution and involution, form in their turn the roots or developing causes of new effects, from worlds and "man-bearing" globes, down to the genera, species, and classes of all the seven kingdoms. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 635)

The recent discoveries of Cleve Backster, a New York polygraph expert, and his colleagues, have attracted much attention and were the subject of an article in the February-March issue of *National Wildlife*. The experiments started in February 1966, when Mr. Backster first began to suspect that plants experience emotions. To test this theory, he first attached the electrodes of his polygraph to the plant leaves, and

then attempted to think of ways he might harm the plant. At the moment he thought of burning a leaf with a match, the polygraph recording pen, which had until then been charting the normal plant rhythms, showed a dramatic change.

I had not moved [he writes], or touched the plant, so the timing of the PGR pen activity suggested to me that the tracing might have been triggered by the mere thought of the harm I intended to inflict upon the plant. This occurrence, if repeatable, would tend to indicate the possible existence of some undefined perception in the plant.

Mr. Backster regards it as significant that his intent to harm the plant produced a stronger reaction than the actual burning.

Further experiments which involved the plants' reaction to the death of brine shrimp led him to the hypothesis that perhaps a cell broadcasts a signal to all other living cells when it dies. He has tested this hypothesis not only on plants, but on amœba, paramecium, fresh fruits and vegetables, mould cultures, blood samples, etc. The signal is definitely not within any known frequency; distance seems to impose no limitation.

Decades ago, Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose did pioneering work in experimenting with what he called "the nervous system of plants." His study showed that plants are sensitive to practically every stimulus to which animals are sensitive, that they become excited and fatigued, and that when they die they do so with a spasm and with the emission of a measurable electric voltage at the instant of death. There is no life reaction in the highest animal, he contended, that has not been foreshadowed in the life of the plant, and he concluded that plant and animal are "a multiform unity in a single ocean of being." It is noteworthy that the advances of science have always been towards a clearer perception of underlying unity in apparent diversity—a truth the ancients well knew.

The hypothesis that the brain is a machine operated by the mind, "a ghost of consciousness existing beyond the brain," was advanced in a recent documentary on BBC-1 television. Michael Barnes's programme "Hypnosis and Mind" used the evidence of hypnosis, telepathy and extrasensory perception to put the case. (*The Daily Telegraph*, June 24)

Without committing themselves totally, the three scientists involved

—Sir Alister Hardy the zoologist, Sir Cyril Burt the psychologist, and Arthur Koestler — very much favoured the hypothesis and hoped that there might be proof before too long.

There have prevailed as many misconceptions about the concept of mind as of matter. The belief that man is a machine, or at best an animal, held for so long, is now being questioned by many earnest seekers after the knowledge of Man, affiliated to differing scientific disciplines. Some years ago, a distinguished neurologist, Sir Francis Walshe, M.D., F.R.S., declared that “from sheer psychological and philosophical necessity, traditional common-sense philosophy from the earliest Greeks to Aquinas accepted the existence in man of an essential immaterial element,” capable of transforming him from the material to the immaterial world of ideas “and setting him above the merely animal. This element they called psyche, entelechy, anima or soul.”

It has also to be recognized that for the soul's functioning as an essential element in the hylomorphic human person, it needs sense data, of which the brain is the collecting, integrating and distributing mechanism. Yet it would be quite childish to identify the instrument with its user, even though the user be dependent upon the instrument for operating.

The student of Theosophy might wish that more men of science would realize the childishness in confusing mind with brain or soul with body. Ideas rule the world, and the thoughts set in motion by H.P.B. in her *Ten Items of Isis Unveiled* and the Three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine* are bound to stimulate the mind of any thinking man who believes himself to be more than a machine.

A recent symposium in Madrid is memorable on many counts, not the least of which is that rubbing shoulders with neurologists and cardiologists were theologians of many faiths. Another is that the experts agreed on a universally acceptable definition of death. The question whether a man may be deemed to be dead when his breathing and heart-beats cease is important from more than one point of view. The symposium decided that a man could be taken to be dead when there is irreversible bio-electrical silence of the brain; in other words, when the central nervous system lapses into final electrical silence. (*The Times of India*, July 25)

Not, it may be noted, when the heart stops, for the man still has a good chance of reviving. The annals of medicine teem with examples of "suspended animation" as the result of asphyxia by drowning, the inhalation of gases and other causes, and life has been restored in the case of drowning persons even after they had been apparently dead for twelve hours.

What medical men are now admitting, that a man is not really dead when the heart-beats stop and the breath leaves the body, was asserted by H.P.B. in the last century and has always been known to those who have the knowledge concerning the states of man after the death of the body. When the body begins to get cold and the man appears dead, all the forces of body and mind rush through the brain. The real man is busy in the brain and lives his whole life over again. Not until his work there is ended is the person really dead and the remaining principles detach themselves from the physical corpus.

Cryonics, freezing the dead in hopes of future reanimation when science has evolved new techniques to cure the disease of which the person died (see THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, March 1967) is still being practised. Ten more bodies have been placed in special freezing chambers in the past two years and live membership in cryonics groups is up to 1,000 (*Science Digest*, June 1969). A new \$100,000 facility that just opened in California has room for 40 bodies (they are called "patients") in stainless-steel vaults. Cryonic burial is not cheap: the body of a New York University student who died last year is in a \$4,500 capsule maintained at \$50 a month. Science tends to scoff at cryonics, but members of cryonics groups, whose motto is "Never say die," maintain that there are few problems worse than being dead.

Not a few would be inclined to the view that there is indeed worse that can happen to a man than the death of his body. There is also much misconception about the process of death, and this is but inevitable in a society which believes the physical body animated by the life-principle to be all that there is to the man. Death occurs at the instant when both the astral body, or life-principle, and the spirit part for ever with the corporeal body. Once life has fled for ever and the tabernacle is tenantless, by no manner of means can it be resuscitated.
